

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

7:00 p.m., Thursday, April 8, 2021

Via Zoom

I. Call to Order

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

Chair Murray called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. Casserly did a roll call for attendance. A quorum was present.

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

Members Absent: J. Cameron.

Staff Present: J. Pfothauer and D. Casserly.

Others Present: Ryan McCune, Nexamp; James Palumbo, Nexamp; Bob Beckstead, Watertown Daily Times.

b. **Adoption of the Agenda:**

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

The agenda was unanimously adopted (Shatraw/Duff).

c. **Approval of the March 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes:**

The agenda was unanimously approved (Rose/Gilbert).

II. **Public Forum:** None.

III. **Project Reviews**

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

Pfothauer presented the list of nine projects.

- i. Lawrence (T): Subdivision
- ii. Louisville (T): Special Use Permit
- iii. Massena (T): Subdivision
- iv. Massena (V): Site Plan Approval (x3)
- v. Potsdam (T): Area Variance (x2)
- vi. Potsdam (V): Site Plan Approval and Sign Permit

b. Full Reviews:

- i. Oswegatchie (T): Site Plan and Special Use Permit for a Solar Array at 6866 State Highway 37.

Casserly presented the project review and reviewed the staff recommendations.

- Chambers asked if there is a change in the taxable status of the parcel.

- McCune replied no because the parcel is already tax exempt. The Town did not opt out of RPTL 487, therefore a PILOT with the SLC IDA is in the works.
 - Bisonette explained that the tax exemption for the parcel is also applied to the area leased for the solar array.
 - Fay asked whether or not the applicant has a confirmed a price for the sale of electricity.
 - McCune replied, yes and no, the price is determined by NYPSB and NYSIR. The value stack has not been locked in, they have to wait until interconnection costs are paid. 80-85% of the value stack is based on wholesale energy prices and they are variable.
 - Fay asked if solar projects will impact hydro from Massena (NYPA's Moses/Saunders power dam).
 - i. McCune replied that hydro is more so transmission based. Solar will operate on the local National Grid Distributed Generation Grid.
 - Alan asked about the current use.
 - McCune said that the land is fallow and bush hogged for recreation.
 - Casserly asked about prime farmland language as a condition.
 - Alan supports this inclusion.
 - O'Neil expressed that she is not so concerned because it's not tile drained and the site is primarily prime if drained farmland. Gilbert agreed.
 - Bisonette added a tax example if a farmer were to farm the land and there would not be much of a financial incentive.
 - Murray asked about timeframe condition for this approval and should it be 1 year.
 - Alan shared the Town's site plan approval expiration language and the Board agreed that it should be added as a condition.
 - Rose asked about other agriculture uses for this type of project.
 - McCune replied that there are and gave an example in Newfield, NY of an active solar grazing operation. [American Solar Grazing Association](#)
 - McCune added that [Agrivoltaics](#) are challenging because the array may need more height and steel prices can be a limiting factor.
 - The Board voted unanimously to approve the project with conditions (O'Neil/Gilbert).
- ii. Massena (T): Site Plan, Greenhouse Development in the General Industrial Zone
Casserly presented the project.
- Alan said that from the [applicant's web site](#) crops will be hydroponically grown.

- O’Neil and Gilbert said in this type of grow system there is no waste water.
 - Rose asked about liquid fertilizer on site.
 - Bisonette asked if there is a fence around storage pond.
 - Alan responded no, but around the site.
 - Duff asked about proximity to Grasse River and potential waste water contamination.
 - Alan and O’Neil agree that a waste water plan be submitted to address this.
 - Chambers asked about dark sky compliant lighting and whether this project can satisfy the requirements
 - Gilbert said that screens are usually used to block light at night and maintenance is import for screens to work effectively, especially at night.
 - Rose asked about impact to airport.
 - A majority of the Board voted to approve the project with conditions (Chambers/O’Neil). Abstentions: Bellor. Opposed: None.
- iii. Rossie (T): Land Use Regulation Revisions
Pfortenhauer presented the project.
- The Board voted unanimously to approve the project with conditions (Alan/Duff).
- iv. Norfolk (T): Use Variance for a Mobile Home
Pfortenhauer presented the project.
- The Board voted unanimously to deny the project (Bisonette/Shatraw).
- v. Massena (T): Site Plan for Barn Based Event Venue and Cut Flower Farm
Pfortenhauer presented the project and recommended return for local action
- A majority of the Board voted to approve a return for local action (O’Neil/Alan). Abstentions: Bellor. Opposed: None.

IV. Reports

- a. **Executive Committee:**
 - i. Murray said the Committee met, discussed projects, and set the agenda.
- b. **Board of Legislators:**
 - i. Fay talked about the BOL recognizing people who helped respond to a recent tragic fire in Pierrepont.
 - ii. Fay said a public hearing was held on the [County’s multi-use recreation trails](#) and no action was taken. The BOL took input and the public felt that fees were justified if the funds were to be used on the trail.

- iii. Fay said that the County Attorney has taken on legal services for social services.
- c. **Highway Department:**
 - i. Chambers talked about bridge projects that are out to bid.
 - ii. Chambers said that funding from CHIPS is projected at 1.6m in aid for highway related projects.
 - iii. Chambers said that three highway outpost projects are progressing.
 - iv. Darling asked about Biden infrastructure project and how it will impact SLC
 - Chambers responded that funding from the Feds goes through the NYS DOT and then to the local level.
 - v. Blatchley asked about CHIPS funding, will Towns receive an increase as well.
 - Chambers responded yes, increases are expected (~20% increase).
- d. **State of the County Roundtable:** None
- e. **Staff Report:**
 - i. Pfothenauer said that a \$600k CDBG grant was submitted today and this will assist low-income first time homebuyers in the County.

V. Other Items

- a. **Correspondence:** None
- b. **Financial Disclosure Statements:**
 - i. Pfothenauer gave a reminder to submit statements. Ethics training associated with the disclosure statements will be presented at the next County Planning Board meeting.
- c. **Next meeting dates:**
 - i. Executive Committee: Thursday, April 29th at 4:15 pm
 - ii. Planning Board: Thursday, May 13th at 7:00 pm

VI. Adjourn

- a. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm (Shatraw/Duff).