

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

7:00 p.m., Thursday, November 12, 2020

Via Zoom

I. Call to Order

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

Chair B. 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, D. Chambers, P. Darling, D. Duff, D. Fay, M. Gazin, A. Gilbert, M. B. Murray, K. O’Neil, J. Rose and C. Shatraw, J. Cameron.

Members Absent: K. Bisonette.

Staff Present: J. Pfothauer and D. Casserly.

Others Present: Vaughn Golden, Watertown Daily Times; Town of Canton residents: Jim and Pam Rose, Guy Berard; Ed Ryder.

b) **Adoption of the Agenda**

Solar project reviews were reordered.

The agenda was unanimously adopted (Rose/Gilbert).

c) **Approval of the October 8, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Signature change from Alan to O’Neil.

The October 8, 2020 minutes were unanimously approved (O’Neil/Duff).

II. Public Forum

Murray addressed members of the public on the meeting process and when they can join the discussion.

III. The Solar Development Power Queuing and Interconnection Process

- Casserly presented on this topic.
- 50 minutes of CPB training

- Alan asked about projects that are outside of the NYS DPS SIR (Standardized Interconnection Requirements) inventory.
 - Casserly responded that the SIR inventory includes all solar projects from small residential to 5 MW.
- Gilbert asked about sub-transmission and can developers work together on upgrades.
- Duff would like to see a map with National Grid’s Distributed Generation (DG) infrastructure overlaid upon SLC prime farmland data.
- Gazin asked about the number of projects in the queue and whether or not there is a significant amount.

IV. Project Reviews

- a. Referrals Returned Pursuant to MOU - RFLA (Return for Local Actions)
Pfothauer presented the lists of projects.

- Macomb (T): Ten-lot Subdivision on Black Lake Road
 - Murray asked Duff about his thoughts on this project.
 - Duff and Macomb planning board are not pleased with current design.
 - RFLA and applicant must satisfy all Town subdivision regulations.
 - A majority of the Board voted to approve the RFLA (Alan/O'Neil).
- Abstention: Duff.

b. Full Reviews:

- a) Canton (T): Solar Array Special Use Permit, 161 Meade Road
 Pfothenhauer presented the project review and reviewed staff recommendations.
- Alan asked about deeded easement.
 - Pfothenhauer replied that he did not know easement details.
 - Alan asked about current access road width, it is about 12', the plan calls for 16', will this impact easement.
 - Jim Rose confirmed 12' width and Pam added that access road is currently grass after their house
 - Gilbert asked if 12' width for the access road would work instead of 16'.
 - Gilbert asked about the decommissioning plan and removing salvage value language.
 - Alan asked if the parcel is currently in agriculture use.
 - Rose replied, yes, cropped every year, corn or soybeans.
 - Alan disagreed (with emphasis) with siting on prime farmland and hopes the board will agree with him.
 - O'Neil agreed and to add language for applicant to demonstrate prime farmland avoidance.
 - Gazin asked about the Canton code, transmission, sub-transmission, distribution language and resulting confusion. He seeks more clarity on these topics.
 - Alan said that project should connect with the same level power line.
 - Pfothenhauer suggested more clarity with regards to utility infrastructure use and connection in the Canton Solar Law.
 - Duff agreed with Gazin and thinks that more clarity is good for a project like this since it would be around for 30-40 years
 - Rose submitted a document with additional site info. They said that the tree clearing is about 10 acres. They are concerned with lines and poles, since they are not identified in site plan. They have invested in electrical infrastructure near the site and are concerned with equitable share of those costs. They also feel enclosed by the proposed project.
 - Rose asked about hazardous waste in panels.
 - Pfothenhauer replied that panels are glass, sand, metal, however there may be some contamination from other materials in panels.
 - Gilbert replied that panels do have rare-earth elements in them (cadmium, copper) and would be considered contaminants.
 - Chambers asked about shielded view sheds with poles and lines.
 - Pfothenhauer replied that a condition be added.
 - O'Neil added that above ground infrastructure be moved to site and out of view
 - Chambers asked about deeded ROW and there are usually dimensions.
 - Rose replied that he doesn't remember a size and Pam thinks that that easement is vague in definition.
 - Rose asked about type of screening.

- Pfothenhauer replied that the type should provide immediate screening.
- Pam asked about negative power impacts to their supply and use from array.
- Pam asked about notification about this project which they have had none.
 - Pfothenhauer replied that it differs, before a local review decision is made, there will be a public meeting.
- Pam asked about how the current owner bought with agriculture interests and use is changing, is there any concern with this situation.
- Murray said he doesn't like the site plan access road.
- Alan said he doesn't like the array impact on farmland, wetland, and access road, and thinks the board should flat out deny.
- Bellor and O'Neil agreed and asked the Roses' about contact from developer and they confirmed that there has been none.
- Gazin asked if the abandoned road (which is part of the existing access road) is private property and what are the costs associated with electric infrastructure for the project.
- Ryder said that a utility easement is not mentioned and has concerns with wetland impact(s).
- Berard said that there seems to be a lot of hurdles for developer and project and that it should be dropped. He is concerned with lack of screening, wetland impact, and lack of contact from developer.
- Rose asked about Canton Town Planning Board having developer present on the project and no contact to them about it.
- Gilbert said that a focus on deeded ROW and the details of it are needed for assurance.
- Cameron asked about abandoned road regulations.
 - Chambers said there are different issues with abandonment, qualified abandonment is usually how it works. Time period of abandonment can impact because laws have changed.
- O'Neil and Rose said to deny project because of access road, easement, farmland, and wetlands.
- Ryder asked that conditions reference specifics from the Roses' documentation.
- Rose asked if they could receive a copy of CPB notice of action and next steps in the process at the town level.
 - Pfothenhauer replied about what is sent to the Town and that the Town Planning Board can overrule CPB decision.
- A majority of the Board voted to deny the project (Alan/Shatraw). Opposed: Chambers. Abstentions: None.

b) Oswegatchie (T): Solar Array Site Plan, 5693 CR 6

Casserly presented the project review and reviewed staff recommendations.

- O'Neil and Alan said they like this project because it mostly avoids prime farmland and instead uses marginal farmland.
- The Board unanimously approves with conditions (Gilbert/Alan).

c) Oswegatchie (T): Solar Array Site Plan, 5704 CR 6

Casserly presented the project review and reviewed staff recommendations.

- O’Neil and Alan said they like this project because it mostly avoids prime farmland and instead uses marginal farmland.
 - The Board unanimously approves with conditions (Duff/O’Neil).
- d) Oswegatchie (T): Solar Array Site Plan, 400 Taylor Road
Casserly presented the project review and reviewed staff recommendations.
- O’Neil asked how this project can avoid prime farmland.
 - Duff said that he would like a 3rd party review of the decommissioning costs.
 - Rose asked about clarifying the size of the array.
 - Murray mentioned that the site had previously been used for processed solids application.
- A majority of the Board voted to approve the project (O’Neil/Duff).
Opposed: Alan. Abstentions: None.
- e) Canton (V): Convenience Store with gas pumps Site Plan, 5994 US 11
Pfortenhauer presented the project review and reviewed staff recommendations.
- Duff asked about downcast lighting.
 - Pfortenhauer replied that it is noted in the application.
 - Alan said that straight parking at Sunoco in Canton is not ideal, and a more ‘angled’ design would help.
 - O’Neil noted a concern for pedestrians on site with submitted parking configuration, she recommended moving further from the road and angled.
 - Chambers asked about elevation plan and drainage.
 - Pfortenhauer highlighted with what’s in the plan to move water on the site and to contain.
 - Chambers liked that they are keeping all drainage on site.
- The Board unanimously approves with conditions (Chambers/O’Neil).

V.

Reports

- a. **Executive Committee**
- O’Neil said discussion focused on the agenda and projects to be reviewed.
 - Murray reminded Staff to send training hours to-date to Bellor.
- b. **Board of Legislators (BOL)**
- Fay shared that the BOL is continuing to negotiate with Ogdensburg and other municipalities about sales tax allocation.
- c. **Highway Department**
- Chambers said that the Dept. is preparing for winter.
- d. **State of the County Roundtable**
- None
- e. **Staff Report**
- Pfortenhauer talked about staff reorganization due to state of emergency and expressed to the Board that contact by email and/or phone is the best option.

VI.

Other Items

- a. **Correspondence**
- Pfortenhauer talked about the North Side Energy solar project and its progress.
 - Pfortenhauer said that Staff is working on the Work Program for 2021.

- Murray suggested that the Board review the Work Program and have comments at next meeting.
- b. **Announcements:** None
- c. **Next meeting Dates**
 - Executive Committee: Tuesday, November 24th at 4:15 pm
 - Planning Board: Thursday, December 10th at 7:00 pm

VII. Adjourn

- The meeting adjourned at 10:33 pm (Duff/O'Neil).

Respectfully Submitted,



Eric Alan, Secretary

Minutes prepared by Dakota Casserly

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