

also seeking a variance to Table 5.02.03(B) as it pertains to the location of a chain link fence in a front yard. This table within the ULDC stipulates that a chain link fence can be erected on the side yards and rear yard. However, the applicants desire to erect a chain link fence in the front yard parallel to Georgia Highway 376. Additionally, the applicant is requesting a variance to Section 5.02.03(G)(3) as it pertains to the maximum height of a fence in a front yard. This section of the ULDC provides that the maximum height of a fence in a front yard is six feet. The applicant is asking for a variance of one foot in the front yard in order to erect a seven-foot fence around the entire leased area (front, sides and rear). The applicant desires to erect a seven-foot fence around the leased perimeter because the ULDC does not allow barbed wire to be placed on fencing in an R-1 zoning district. While the ULDC does not require a buffer yard along the north lot lines (front yard), the applicant is proposing to establish an additional 30 feet wide buffer along the length of the front yard of the leased area to act as a shield/buffer from the traveling public on Georgia Highway 376 (north lot line). They are also proposing twenty-three (23) trees and one hundred forty-four (144) shrubs along the southeastern lot line is a 228.34-acre tract utilized for agricultural farming purposes, of which the applicant is proposing to lease 31.7 acres to establish a solar farm. The TRC {Technical Review Committee} reviewed the variance request and recommended approval.

Mrs. Quarterman asked if these requirements were related to the R-1 zoning. Mrs. Tulloch stated that was correct. Vice-Chairman Strickland asked if the fence was proposed to be a minimum of seven feet, or a maximum of seven feet. Mrs. Tulloch stated it was proposed to be a maximum of seven feet in height. Mrs. Quarterman asked why the applicant did not want to rezone the property. Mrs. Tulloch stated that solar farms were permitted in most zoning districts in Lowndes County.

There being no more questions for staff, Chairman McCall asked if there was someone who would like to speak on behalf of the application. Mr. Ryan Peters, 1819 Peachtree Road, Atlanta, spoke on behalf of the application. He stated he was with Solar America and an environmental engineer. He stated that the electrical code required a seven foot fence. Mr. Peters stated they would like to use the existing landscaping/vegetation to meet the landscaping requirements. Mrs. Quarterman noted that the applicant intended to use wax myrtle and holly, and she appreciated the use of native vegetation. Vice-Chairman Strickland asked how close their panels would be to the fence, vegetation, and property line. Mr. Peters stated they would strategically plant their vegetation far enough away and maintained well enough to where it would not impede the solar panels' ability to function. Mr. Hogan asked what the height was of the panels. Mr. Peters stated his panels, which they referred to as "trackers" because they follow the sun throughout the day, were about eight to nine feet in height, and they rest at six feet tall at night. Chairman McCall asked how long their lease was for. Mr. Peters stated they had a thirty-five year lease. Chairman McCall asked if they were required to decommission the property at the end of the lease. Mr. Peters said they were required to remove the equipment at the end of the lease. Mrs. Quarterman suggested that the Board may want to tie the term of the lease to the variance approval, if the Board so chooses.

There being no more questions for the applicant, Chairman McCall asked if anyone else would like to speak on behalf of the application. No one spoke. Chairman McCall asked if anyone would like to speak in opposition of the application. No one spoke. Chairman McCall asked if anyone had contacted the office. Mrs. Tulloch stated there was no contact to the office.

There being no further discussion, Chairman McCall called for a motion. Vice-Chairman Strickland made a motion to approve the variance requests as presented for the duration of the lease, and that if the lease was not renewed, the variances would become null and void. Mrs. Quarterman seconded the motion. The motion was called and carried with a vote of 5-0-1, with Mrs. Hobby abstaining.