

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

7:00 p.m., Thursday, February 11, 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, K. Bisonette, G. Blatchley, J. Cameron, D. Chambers, P. Darling, D. Duff, D. Fay, M. Gazin, A. Gilbert, B. Murray, K. O’Neil, J. Rose, and C. Shatraw.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: J. Pfothauer and D. Casserly.

Others Present: None.

CPB member George Blatchley was provided a few minutes to introduce himself.

b. **Adoption of the Agenda**

i. Pfothauer added projects to **III. Project Reviews**.

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

c. **Approval of the January 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

The minutes were unanimously approved (Shatraw/O’Neil).

II. Public Forum: None

III. Project Reviews

a. Referrals Returned Pursuant to MOU - RFLA (Return for Local Action)

Pfothauer presented the list of projects.

- i. Macomb (T) - 4 lot subdivision.
- ii. Massena (V) - Site plan.
- iii. Massena (V) - Site plan.
- iv. Massena (V) - Area variance and site plan.
- v. Potsdam (V) - Sign permit and site plan.
- vi. Stockholm (T) - 8 lot subdivision
- vii. Stockholm (T) - Special use permit

b. Ogdensburg (C) – Site plan for a Taco Bell

- i. Pfothauer presented preliminary plans.
- ii. Fay asked about common ownership of the parcel.
 1. Pfothauer replied, no, parcel will be subdivided.
- iii. Shatraw shared her concerns with traffic flow if the site is located in the Wal-Mart parking lot.

- iv. O’Neil and Gilbert supported moving the site to the parking lot, while addressing traffic flow and access to Ford St Extension.
- v. Chambers said the site could be located closer to the center of the parking lot and not add more impervious surface. Also, Wal-Mart may be hesitant on this because of view blockage.
- vi. Gazin asked about the Canton Burger King precedent.
- vii. Murray expressed that the proposed site is a wetland and supports parking lot location.
- viii. Bisonette asked about access from neighboring Jreck Subs store access.

c. Full Reviews:

- i. Oswegatchie (T): 5 MW solar array, special permit, 1454 County Route 15
Casserly presented the project review and reviewed the staff recommendations.
 - Gazin talked about the importance of cybersecurity threats, with attention to the [SolarWinds Corp.](#) hack.
 - Alan talked about his displeasure with siting on prime farmland and that these developers should look to other marginal lands.
 - O’Neil agreed with Alan. However, she is less concerned because it is not tile drained.
 - O’Neil is concerned with wetland obstruction from fence construction (clogging).
 - Murray asked about setbacks for federal wetlands.
 - Chambers said he would like to see the screening redesigned, at the intersection of CR 15 and River Rd., to angled, rather than to a point.
 - Fay is concerned with the increase in power projects taking prime farmland, then sending power downstate, and County residents not benefitting. He supports non-prime farmland siting. He has changed his thinking towards solar development.
 - O’Neil agreed.
 - Fay talked about his concern with larger energy projects bypassing local land use regulations.
 - O’Neil referenced a solar project outside of the County that was denied because of prime farmland siting.
 - O’Neil asked Fay if he is ok with project siting on prime (if drained) farmland. Fay replied, no.
 - Murray asked about how these projects can benefit County residents.
 - Gazin again asked about how these projects could provide low cost power to municipalities and County residents.
 - O’Neil talked about other municipal power (Massena) models
 - Bisonette asked about tile draining.
 - Gilbert responded that tiling is challenging and there is not enough elevation drop on the site.
 - Duff talked about this type of solar project and speculation with regards to interconnection status.
 - Duff would like legislative backing to avoid prime farmland siting.
 - Murray would like to add a 1 year expiration to CPB approvals. Consensus was reached for all future solar projects.

- O’Neil talked about how National Grid is potentially using these projects as a way to upgrade their infrastructure.
- The Board unanimously approves with conditions (Shatraw/Rose).
- Further discussion after approval:
 - Bellor asked about the CPB solar project review inventory. Staff will share with the Board.
 - Duff talked about solar projects tying up parcels. Also, if CPB approval expires, projects need to be reviewed again.
 - Gazin would like to see some sort of deposit in relation to these projects due to speculation.
 - Duff asked about our fees in comparison to other county planning boards and other fee structures.
 - Bisonette asked about what other county planning boards are doing with regards to reviewing solar projects.

IV. Reports

- a. **Executive Committee**
 - i. Murray summarized.
- b. **Board of Legislators**
 - i. Fay talked about the Ogdensburg sales tax discussion. He talked about his support for opening high school sports, where COVID is not an issue. Also, he talked about the work that is being done to return foster kids back to their families, and the use of a mobile clinic to help individuals who need treatment for addiction.
- c. **Highway Department**
 - i. Chambers talked about how they are designing and preparing for the upcoming construction season.
- d. **State of the County Roundtable**
 - i. None
- e. **Staff Report**
 - i. Pfothauer talked about Office operation under COVID and Hammond land use revision project.

V. Other Items

- a. **Next meeting dates:**
 - i. Executive Committee: Thursday, February 25th at 4:15 pm
 - ii. Planning Board: Thursday, March 11th at 7:00 pm

VI. Adjourn

- a. The meeting adjourned at 9pm (Fay/Duff).

Respectfully Submitted,



Eric Alan, Secretary

Minutes prepared by Dakota Casserly