

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

Thursday, October 1, 2020  
Zoom Meeting ID: 974 5389 8198  
Passcode: 514549

**I. Call to Order**

**A. Members present:** P. Ames, R. Andrews, B. Green, L. Denesha, D. Fisher, S. McKnight, R. Sapp, J. TeRiele, and J. Pfothenauer. **Members absent:** J. Greenwood. **Staff present:** M. Larson. **Others present:** Margaret Finen, candidate for the Board; Patrick Kelly, St. Lawrence County IDA; Raeanne Dulanski, St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District; Karen White, Ana Stakoviak and Jeff Farrell, New York Power Authority; John (Last name unknown), Michael's Construction; Vaughn 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. Larson asked who the call-in user was at 854-0450; John with Michael's Construction identified himself. Andrews asked members of the Board and staff to introduce themselves.

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

**C. Approval of the Minutes.** The April 2, 2020 meeting minutes were unanimously adopted (Fisher/ Pfothenauer).

**II. New Business**

**A. Presentation on NYPA Smart Path Initiative.** Karen White from NYPA began her presentation with an overview of the State's response to COVID19. White explained the power lines that extend from the Robert Moses Dam to the Marcy Dam were constructed in 1942, and upgrades to these lines will occur in two phases. The first phase will be to upgrade the 230 kV line by replacing replace 78 miles of wood "H" frames with taller, metal monopoles. White said this phase began in March 2020 and will conclude in June 2023. The second phase involves upgrades to the 345 kV line, and substation improvements on both ends. White added this phase will proceed based on the demand. White and Stakoviak said studies for the project began in 2015, and phase one is broken down into three geographies. Stakoviak reviewed a sample site plan and elevation plan of the upgrades being made in the right of way. Andrews asked if upgrades to the line could be used to deliver power to the former J&L site. Green

asked about the height of the new poles going in. Stakoviak said the poles would range from 120 to 180'. TeRiele asked if the new poles would require guy wires. The response was no; all poles were self-supporting. Green asked if the power lines would be transmitting power to Crogan with no stops. Would the new system accommodate new substations? The response was the potential exists to accommodate new substations in the future.

- B. Overview of NYS Renewable Energy Growth and Community Benefit Act.** Larson reviewed a handout prepared by NYSERDA about the process that will into effect to regulate the review of renewable energy projects 10MW and greater.

### **III. Old Business**

- A. Resolution No. 132-2020 Regarding the Siting of Solar Arrays on Farmland.** Larson reviewed the actions to date since the County adopted the resolution in April. Larson also reviewed a spreadsheet that summarized large scale solar array projects reviewed to date by the County Planning Board. Pfothenauer discussed a recent decision by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets about a proposed array on the Zufall farm in Lisbon. Pfothenauer also discussed the likelihood of a solar project based on its position in National Grid's queue for an interconnect, and an oversubscription for interconnects based on current transmission capacity in some locations.

### **IV. Reports**

- A. Board of Legislators.** Denesha said there was one new COVID19 case since the Board of Legislator's last meeting. The 2019 audit results were presented at Finance Committee, with zero findings. Denesha noted the County Treasurer's Office has good internal controls. Denesha said the 2021 preliminary budget will be presented to the Board of Legislators on October 5<sup>th</sup>, and said the County anticipates a 20% reduction in State reimbursements, also known as a "holdback."
- B. Cornell Cooperative Extension.** Ames said Cooperative Extension is experiencing a 20% holdback with five State contracts, and they went through the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter without receiving any reimbursements. CCE reopened on June 8<sup>th</sup> for walk up window service, and staffing increased from 50% to 75%. Food processing of carrots and apple continued during the spring term, but was suspended over the summer months. CCE partnered with NYS Ag and Markets to distribute PPE to 150 farms, which included 7,000 masks and gallons of sanitizer. Ames said CCE also assisted with USDA's food distribution program, which was available to 950 families. In August, in person programming resumed on a limited basis. Staff were involved with ecommerce webinars which included over 400 participants. Ames said their office just submitted a \$250,000 grant proposal for direct marketing, and CCE's annual meeting will be held on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- C. Industrial Development Agency.** Kelly said there has been a lot of IDA activity related to COVID19, and that he is involved with the County's Reopening Task Force, which coordinates activities related to economic recovery. Kelly said their office has focused on outreach to more than 500 businesses. Kelly said the county lost 3,100 jobs from February to April, and has

since gained back 2,000 jobs, and anticipates long term economic harm caused by COVID19. Kelly said the IDA has been partnering with other regional agencies to share best practices, and offered payment relief to business thru its LDC loan partners. Kelly said the agency received a grant from the USDA for CDL training, and the IDA recently completed its first PILOT for a solar array in Morristown, with a half dozen more solar projects in the pipeline. Kelly said the agency is incorporating decommissioning requirements in PILOTs that are negotiated with solar developers. Kelly noted Tom Plastino's passing on September 6<sup>th</sup>. Members of the Board shared remembrances of Tom.

**D. Real Property.** Green said while staffing levels were reduced by 50%, their office continued to work with municipal assessors. Three revaluations are scheduled for this year, and the tax foreclosure will occur online with 132 properties. Green said the sale of properties since 2010 are now posted by town on the Office's website.

**E. Soil and Water Conservation District.** Dulanski said Soil and Water is following USDA's reopening plan, which is currently in Phase 1 with no more than 10 people allowed in the building. This means two Soil and Water staff persons in the office at any given time. Dulanski said the annual fish sale occurred on October 2<sup>nd</sup>; their technician is pursuing certification as a planner; and their forester is currently working with Potsdam on an Urban Forest Management Plan. Dulanski said the award of nonpoint source pollution projects are delayed.

## **VI. Other Items**

**A. Correspondence.** Larson said the Planning Office has been receiving correspondence from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets regarding various solar array projects that are proposed throughout the county.

**B. Announcements.** None.

**C. Next Meeting Date.** The next Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board meeting will be held online on Thursday, December 3, 2020 at 7:30 pm.

## **VII. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 pm (Denesha/Green).

Respectfully submitted,

*Matilda Larson*