

Saluda County Council appreciates the citizens who spoke during public comment regarding the proposed solar project discussed at the recent Council meeting. We value public engagement and the opportunity to clarify the County's role in this matter.

The ordinance referenced during the meeting received first reading at the October Council meeting. A public hearing on the ordinance is scheduled for the March Council meeting, where citizens will again have the opportunity to speak. The ordinance (Ordinance 15-25) is available on our website under "Recent News".

The ordinance under consideration does not authorize or approve construction of a solar farm. Rather, it pertains to a proposed Fee-in-Lieu of Tax (FILOT) agreement. A FILOT is an economic development incentive that allows a company to pay a negotiated, set amount of property taxes over a specified period of time if they choose to locate a project within the county.

It is important to clarify:

- The County does not own the property in question. The land is privately owned.
- Saluda County does not have zoning regulations governing land use.
- Property owners have the legal authority to determine how their land is used, subject to applicable state and federal laws.
- Approval of a FILOT agreement does not guarantee that the company will move forward with the project. The company must still complete numerous additional steps and regulatory requirements before any development could occur.

It is also important to clarify that the project being discussed is not, and has never been, a data center.

County Council's consideration of this ordinance is limited to whether to authorize a potential tax agreement should the company ultimately choose to invest in Saluda County.

We encourage residents to attend the public hearing in March if they wish to share additional input.

Saluda County Council remains committed to transparency and providing accurate information to the public.