Environmental Committee
May 7, 2026 | Following Budget Committee
Small Courtroom on 3rd Floor of Courthouse

Members Present:	Others Present:	
Sue York	Torey LaMontagne, Mayor's Office	Jimmy Eller, Solid Waste
Vacant	Gary Nelson, *Crossville Chronicle*	Craig Clark
Karen Shanks	Philip Burnett, County Attorney	Silicone Ranch Representatives
David Gibson	Jennifer Turner, Director, Finance	Ben Nakdimen, constituent
Jack Davis	Mayor Foster	Bethany Brown, constituent
Joe Sherrill	Josh Selby, Director, Codes	Sharon Brown, constituent
Mark Baldwin	Tom Isham, 2nd District	Ronald Baker, constituent
Deborah Holbrook	Darrell Threet, 3rd District	
John Patterson	Terry Lowe, 5th District	
	Wendell Wilson, 6th District	
	Greg Maxwell, 8th District	
	Colleen Mall, 9th District	

CALL TO ORDER
With a quorum present, David called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm immediately following the prior budget meeting on Thursday, May 7, 2026 in the small courtroom on the 3rd floor of the courthouse.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Joe made a motion to approve the previous meeting's minutes as presented. Deb seconded the motion, none were opposed, and the motion to approve the previous meeting's minutes as presented carried.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT(S)
The floor was opened for public comments on the agenda and there were a few constituents that spoke regarding Silicone Ranch.

Ben Nakdimen (230 River Road) spoke in opposition of Silicone Ranch's proposed solar farm. Ben's concern was that the farm is a precursor to a data center. Representatives from Silicone Ranch stated that it has no plans for a data center and has no current connection to one.

Bethany (380 Mohawk Drive) and Sharon Brown (31 Ozone Loop) spoke in favor of Silicone Ranch's proposed solar farm. Bethany uses solar on her home and is looking forward to more of that energy source being available. Sharon attended the community presentation Silicone Ranch held and had many of her questions answered.

Ronald Baker (2157 Ona Road) spoke regarding what he believed to be a positive future in solar power. Ron worked for years in the power and energy sector and has done some recent research on America's largest power companies. He found that 8 out of 10 of those are investing in solar power.

SOLID WASTE UPDATES, JIMMY ELLER
Jimmy stated that we are still currently waiting to hear back from some engineers on the landfill. He mentioned that they are still considering a pond as a solution.

DISCUSSION: SILICONE RANCH
Rob and Morey were present representing Silicone Ranch.

County Attorney Burnett spoke regarding vested property rights in the state of Tennessee. He noted that Cumberland County hasn't adopted anything relating to the *Vested Property Rights Act of 2014* and is a "soft landing" for projects such as this. Burnett mentioned that the County Commission would need a 2/3 vote in favor of enacting an energy powers resolution in order to pass one.

Entering into a voluntary siting agreement along with Silicone Ranch and its developer allows Cumberland County a 10-year moratorium on the project whereas without an agreement, the moratorium is three (3) years. The agreement includes stipulations regarding buffers, vegetation, road maintenance, inspections, and decommissioning, as well as a one-time community benefit fee to Cumberland County in the amount of $230,000.

Rob mentioned that the project must be complete and delivered by the summer of 2028. It will be 300,000 solar panels on just over 1,656 acres of land. They also plan to lease the land for farmers who need space for sheep to graze. As of now, the energy produced by the panels will not be utilized in Cumberland County. Rob mentioned that Silicone's ownership of the land generates over $100,000 of property tax revenue every year. When asked about the life of the panels, Rob stated that a life of about 40 years is expected out of a project this size.

Joe made a motion to approve the energy siting agreement presented at this committee meeting between Silicone Ranch Corporation, SL Copeland, LLC (developer), and Cumberland County. Deb seconded the motion, none were opposed, and the motion carried.

Regarding the 2/3 vote needed on an energy powers resolution, Mayor Foster asked the County Attorney, Philip Burnett, to research our options. To solidify, Joe made a motion to have Philip diligently look into the county's options when it comes to regulating these types of developments. Deb seconded the motion, none were opposed, and the motion carried.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS, IF ANY
None.

ADJOURNMENT
With no further business, a motion was made to adjourn by Joe. The motion was seconded by Deb, none were opposed, and the motion to adjourn carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:17 pm in the small courtroom on the 3rd floor of the courthouse.

Approval:

David H. Gibson

David Gibson 06/04/2024 **Date**