

**ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY  
AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD**

Public Safety Complex, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 48 Court Street  
Canton, New York 13617-1169

Tel: (315) 379-2292 • Fax: (315) 379-2252 • [farming.stlawco.org](http://farming.stlawco.org)

---

**MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, December 3, 2020  
Zoom Meeting ID: 924 2821 3364  
Passcode: 759507

**I. Call to Order**

**A. Members present:** R. Andrews, M. Finen, B. Green, J. Greenwood, L. Denesha, D. Fisher, S. McKnight, R. Sapp, J. TeRiele, and J. Pfothenhauer. **Members absent:** P. Ames. **Staff present:** M. Larson. **Others present:** Patrick Kelly, St. Lawrence County IDA; Raeanne Dulanski, St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District; Rachel Hunter, Gouverneur Tribune Press; Vaugh Golden, Watertown Daily Times.

**Roll Call and Determination of a Quorum.** Andrews called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. Larson did a roll call for attendance; a quorum was present.

**B. Adoption of the Agenda.** The meeting agenda was unanimously adopted (Fisher/McKnight).

**C. Approval of the Minutes.** Larson said Green informed her that Jeff's last name from the New York Power Authority is "Farrell," not "Russell." Kelly noted the word "members" was missing from the last sentence in the top paragraph on page 3. The corrected October 1, 2020 meeting minutes were unanimously adopted (Fisher/ Sapp).

**II. New Business**

**A. Adoption of the 2021 meeting calendar.** Larson reviewed the proposed meeting dates for 2021: February 4, April 1, October 7 and December 2. Larson said the Board has traditionally met at 7:30 pm on these dates, and will occur via Zoom until it is safe to meet in person. The Board unanimously adopted the 2021 meeting calendar (Pfothenhauer/TeRiele).

**B. Planning Office Comments to Draft Regulations for NYS Renewable Energy Growth and Community Benefit Act.** Pfothenhauer explained the intent for the draft regulations, which is to expedite the review of renewable energy projects that generate 20 MW or more energy to no more than six months. Both Larson and Pfothenhauer reviewed the Planning Office's comments and recommendations to the Office of Renewable Energy Siting. Denesha said the staff comments were well done, and he appreciated the recommendations concerning transportation impacts, emergency response and decommissioning. Denesha said he also

concurrent with suggested changes to time limits. Greenwood said the recommended language prohibiting the clearcutting of land for solar arrays should be clarified to allow for the clearing of marginal lands. Green added that land owners will pay penalties with interest on lands receiving an agricultural exemption when they are converted to non-agricultural uses. The Board unanimously endorsed the Planning Office's comments and recommended changes to the draft 94C regulations (Greenwood/Finen).

### **III. Old Business**

- A. Update on solar array projects reviewed by the County Planning Board.** Larson provided an overview of an updated table and map of solar projects reviewed by the County Planning Board. Andrews and TeRiele talked about possible solar lease sites in Dekalb and Canton, and wondered whether future solar projects will exercise eminent domain to achieve interconnects to the high voltage transmission lines that extend between Massena and Marcy Dam. Greenwood said the State may be planning to replace energy generated by Canadian hydropower facilities with solar and wind energy projects in the State. McKnight added that NYPA may be reducing power generated at the Moses Saunders dam to accommodate solar and wind energy projects that come online.

### **IV. Reports**

- A. Board of Legislators.** Denesha said the County's 2021 budget was passed in November, and achieved a tax rate decrease that is down by \$1.14 per \$1,000. Denesha said there were 83 new COVID19 cases, for a total of 1,091. Denesha said more than 300 cases have occurred since November 23. Denesha said testing is an issue; 90% of the tests done in the county are sent away, with an average wait of three to five days, and sometimes up to 10 days to receive a result. To help reduce wait times, Denesha said the County purchased Reyonics rapid testing machines that can process 88 tests every 24 hours and achieve test results within three to five hours. Denesha explained these machines are being leased to area hospitals for \$1 per year, and the test results are 95% accurate. Finen said an acquaintance went to Urgent Care at the EJ Noble Building in Canton and was exhibiting symptoms, but was sent home without being tested. Finen said this person eventually tested positive with COVID19. Denesha said he appreciated hearing about his concern and would convey the information.
- B. Cornell Cooperative Extension.** Larson said Ames provided a written update and CCE's 2020 Annual Report which were forwarded to the Board for review.
- C. Industrial Development Agency.** Kelly said the IDA has initiated dairy processing outreach, which includes quantifying milk produced in the county and increasing the county's processing capacity. Kelly said they are working with companies and marketing firms in the Midwest and the Northeast. Kelly said redevelopment is underway at the Newell building; interior work has begun. Kelly said the IDA has been coordinating with the Planning Office on solar projects, and that CDL Class A training at SUNY Canton's CREST will begin on December 10<sup>th</sup> for four to five weeks on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Kelly concluded his update by showing an advertisement recently released to attract Clarkson University alumni back to the area.

**D. Real Property.** Green said their office continues to work at 50% reduced staffing capacity and assist municipalities with tax rolls.

**E. Soil and Water Conservation District.** Dulanski said USDA's office building continues to operate in Phase 1 with no more than 10 people in the building. Dulanski said an employee in the building tested positive and the building was closed for two weeks. Dulanski said they received approximately 50 agricultural value assessments representing about 1,900 acres in the county.

## **VI. Other Items**

**A. Correspondence.** Larson announced the North Side Energy Center's virtual Open House on December 16 from 11 am to noon, and from 5:00 to 6:00 pm. Larson said the company also issued a Notice of Submission of Proposed Stipulations which outlines the project review process for the 180MW Solar Array for Brasher, Massena and Norfolk. Pfothenauer added this project is being reviewed through Article 10, which is separate from the 94C draft regulations to expedite the review of renewable energy projects. Pfothenauer said 94C is scheduled to be codified in April 2021. Fisher said he anticipates that property rights will prevail on these projects.

**B. Announcements.** None.

**C. Next Meeting Date.** Larson said the next Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board meeting is scheduled be held online on Thursday, February 4, 2021 at 7:30 pm. Finen asked if these meetings could instead begin at 6 pm. Members of the Board agreed to reschedule the AFPB's 2021 meetings to begin at 6 pm instead of 7:30 pm.

## **VII. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm (Pfothenauer/TeRiele).

Respectfully submitted,

*Matilda Larson*