

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FORT EDWARD PLANNING BOARD MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2020 AT TOWN HALL COMMENCING AT 7:00
P.M.**

Chairman Belden called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

Pledge of Allegiance

PRESENT: Chairman Belden
Valerie Ingersoll
Donald Sanders, Jr
Zachary Middleton
Frank Wells
Joe McMurray

ABSENT: Max Fruchter

OTHERS PRESENT: Anne Waling (CS Energy), Matt Tripoli (CS Energy), Supervisor Lester Losaw, Caitlin Mahoney, Town Engineer Jim Houston and Planning Board Clerk Aimee Mahoney

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

MOTION by Donald Sanders, Jr, Seconded by Joe McMurray to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 26, 2019 **ALL AYES**

MOTION by Joe McMurray, Seconded by Donald Sanders, Jr to approve the minutes of the meeting of February 26, 2020 **ALL AYES**

BUSINESS:

**CS Energy
Project Update
Presenter: Matt Tripoli**

Matt Tripoli: Since we presented to you last June we have been working on our project that we will be proposing to the Town. We are not quite ready to submit an application yet but wanted to give an update since it has been a year since we were here. This presentation is a little different than I had last year. One big thing that happened right after I was here was NY signed a law to advance the Clean Energy Standard to 70% renewable energy by 2030. This establishes NY as a national leader in the renewable energy space. There are 3 types of Solar projects in NY, Residential which is on roof tops, Community projects which would be a 20-40 acre development and Wholesale which is what we do, they are larger scale projects that compete against conventional power plants. We are looking at a 20mw project in the Town which will end up being a little more than 100 acres. NYSERDA has a competitive solicitation for contracts for large scale renewable facilities which we have been participating in for the last 3 or 4 years. We have won 7 awards; we bid our Dolan Solar Project for here this past year and were not selected. We were a little high on the price we offered and we are trying to gear up for the next

solicitation which will be this summer. We work with National Grid as well and that took a little longer than expected for them to do their first round of studies but we did hear back a week ago and the project is viable and we can connect to their system at a price we think makes sense. We have to pay for all of the upgrades required to accommodate our project.

Chairman Belden: Do you tie into the new line that they just built?

Matt Tripoli: Yes we are proposing to connect to one of the two that are there.

Joe McMurray: How far away from the power line will the panels be?

Matt Tripoli: It's a competitive market so every foot of additional conductor that we have to put on the ground costs us money. We currently have relationships with 7 different landowners and have property right on the corridor. One of our projects in Easton has approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile run to the power line and that is one of the longest we have in our portfolio of projects across the State of New York.

Zachary Middleton: Will the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) affect this project at all?

Matt Tripoli: They regulate the wholesale of electricity; we have a unique situation in NY where we are a single state type of market but still regulated by the Federal Government. They came out with a ruling a few weeks ago in an effort maybe to prop up coal and natural gas but in NY it mostly affects downstate markets closer to NYC where this is more regulated by FERC. Up here, nothing that they decided really affects us to a great degree.

Zachary Middleton: Are these all fixed panels?

Matt Tripoli: We have enough property here that we are looking to do a tracking system where the panels sit flat at noon and in the morning they will tilt to the east and they will slowly track the sun across the sky which improves our yields maybe 15%. It costs more to install and takes up a little more space but economically it makes sense for this area.

Joe McMurray: What about snow?

Matt Tripoli: That's another good thing about the tracking; you can shake the snow off to a degree. We are starting to install bi facial panels, most of the time the panels will have a white sheet of plastic on the back so that sunlight only hits the front of the panel but the bi facial panels have glass in the back so that reflective light can hit the bottom of the panel which improves yield and also heats up to help melt the snow.

Chairman Belden: Did you contact the Biologist from DEC after the last meeting?

Matt Tripoli: We haven't started any of the studies yet that would involve DEC. We have noticed that in this area we have had to complete bird studies due to wintering raptors as well as grassland birds.

Chairman Belden: One of the discussions was permeable vs. impermeable and ENCON said that as long as the panels weren't mounted on the ground the water can still run into the ground. What do you normally hear about permeable vs. impermeable?

Anne Waling: I used to bring a memo from the head of DEC and they basically said it's a permeable surface and the reasoning is because there is spacing between the racking. Especially with tracker panels you will get the spacing a lot better. People think of it like a flat roof and it really isn't because there is so much drip room in between. The only part that has any impact is the post.

Chairman Belden: I believe DEC was going to take care of the clear cutting issue so that should be taken care of by now.

Joseph McMurray: How many acres do you have under contract in the Town so far?

Matt Tripoli: We have contracts with 7 landowners and close to 400 acres that we could utilize to optimize and make our project as invisible as possible.

Chairman Belden: How much infrastructure as far as roads?

Matt Tripoli: We try to minimize that so we will have 7 or 8 areas that will have some equipment on pads that will need roads to them.

Anne Waling: We experimented with using a permeable road of washed stone with compaction underneath and the DEC liked that model for a while but I'm not sure if they still are.

Jim Houston: DEC has put out a memo and also a recommendation of what they consider a porous road for these types of temporary uses.

Matt Tripoli: NYS Ag. & Markets has come out with some new standards as well this past fall so we have some new guidelines that we have to apply. We have to commit to them as part of the NYSERDA process. If we have a temporary laydown area for construction on agricultural soils we will have to de-compact that area so it can be returned to agricultural use and the same goes for removal of the project. There will be someone on site to monitor and make sure we are stock piling top soil appropriately so that it can be re-applied after construction is complete.

Frank Wells: What is underneath the solar panels?

Matt Tripoli: A low growth meadow type grass. Mowing and upkeep of the grass is one of the biggest operational costs.

Chairman Belden: Is livestock an option with the tracker panels?

Matt Tripoli: Yes because the tracker panels sit a little higher, we have talked with some sheep farmers in the Easton area about our projects.

Chairman Belden: How long does it take to build?

Matt Tripoli: Approximately 12 months.

Jim Houston: One of the big things from a storm water permitting standpoint is whether or not there is ground disturbance and we have come across that where you have wooded sites vs. existing meadow. In the 400 acres that are under contract is there wooded area or open field or a combination?

Matt Tripoli: There are a few wooded areas that we are considering; I think it will generally come down to the environmental studies we will have to do. We will be looking at storm water very closely.

Donald Sanders, Jr: What happens at the 25 year mark?

Matt Tripoli: It is in the Town Code to restore the site back to what it was.

Matt Tripoli: We thank you for your time and we will be back in the fall or winter.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Chairman Belden: Someone is looking to open a flower shop at the old Toomey's Liquor Store, it would take about a month to get them approved or disapproved. They would have to go to ZBA for a couple things and then to us. Back when Mike Hill was our Attorney he informed us that we cannot over rule what a Zoning Administrator does. Our Zoning Administrator doesn't feel it is necessary to go through site-plan due to it being an allowed use without many changes so we will have a new flower shop soon at that site.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION by Zachary Middleton, Seconded by Joe McMurray to adjourn the meeting at 7:40pm
ALL AYES

Dated: March 17, 2020

Aimee Mahoney, Clerk