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## AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF CHATHAM COUNTY

**WHEREAS**, the Chatham County Board of Commissioners has considered amendments to the Chatham County Zoning Ordinance/Regulations, as described in Attachment A, and finds that they are reasonable and public interests are furthered; and

**BE IT ORDAINED**, by the Board of Commissioners of Chatham County as follows:

1. The amendments to the Chatham County Zoning Ordinance/Regulations described in Attachment A are approved.
2. This ordinance shall become effective upon its adoption.

Adopted this 20th day of August 2012

Brian Bock, Chair  
Chatham County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Sandra B. Sublett, CMC, NCCCC, Clerk to the Board  
Chatham County Board of Commissioners

## ATTACHMENT A

Sections of the Chatham County Zoning Ordinance to be amended for the use of “solar” within the county.

### Section 7.2 Definitions

**Photovoltaic System** – An active solar energy system that converts solar energy directly into electricity.

**Solar Collector** – A device, structure or a part of a device or structure (i.e. array, panel, etc.) installed for the sole purpose of the collection, inversion, storage, and distribution of solar energy. This device may be roof-mounted or ground-mounted as an accessory use (Refer to Section 17.6 for general standards).

**Solar Energy** – Radiant energy received from the sun that can be collected in the form of heat or light by a solar collector.

**Solar Farm** – A use where a series of solar collectors are placed in an area for the purpose of generating photovoltaic power for an area greater than the principle use on the site or as the principle use on the site for off-site energy consumption. The use of solar collectors for personal or business consumption that occurs on-site is not considered a solar farm.

### Section 10.13 Table of Permitted Uses

|  | R5 | R2 | R1 | O&I | B1 | NC | CB | RB | IL | IH |
|--|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Solar Farm <less than 2 acres follow Section 17.6    | P  | P  | P  | P   |    |    |    |    | P  | P  |
| Solar Farm >greater than 2 acres follow Section 17.6 | CU | CU | CU | CU  |    |    |    |    | P  | P  |

### Section 17.6 Standards for Solar Energy Uses

This section is intended to provide the opportunity for solar energy to serve as a viable form of energy generation while protecting public health, safety, and general welfare. All regulations in the zoning ordinance shall apply unless expressly allowed or modified in the below standards.

A. Solar collectors shall be permitted as an accessory use to existing structures or facilities in any zoning district under the following standards:

1. Roof mounted solar systems shall not extend beyond the exterior perimeter of the building on which the system is mounted or built.
2. Ground mounted solar systems shall meet the minimum zoning setbacks from property lines for the zoning district in which it is located.

3. The maximum height for a ground mounted solar system under this standard is 15 feet as measured from the grade of the base of the collector to its highest point.
- B. Solar farms on **<less than two (2) acres** in size shall meet the following standards:
1. Collectors and all their components shall not exceed 25 feet in height as measured from the grade of the base of the collector to its highest point.
  2. All structures and collectors shall meet a 50 foot minimum perimeter setback from all property lines.
  3. In cases where buffers do not exist, a modified version of the Type B buffer as described in Section 12 of the Zoning Ordinance, shall be appropriate to the location of the site, the adjacent land use, and the area topography.
- C. Solar farms on **>greater than two (2) acres** in size shall meet the following standards:
1. A conditional use permit shall be applied for and approved before any activity may proceed on the proposed solar farm site and must comply with Section 17.1 Procedures for Conditional Use Permits.
  2. Collectors and all their components shall not exceed 25 feet in height as measured from the grade of the base of the collector to its highest point.
  3. All structures and collectors shall meet a 50 foot setback minimum perimeter setback from all property lines with a 100 foot minimum setback from any public roadway where applicable.
  4. In cases where buffers do not exist, a modified version of the Type B buffer as described in Section 12 of the Zoning Ordinance, shall be appropriate to the location of the site, the adjacent land use, and the area topography.
- D. ***All solar farms shall comply with the following:***
- Shall comply with all Building and Electrical codes.
  - Shall not create a visual safety hazard for passing motorist or aircraft.
  - Shall be removed, at the owner's expense, within one hundred and eighty (180) days of determination by the Planning Department the facility is no longer being maintained in an operable state of good repair or no longer supplying solar power.