

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

7:00 p.m., Thursday, January 14, 2021

Via Zoom

I. Call to Order

a. **Roll Call and Determination of a Quorum**

Chair Murray called the meeting to order at 7 pm. Casserly did a roll call for attendance. A quorum was present.

Members Present: E. Alan, K. Bellor, G. Blatchley, K. Bisonette, D. Chambers, P. Darling, D. Duff, D. Fay, M. Gazin, A. Gilbert, M. B. Murray, K. O’Neil, C. Shatraw, and J. Cameron.

Members Absent: J. Rose.

Staff Present: J. Pfothenauer, D. Casserly, and M. Larson.

Others Present: Racheal Hunter, Gouverneur Tribune; Casey Kirkpatrick, National Grid; Approximately 20 people form the general public.

b. **Adoption of the Agenda**

i. Pfothenauer added projects to **IV. Project Reviews**.

ii. Pfothenauer introduced Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board Members, Larry Denesha (BOL) and Bob Andrews (Chair).

iii. Pfothenauer introduced the new CPB member, George Blatchley.

The agenda was unanimously adopted (Gilbert/O’Neil).

c. **Approval of the December 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

The minutes were unanimously approved (Shatraw/Duff).

II. Public Forum

None

III. Presentation - Casey Kirkpatrick, Director, Distributed Generation Ombudsperson, National Grid.

Kirkpatrick presentation was titled: Distributed Generation Interconnections.

Discussion:

- Hugo Attemann asked how National Grid handles residential customers and developers.
 - Kirkpatrick responded that their goal is to meet the expectations of all of their customers.
- Gazin asked about renewable energy and how National Grid can reduce electric costs for County users.
 - Kirkpatrick responded that some of the community solar projects will provide 5-10% off utility bills. NYSERDA and National Grid are working on a solar access initiative to provide additional savings to low-moderate income customers.
- Gilbert asked about issues with balance of the grid from solar.
 - Kirkpatrick responded that National Grid is concerned with generation to load schedule. Curtailment (DG generators scale back output) is a possibility, as well as battery storage (generator and load balance).

NYSIO (NY Independent System Operator, large energy projects) uses curtailment.

- Duff asked, for projects 5 MW or less, how do we sort out viable vs. speculative.
 - Kirkpatrick responded that National Grid is dealing with this and agrees that there is speculation.
- Duff asked, how can the CPB help with evaluating the viability of a project.
 - Kirkpatrick replied with resources: the NYS Dept of Public Service's SIR (Standardized Interconnection Requirements) Inventory and National Grid's Hosting Capacity Maps.
- Fay asked about the NYS Governor's promotion of jobs from solar and how this may impact our area.
 - Kirkpatrick replied that the Governor was speaking towards large NYSIO type projects, not his scale of 5 MW or less.
- Alan asked about how many applicants commit to substation upgrade(s).
 - Kirkpatrick responded that there are no applicants at the moment and substation upgrades are several million dollars. Cost sharing options exist for applicants.
 - Duff asked how would prorated cost sharing work.
 - Kirkpatrick replied that 2-3 applicants can share 75% of projected upgrade costs.
- Larson asked about overall and reserved capacity in the County and hydroelectric infrastructure.
 - Kirkpatrick replied that hydro is treated the same as other generators. For reserved capacity, National Grid is planning to leave capacity for small residential solar type projects. When National Grid works on capacity they are conservative with their estimates.
- Larson asked if cost sharing with hydro projects could be cost prohibitive.
 - Kirkpatrick responded that established projects do not participate in substation upgrades only new projects are exploring cost sharing options.
- O'Neil asked about the near future of battery storage and what is National Grid's position.
 - Kirkpatrick replied that National Grid could expect: battery installation next to overloaded substations for relief and to delay costly substation upgrade(s) and flexible developer storage projects.
- Casserly asked if developers will couple solar arrays with battery storage to reduce infrastructure costs.
 - Kirkpatrick responded that this is certainly possible, however they have not seen any applications for this type of project.
- Pfothhauer asked about environmental concerns with battery storage.
 - Kirkpatrick referenced a battery accident in Arizona. A recent National Grid battery project was denied from one community due to their inability to respond to an emergency. National Grid is exploring emergency training options for battery storage projects.
- A general question about upgrading infrastructure.
 - Kirkpatrick responded with directions to check asset upgrades on hosting capacity maps via the capital plan.
- A general question about noise from solar infrastructure on the ground.
 - Kirkpatrick replied that he didn't know of any noise concerns.
- Kirkpatrick ended with his availability to the public for National Grid questions pertaining to interconnection and power generation projects below 5 MW.

IV. Project Reviews

- a. Referrals Returned Pursuant to MOU - RFLA (Return for Local Action)
Pfothenhauer presented the list of Projects
 - Massena (V): Use Variance
 - Macomb (T): Subdivision

V. Reports

- a. **Executive Committee**
 - i. Murray summarized.
- b. **Board of Legislators (BOL)**
 - i. Fay talked about the importance of signing up for the vaccine.
- c. **Highway Department**
 - i. Chambers said the Brown's Bridge project will begin again in summer, snow plow is going well, and the Dept. is struggling with COVID.
- d. **State of the County Roundtable**
 - i. O'Neil talked about drought in the County and that more snow is needed.
- e. **Staff Report**
 - i. Pfothenhauer talked about COVID issues with County operations and applauded the mapping efforts by Larson and Casserly. Also, Larson's continued efforts with everything transit were acknowledged. Some Staff are working with Public Health at the call center. The hazard mitigation plan with the Highway Dept. and Emergency Services is progressing.
 - ii. Denesha asked about the County's broadband survey.
 1. Pfothenhauer talked about the project cost sharing with DANC and how this project will assess broadband access in the County.
 - a. Shatraw asked about survey distribution.
 - i. Pfothenhauer said there are multiple methods and he will have more info after the January 19 meeting.

VI. Other Items

- a. **Correspondence**
 - i. Oswegatchie (T) 5MW solar project on the Kelly Farm will be reviewed at the next meeting
- b. **Announcements**
 - i. None
- c. **Next meeting dates:**
 - i. Executive Committee: Thursday, January 28th at 4:15 pm
 - ii. Planning Board: Thursday, February 11th at 7:00 pm

VII. Adjourn

- a. The meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm (Bisonette/O'Neil).

Respectfully Submitted,



Eric Alan, Secretary

Minutes prepared by Dakota Casserly

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