



St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council
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MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday February 15, 2023 at 6:00 PM
2nd-Floor Conference Room, Public Safety Complex and Zoom
49½ Court Street, Canton, NY

1. **Call to Order.** Vice-Chair Sue Rau opened the meeting at 6:03 pm. All present introduced themselves.

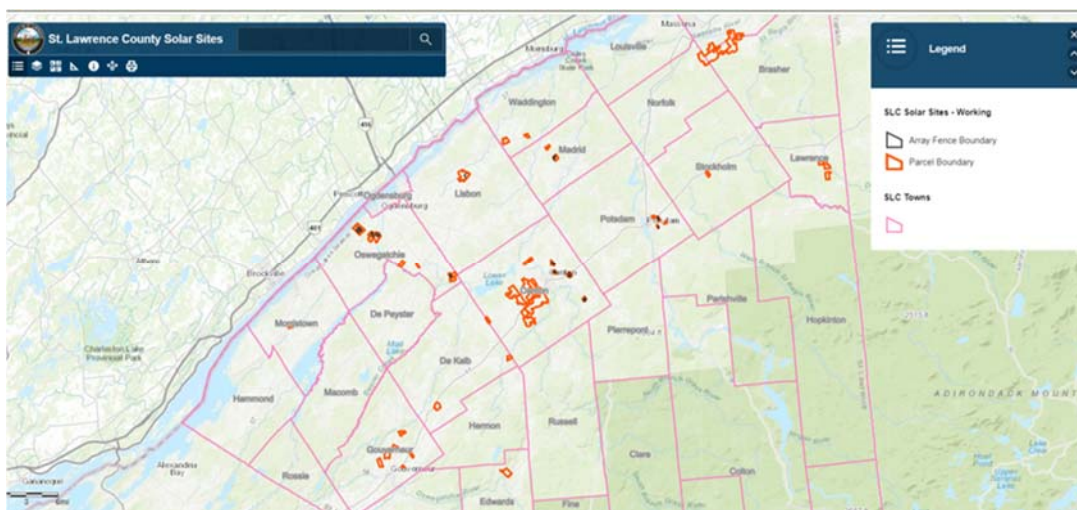
2. **Land Acknowledgement.**

Sue Rau read a Land Acknowledgement, provided by Tony David, Director of the SRMT Environment Division, and used with his permission:

“As we meet today, let us first give thanks and acknowledge that the land upon which we are gathered is part of traditional indigenous territories, including the Rotinoshionni (Low-dee-no-SHOO-nee), the People of the Longhouse, also known as the Iroquois Confederacy; and the Kanienkehaka (Ga-nyun-geh-HA-gah), the People of the Land of Flint, also known as the Mohawk Nation.”

3. **Comments from the Public / Speaker.** The speaker at the February meeting was Jason Pfothenauer, SLCPO Director. Jason spoke about the status of solar energy in the County.

Jason shared a table put together by the County Planning Office ([see attached](#)); it lists 39 solar projects that have been reviewed by the County’s Planning Board between March 2014 and November 2022.



EMC: Everybody Must Care!

Most of these projects have been small: 13 projects were smaller than 5 MW; 25 projects were smaller than 10 MW; only four projects are 10 MW or larger. The largest project reviewed by the CPB has been a 20 MW project to be located in Clifton (at the site of the Benson mine tailings pile); it is listed at 20 MW.

[It must be noted that several other, much larger projects do not appear on this list. The North Side Energy project, proposed for the Towns of Massena, Brasher, and Norfolk, would have 180 MW capacity, sited on 961 acres. This project was rejected by NYS due to environmental concerns. The Rich Road project, proposed for the Town of Canton, is projected to be 240 MW, situated on 1,700 acres. It is just now beginning to undergo review by the State.]

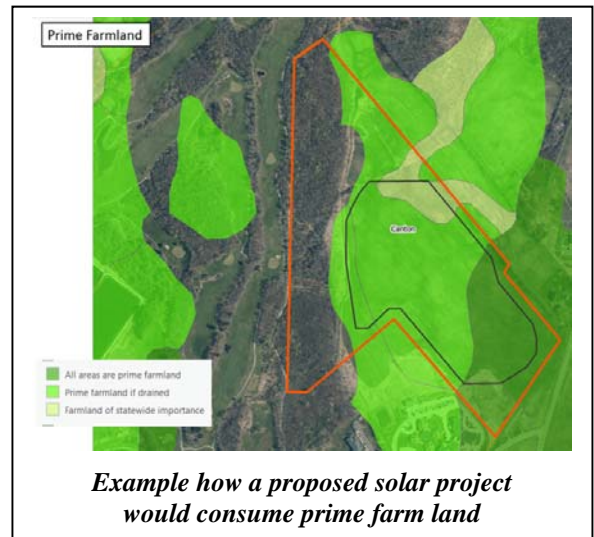
Jason reported that projects larger than 20 MW must go through State level review (Executive Law 94C), conducted by the NYS Office of Renewable Energy Siting (see <https://ores.ny.gov/>). Smaller projects (< 20MW) are reviewed by local communities. The local land use regulations in effect in various towns may not be appropriate for regulating commercial solar projects; many local regulations sought to regulate small-scale projects where a homeowner might put solar panels on the roof of their house/garage/barn, or a free-standing array in the side or rear yard.

Pfotenhauer noted that the state’s Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA; see <https://climate.ny.gov/>), which was passed in 2019, includes mandates to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in NYS by 40% from 1990 levels by 2030, and 85% by 2050. Solar developers have responded to that mandate; they are attracted to St. Lawrence County due to (relatively) inexpensive land, and proximity to electrical grid connections.

Leases for solar development are negotiated between developers and land owners; they are “willing buyer – willing seller” agreements. Many local communities are reluctant (and may not be able) to forbid these leases.

In addition, solar projects consume some of the most valuable farm land in the County. Developers want flat, well-drained land. This land will be out of farm production for decades, thereby reducing the economic impact of agriculture on local economies.

Looking ahead, Jason reported that State mandates and incentives will continue; development will follow. He reported that it may be possible for local communities to more tightly regulate smaller solar projects, or for the State to take a harder stance on projects proposed for prime farmland. Also unclear is the long-term status of property taxes, financial incentives, and other considerations.



The EMC thanked Jason Pfotenhauer for his presentation. A five minute recess was called.

4. Roll Call, Determination of Quorum.

Members present: Catherine Bennett, *Chair*; Sue Rau, *Vice Chair*; Herb Bullock; Lance Rudiger; Nicole Terminelli, *BOL Liaison*; Brian Washburn. **A QUORUM WAS NOT OBTAINED.**

Members absent: Sean Cunningham; Lucas Hanss; Richard Marshall; Tiernan Smith; William Stephens III.

Staff: Jason Pfothenauer, SLCPO Director; John Tenbusch, Planner II.

Guests: Emily Fell, DEC; Dawn Howard, EMC alumna; Barbara Lee; Adam Pearson; Barbara Rogers; Neil Woodworth.

5. Acceptance of Order of Business, Items for New Business, Items for Unfinished Business.
Accepted by consensus.

6. Approval of the Minutes of the September, October, November 2022 and January 2023 EMC Meetings. Due to lack of quorum, Minutes from the September, October, November and January EMC meetings were NOT approved.

7. Report by Nicole Terminelli, Representative of the Board of Legislators.

- Nicole reported that the BOL Operations Committee had moved several candidates for EMC seats to the next full BOL meeting for approval.

8. Report of the Committees. None.

- Due to staffing constraints, Standing Committees have been suspended.

9. Report of the Staff.

- Jason Pfothenauer and John Tenbusch spoke about the Planning Office's efforts to recruit one or two persons to fill the open positions of Planner II and Planner I.
- Jason reported that, since the EMC was established by the Board of Legislators, is an advisory board to the BOL, and has had the Planning Office assigned by the BOL to provide staff support for it, members of the EMC can rest assured that Planning Office support will continue. What that support might look like will depend on the composition of the Planning Office after the retirement of John Tenbusch.

10. Unfinished Business. Due to time constraints, several items of Unfinished Business were not addressed. These included:

- Discussion of NYS Soil Health and Climate Resiliency Act (Senate Bill S.4722A)
- EMC Visioning process
- EMC Bylaws
- EMC activities for 2023
- Report on FISU games and environmental conference (held in January 2023)

11. **New Business.** None.
12. **Announcements.** None.
13. **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 8:15 pm.

Minutes prepared by John Tenbusch from notes provided by Sue Rau.

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Locations of Solar Projects Reviewed by the County Planning Board											
Updated: Jan 2023											
P:\PLANNING\CPB\PROJ-REV\ - Solar Arrays\CPB Solar Review Projects Inventory - Working1.xlsx											
No.	Town	Address	Land Owner	Developer	MW (AC)	Parcel Size	Leased Area	Reviewed	Decision	Parcel IDs	Ag Dist
1	Potsdam	307 & 309 SH 11B	Clarkson University	Clarkson Solar	2.2	30.8	12.0	Mar-14	Approved	65.003-1-66	-
2	Lisbon	630 Five Mile Line Road	Teele, Stephen E.	Borrego Solar	3.6	452.0	21.6	Aug-15	Approved	49.002-1-56 and 49.002-1-55	2
3	Gouverneur	163 Scotch Settlement Road	Andrews Family Trust	Borrego Solar	2.9	96.7	19.1	Jul-16	Approved	159.004-3-25.11 and 159.004-3-52	1
4	Canton	5779 USH 11	Village of Canton	Solar City	1	15.8	4.7	Feb-18	Approved	88.057-1-19	-
5	Gouverneur	88 Welch Road	Parent, David L.	Renua Energy	6.2	119.0	29.2	Mar-19	Approved	144.004-1-17.11	1
6	DeKalb	40 Cousintown Road	Smith, Charles B. Jr	Omni-Navitas	9.9	84.4	32.8	Apr-19	Approved	116.004-1-8.12	1
7	DeKalb	2700 USH 11	Buckley, Timothy W.	Omni-Navitas	6.2	163.8	24.1	Apr-19	Approved	145.001-2-5.1	1
8	Gouverneur	1645 USH 11	Parent Whispering Pines	Omni-Navitas	4.9	198.9	18.5	Apr-19	Approved	159.002-1-13	2
9	Gouverneur	218 Peabody Road	Seifert, Claire E.	Omni-Navitas	9.8	168.8	19.4	Apr-19	Approved	159.003-1-2.112	2
10	Potsdam	74 Lawrence Ave.	Snell, James	Potsdam Community Solar	4	29.5	18.5	Jun-19	Approved	64.052-1-1.1	2
11	Gouverneur	126 Little Bow Road	Emrich, Jay M.	Renua Energy	10	161.1	47.1	Sep-19	Approved	159.003-1-20.11	1
12	Morristown	34 CR 2	Aldrich, Cyril H.	Source Renewables	10	52.5	31.7	Oct-19	Approved	97.003-2-4.112 and 97.003-2-20.1	1
13	Waddington	Off CR 11/Chipman Road	Brandy View Farms, LLC	Nexamp	5	55.8	24.9	Feb-20	Approved	30.003-1-22.21	2
14	Madrid	Chipman & Brady Roads	Brandy View Farms, LLC	Nexamp	5	30.5	24.9	Mar-20	Approved	40.002-1-14.2	2
15	Madrid	Off Brady Road	Brandy View Farms, LLC	Nexamp	2	19.8	11.3	Mar-20	Approved	40.002-1-14.3	2
16	Waddington	20 Campbell Road	Zufall, Robert J.	Omni-Navitas	5	215.6	41.7	Mar-20	Approved	29.004-2-10.11	2
17	Stockholm	52 Wells Road	Eggeston, Alan W.	Nexamp	3.4	69.5	18.4	Jun-20	Approved	55.001-1-2.2	2
18	Oswegatchie	56 Rufa Road	Rufa, David R.	Nexamp	5	176.0	33.0	Aug-20	Approved	58.004-1-1.11	1
19	Oswegatchie	104 Horseshoe Road	Bellinger, Don	EDF Renewables	2	36.6	16.0	Aug-20	Approved	72.003-4-10	1
20	Edwards	1889 CR 24	Payne, Robert J Jr	Omni-Navitas	5	269.9	26.0	Sep-20	Approved	175.002-1-22 and 175.002-1-21	1
21	Lawrence	641 Ferris Road (East and West)	Crinklaw, Jerome D.	Omni-Navitas	10	287.4	65.7	Sep-20	Approved	46.003-1-6.11	2
22	Lawrence	409 Ferris Road	Crinklaw, Jerome D.	Omni-Navitas	5	229.6	32.9	Sep-20	Approved	57.001-2-3.2	2
23	Gouverneur	587 and 599 CR 11	Stowell, Thomas H.	Renewable Properties	3.5	89.4	29.0	Sep-20	Approved	159.002-1-22.111	1
24	Canton	161 Meade Road	Brewer, Brian	US Light Energy	5	54.8	33.8	Nov-20	Disapproved	88.003-1-59.11	2
25	Oswegatchie	5693 CR 6	Royal J Acres, LLC	Royal Solar Partners, LLC	5	291.9	34.7	Nov-20	Approved	59.003-1-25.121	1
26	Oswegatchie	5704 CR 6	Royal J Acres, LLC	Royal Solar Partners, LLC	5	207.3	38.5	Nov-20	Approved	59.003-1-22.1	1
27	Oswegatchie	400 Taylor Road	Village of Heuvelton	Heuvelton Solar, LLC	5	102.2	50.0	Nov-20	Approved	71.004-2-17.2	1
28	Oswegatchie	1454 CR 15	Kelly, Allen	TJA Clean Energy	5	227.6	27.9	Feb-21	Approved	86.002-1-8	1
29	Oswegatchie	6866 SH 37	Wadhams Hall Seminary	Nexamp	5	196.0	32.0	Apr-21	Approved	58.004-1-2	1
30	Potsdam	Off USH 11	Terra Development Inc	Potsdam Community Solar	5	40.5	22.4	Aug-21	Approved	64.002-6-1	2
31	Madrid	Cogswell Corner's Road	Smith, Thomas	Acer Solar	4.4	33.5	102.6	Feb-22	Disapproved	40.004-2-20.22	2
32	Canton	90 Judson Street Road	Sheesley, Tracy and Carol	SolAmerica Energy LLC	5	42.9	24.3	May-22	Disapproved	88.002-2-1	-
33	Canton	6578 CR 27	Viking Knoll Trust	Grass River Solar, LLC	4.5	98.3	23.2	Jun-22	Disapproved	74.003-2-8	2
34	Lisbon	8903 CR 27	Steve Teele	AESC Clean Energy	19.8	426.0	86.5	Jul-22	Disapproved	50.001-1-36	2
35	Canton	676 Old Canton Road	William Mahoney	Algonquin Power Co	3.3	74.4	29.2	Aug-22	Approved	101.001-2-9	2
36	Canton	295 SH 310	North Woods Properties, LLC	SolAmerica Energy LLC	5	70.7	30.8	Aug-22	Disapproved	74.004-7-71	2
37	Canton	29 Nickerson Road	Derek Sanderson	Forefront Power	5	74.6	24.3	Oct-22	Disapproved	103.001-1-3.1	2
38	Clifton	SH 3 and CR 60	Bensen Mines, Inc.	NYSERDA	20	255.0	113.0	Nov-22	No Action	214.000-4-21.1 and 214.000-4-24	-
39	Oswegatchie	5986 CR 6	Quinton Smithers	Pivot Solar	5	88.0	32.0	Nov-22	No Action	59.001-1-33.1	1
					Totals:	228.6	4,994.0	1,162.7			
						Mean Lease Size	33.5				
						Median Lease Size	29.0				
						MW	Parcels AC	Lease AC			
			Ag Dist 2			28.2	2,630	650.6			
			Ag Dist 1			90.7	2,362	503.1			
						118.9	4,992.5	1,153.7			