

2026-1-ORD requested by Walter Pilié, Councilman, District III & Michelle O’Daniels, Councilwoman, District V to amend the St. Charles Parish Zoning Ordinance of 1981, Section VII. – Supplemental use and performance regulations, Large Solar Energy Systems (LSES).

Mr. Albert – just as a quick primer, late last year coming into this year the state updated their regulations for site development of large solar farms. The parish had already had something on the books in the ordinance you passed in 2023. So, in response to that the council opted out of adopting the state requirements to maintain our own self-governance on that issue. However, looking at what was in the code comparing it to what the state did and what someone other municipalities did and working with Councilman Pile and O’Daniels, there were items that they wanted to add in terms of our review. In quick summary it comes down to landscaping and buffer requirements, minimum size for the large solar farms, small local like individual solar operations like on your house are unaffected by this at all. The other part was a requirement to evaluate glare in the development of these large solar fields so what you seeing in the ordinance is the collected work of a number of meetings. This went to the legislative committee and was okayed in its current forms that you’re seeing before you now. If you have any questions, I’ll be happy to answer them. Thank you.

Commissioner Petit – it looks pretty thorough from what I read. Any questions for Michael or for Mr. Pilié from commissioners?

Commissioner Keen – do we meet all the state minimum requirements by the state statute with this, we can add to, but we’re not taking away is what I’m asking.

Mr. Albert – it works differently and, in most cases, where like the higher-level government has set forth a minimum standard we couldn’t go below that. But in this instance, we fully opted out of the regulations to set our own much like with home rule charter stuff works. So, there minimum standard I think they had 300 ft of buffer, we don’t, we’ve chosen our own standards. So, what they established doesn’t affect the minimum threshold for St. Charles Parish.

Commissioner Keen – how are we in comparison to our adjoining parishes with this in regards like as in Jefferson or whatever it may be. In case we ever do have one that’s close proximity to one of the parishes or the others.

Mr. Pile – I think we did a comparison between the state regulations, that was the start because we opted out from that but our regulations that were in place already so we’re able to do so. We found some, let’s say soft points, you know things where the setbacks of the equipment was too close in our opinion given what we saw from the state but then we went to Tangipahoa parish which is extremely stringent and long and it covers just about everything, but they’ve got some solar farms over there. So, we made a matrix that showed what the state required, what St. Charles Parish required, and what Tangipahoa required, and we compared every category to thin it down to the things we thought made the best

sense for our parish which would provide the proper regulatory you know, treatment for these types of farms, should one ever come about. But in terms of the state I think we covered most everything. The things we haven't covered are somewhat inconsequential, quite frankly, things like, you know, spacing away from waterway or something like that. But I think ours is pretty robust, now that we've changed it. Nobody will ever something as robust as Tangipahoa parish. So, I got to tell you it took a lot of time to compare that. I think if you saw the matrix we created, I think you'd feel like we've done a pretty extensive and comprehensive job at comparison. I don't know if that answers your question. Thank you.

Commissioner Petit – do we have any pending request or plans for construction, or are we just trying to get ahead of everything?

Mr. Albert – we're trying to get ahead of it. There was like one inquiry a year and a half or 2 years ago that never panned out.

Mr. Pile – one other thing, excuse me. One other thing we need to point out is this has to do with siting considerations, which are mostly geometric type things. There is another committee in at the state level which is just reviewed things such as financial responsibility and permitting. We have some things in our document that covers those things but it's not yet up to speed because the state hasn't issued the requirements out of this committee yet. That should be made in February, and then we're going to be looking at that as well to see how that compares with ours. Just thought I's let you know. Thank you.

Mr. Albert – he's referring to the decommissioning plans; we have a requirement for that in our existing code now. So, when one of these ceases to operate, they're not allowed to just simply leave their equipment on the field, it has to be removed. The site has to be remediated. The question becomes like what kind of penalties are assigned for not doing that? That's the thing that's still hanging about at the state level, and we will probably do another update with regards to that once those matter are settled.

Commissioner Keen made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Frangella.

YEAS: FRANGELLA, FOLSE, PRICE, PETIT, KEEN

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: ROSS

PASSED
