Commission talks solar panels on Superfund site

By TAYLOR COOPER tcooper@thebrunswicknews.com   Apr 18, 2018

Glynn County Commissioners talked about the possibility of using part of the LCP Chemicals Superfund site for a solar farm at a Tuesday work session.

Commissioner Allen Booker said he proposed the idea and had County Manager Alan Ours look into it.

The state Public Service Commission mandates Georgia Power get a percentage of its electricity from solar panels, Ours said. He added that Georgia Power would work with those who want to construct solar farms, but only accepts proposals for solar farm projects that produce three megawatts of power at most.

Ours said it takes around seven acres of solar panels to generate one megawatt of power, so the county would cover only 21 of the 80 to 90 acres it can use if it did decide to construct a solar farm. Filling all the available upland in solar panels would allow the county to generate around 12 megawatts.

He said the county could use bonds to raise the money needed, and then use the revenue from selling the excess power it generates to cover the cost of construction.

After the initial investment is paid off, Ours said the revenue could go into the county’s budget to be used to offset the energy costs or used in programs to offset electricity bills for low- to moderate-income residents.

Based on conversations with multiple engineering firms, Ours said it could cost around $5,000 to 6,000 to evaluate the feasibility of the project.
Building on Superfund sites comes with its challenges, said Jim Frache — a St. Simons Island resident with whom both Ours and Booker consulted. These challenges can be overcome he said, and have in places like landfills, but the projected profit and loss did not make a solar farm on the Superfund site an attractive investment, Frache said.

In other business, the commissioners heard updates on its litter reduction initiative and a program by One Hundred Miles to get more of the general public involved in environmental advocacy. The Brunswick-Glynn County Development Authority gave a presentation on the return on investment it provides the county and Catherine Ridley, also with One Hundred Miles, gave a presentation on a new initiative to educate the public on sea turtle and shorebird preservation.

The county commission is scheduled to meet Thursday at 6 p.m. in the Old Glynn County Courthouse, 701 G St. in Brunswick. The next work session is scheduled for May 15 in the Harold Pate Courthouse Annex, 1725 Reynolds St., also in Brunswick.

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