

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

April 9, 2020
via Zoom <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/551027803>
Meeting ID: 551 027 803

I. Call to Order

- a. Roll Call and Determination of Quorum.** Chair B. Murray called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Larson did a roll call for attendance. A quorum was present.

Members Present: E. Alan, K. Bellow, J. Cameron, D. Chambers, D. Duff, D. Fay, M. Gazin, A. Gilbert, M. McCluskey, B. Murray, K. O’Neil, J. Rose and C. Shatraw.
Members Absent: K. Bisonette, **Staff Present:** D. Casserly, M. Larson and J. Pfothenhauer.
Others Present: Rachel Hunter, Gouverneur Tribune Press; Bob Washo, Town of Canton board member.

Pfothenhauer introduced newly hired Planner II Dakota Casserly to the Board.

- b. Adoption of the Agenda.** Pfothenhauer said two projects would be presented under MOU. The modified agenda was adopted unanimously (Rose/Fay).
- c. Approval of the Meeting Minutes.** Members of the Board confirmed for Fay that he was correctly listed as absent in the March meeting minutes. The March 12, 2020 minutes were unanimously approved (Gilbert/McCluskey).

II. Public Forum

None.

III. Project Reviews

- a. Projects Returned for Local Action.**

- i. Macomb (T): Two-lot subdivision at 7775 State Highway 58. Pfothenhauer explained the proposed one-acre subdivision included an existing structure. Pfothenhauer said the project was originally discussed at the last Executive Committee meeting, and was asked to examine if the proposed subdivision would be affected by any environmental constraints, such as wetlands or hydric soils that would impact a septic system. Pfothenhauer said there were none, and recommended the project be returned for local action. There were no questions from the Board, who concurred with staff recommendation.

- ii. Hermon (T): Local Law for Flood Damage Prevention. Pfothenhauer said he was informed by the Town Clerk that the Town was instructed by the DEC to draft and adopt this local law following the Village's dissolution four years ago, which had a similar law adopted in 1998. Chambers wondered if the DEC was concerned about flooding impacts to the community's sewage treatment plant. Pfothenhauer said Hermon's flood maps were rescinded by FEMA which indicates a flood risk is not present in the former Village limits. Pfothenhauer said the local law is not referable as it looks to regulate uses in a flood zone that does not exist. Alan asked Pfothenhauer if he would notify the Town about this discovery. Pfothenhauer said yes.

b. Full Reviews.

- i. Potsdam (T): Comprehensive Zoning Revisions. Larson presented the staff report which outlined which revisions were exempt from County Planning Board review; as well as revisions that are subject to non-binding recommendations and conditions of approval. O'Neil asked if the Notice of Action would delineate which comments are non-binding, and which are conditions. Larson replied the project staff report will be appended to the Notice. The Board unanimously voted to approve the Town of Potsdam's zoning revisions with non-binding recommendations and conditions of approval (O'Neil/Shatraw).
- ii. Norfolk (T): Adoption of Local Law to Regulate Solar Energy Systems. Larson presented an overview of the local law, and locations on the Town's zoning map where large scale solar arrays would be allowed. Larson reviewed the recommended conditions of approval in the staff report. Gilbert asked how the Town would determine when a solar system is operating at 10% capacity or less. Larson replied the applicant is required to submit an annual report to the Town regarding the system's performance. O'Neil asked about definitions for non-performance and decommissioning. Larson said in instances when a system has been abandoned, the Town can decommission a site with decommissioning funds that are set aside by the applicant. Bellor asked if timeframes are specified in the law where an applicant can remedy non-performance. Larson replied yes. The Board unanimously approved the Town of Norfolk's Local Law to Regulate Solar Energy Systems with conditions (Gilbert/Alan).

IV. Reports

- a. **Executive Committee.** Murray said the Executive Committee met on the 26th via Zoom to set tonight's meeting agenda, and thanked Alan for scheduling and coordinating the online meeting with the use of his account. Murray said the Committee discussed the National Fire Protection Agency's online training for emergency response to Battery Energy Storage Systems, and the Town of Hermon's proposed flood regulations. Pfothenhauer said McCluskey and Cameron were recently reappointed to the Board, and that a candidate is currently being considered by the Board of Legislators to fill Wade Davis' former seat.

- b. Board of Legislators.** Fay said the county currently has 82 confirmed cases of COVID19, and the County will seek to appoint a new Social Services Commissioner, a roll that will be very important in light of the economic slowdown caused by the virus and the impact it will have on the number of children who will need foster care.
- c. Highway Department.** Chambers said the Highway Department is operating with a skeleton crew with each shift, and the Department is currently responding to emergencies only, and said it was not easy to operate under these conditions.
- d. County Roundtable.** Larson reviewed highlights from the National Fire Prevention Association's online training session on emergency responses to battery energy storage systems. Alan talked about the preparation of Safety Data Sheets, types of photovoltaic systems, and the different types of shut down procedures in the event of system failure. Gilbert said he thought the training session's scenario room was a helpful exercise. Rose recommended any model law include annual training and walk through by the local fire department. Alan said the Parishville Volunteer Fire Department annually tours Brookfield Power's hydro facilities. Murray said that area fire chiefs typically participate in a walk-through of emergency response procedures for a facility. As for next steps, the Board agreed to hold a work session before or during the next Executive Committee meeting to revise NYSERDA's model law to regulate Battery Energy Storage Systems. Pfothenhauer asked when the work session should begin. Murray said unless the next meeting agenda is full, the work session could occur during the Executive Committee meeting which begins at 4:15 pm.
- e. Staff Report.** Pfothenhauer said not all staff are working in the Office, and some are staffing the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which includes distributing PPE, preparing invoices and completing reports. Pfothenhauer said Larson has been involved with the preparation of the daily town case map for Public Health, and Casserly prepares a daily regional map depicting total cases per county. Pfothenhauer said social distancing has challenged the Office with promotion efforts encouraging residents to participate in the 2020 Census. Pfothenhauer said the County's Complete County committee will be meeting online and by phone this coming Friday to review local response rates. Rose offered to assist with promoting Census participation through social media.

V. Other Items

- a. Correspondence.** Larson and Pfothenhauer reviewed a memo from the County's Ag and Farmland Protection Board and a draft resolution for the County Board of Legislators' consideration about preserving prime soils when siting large scale solar arrays on farmland. Gilbert said the State recently adopted its budget which included passage of Article 23 which assigns NYSERDA the responsibility to review renewable energy systems 10 MW and greater, as well as authority to negotiate PILOTs on behalf of local taxing jurisdictions.
- f. Announcements.** Pfothenhauer announced Denise Henophy would be officially retiring from the Planning Office on April 30th. Pfothenhauer said she was a joy to work with; that she was very capable and will be dearly missed. Pfothenhauer said Lisa Bartalo's

appointment to the Office will become permanent. Alan suggested the Planning Board prepare a letter thanking Henophy for her years of service. Fay thanked Planning staff for keeping the department going.

- b. **Next Meeting Dates.** The Executive Committee will meet online on Thursday, April 30th at 4:15 pm. The next County Planning Board will be online on May 14th at 7:00 pm.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm (O'Neil/Shatraw).

Respectfully Submitted,



Eric Alan, Secretary

Minutes prepared by M. Larson

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