

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FORT EDWARD PLANNING BOARD MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2023 AT TOWN HALL COMMENCING AT 7:00  
P.M.**

Chairman Belden called the meeting to order at 7:07pm

Pledge of Allegiance

**PRESENT:** Chairman Mark Belden  
Valerie Ingersoll  
Zachary Middleton  
Max Fruchter  
Dolores Cogan  
Joseph McMurray

**ABSENT:** Don Sanders, Jr.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Paul Lubera, Paul Kruger, Town Engineer Chris Koenig, Town Attorney Bill Nikas and Town Planning Board Clerk Aimee Mahoney.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: MOTION** by Dolores Cogan, Seconded by Valerie Ingersoll to approve the minutes of the meeting of July 12, 2023 **ALL AYES**

**BUSINESS:**

**Fort Edward Community Solar  
142 Blodgett Rd.  
Presenters: Paul Lubera & Paul Kruger**

**Paul Kruger:** When we came before you last time we were proposing (3) 5MW systems at 142 Blogett Rd. since that time we have has a wetland delineation done for the property and received a report back from National Grid regarding the interconnection of our proposed 3 projects to their distribution and their response is that we can't get all 3 on the line we were planning to connect to but we can do 1. The wetland report pretty favorable. Now that we are only doing (1) 5MW AC project and have no land constraints we changed from fixed tilt to tracker panels which takes a little more real estate but you get another 15% boost in generation for the same power wattage. Those are the principal changed from what we presented to you in March and what we are presenting to you now.

**Paul Lubera:** Updated information was submitted reflecting the changes including a revised EAF along with full plans, a storm water analysis and a basic SWPPP to go along with the design. We included some evergreen screening at the top of the hill; we are over 1,000' from Blodgett Rd.

**Chairman Belden:** Where is your proposed access road in relation to National Grid's access road that they will not share with you?

**Paul Lubera:** Our access road will be adjacent to National Grid's access road; we are just to the south of their road. We do have 2 turn arounds on our access road to comply with the fire code.

**Paul Kruger:** In the future if National Grid has more capacity we could possibly come back with a Phase 2 of the project.

**Chairman Belden:** Do you have to wait to get trackers and does that affect your timeline?

**Paul Kruger:** No we still have about the same ordering time.

**Dolores Cogan:** What is the concrete washout area?

**Paul Lubera:** That is for when they are pouring the pad for the equipment during construction so that the concrete truck can wash out and not contaminate any other soil around; it is a temporary measure that will be removed.

**Chairman Belden:** What are your setbacks from neighbors?

**Paul Lubera:** The nearest residential property line is 608' away.

**Chairman Belden:** How far back from your panels will you clear to make sure that your aren't shaded or in danger of trees falling on the panels.

**Paul Lubera:** The way the topography account for we are just going to clear back to the fence line. We don't anticipate clearing much farther than that.

**Chairman Belden:** What is your total coverage right now?

**Paul Lubera:** The area inside the fence is 22.09 acres out of the total of 108.10 acres. That is the complete area within the fence.

**Chris Koenig:** The coverage includes the panels and the spacing.

**Paul Lubera:** Okay if we have to revise it we will.

**Chris Koenig:** I walked the site with Jason from Lansing Engineering and it is relatively flat, open pasture. I did speak with him about some things I might be recommending to the Board such as extending the screen along the entire western fence line. There will be visibility in the winter months through the existing hedgerow separating the residences from the solar array. We also talked about the fencing and in other projects we requested the use of a 7' or 8' deer fence or agricultural type fence in the Ag. District. We would not like to see the 6' fence with the barbed wire. The other thing was the access road which is the pervious gravel; do you know the slope of that road?

**Paul Lubera:** Right around 8.5%-9%.

**Chris Koenig:** Include the slope on the plan and I will also document all of this in a letter so that you will have it in writing. Other things to submit as per the Town Code would be the Decommissioning Plan, Estimate prepared by a NYS P.E., O&M Plan, Memorandum of Lease or some kind of letter of intent from your landowner to demonstrate site control. Proposed surety for the decommissioning bond will also need to be submitted.

**Paul Kruger:** I can provide a draft of the Decommissioning Plan as well as a copy of an O&M Plan for another project in Saratoga County. The actual O&M Plan is 300 or 400 pages but it has a section in it as to how we are going to maintain the site.

**Chris Koenig:** Yes it should be an overall narrative or executive summary of what the O&M entails, we don't need all the spec books for the electrical equipment. What is the panel height? It says less and 20'.

**Paul Lubera:** 10', a new table was submitted.

**Chris Koenig:** Need to submit a landscaping/planting plan identifying species and spacing.

**Chairman Belden:** When talking about visibility I can't tell from the Code if they intended for people to not see them at all or just minimize what people will see.

**Paul Kruger:** I think if the developer comes up with a reasonable approach to try and screen it from vision it's received favorably but some people just don't want to see it at all because they don't like solar. There are ways to effectively screen and I think we should try to do that because people do like to see the natural environment and panels are not really part of that even though they are a valuable resource.

**Chris Koenig:** I don't think you will ever completely screen these projects it is more of a landscaped element. This site has the benefit of elevation so most likely what will be visible is the trees, the fence and the first several rows.

**Chairman Belden:** Will you be able to see it from Duer Rd.?

**Paul Kruger:** No, there is no chance of that.

- **Board members would like to walk the site; the entire Board can go as a group as long as no decisions are made.**

**Dolores Cogan:** Is it flagged off to where the panels are supposed to begin?

**Paul Kruger:** It is not but we can do that and let you know when it is done so you can walk the site.

**Zachary Middleton:** Take pictures for the public hearing showing visibility.

**Dolores Cogan:** Are you proposing any lighting?

**Paul Kruger:** No

**Chris Koenig:** I didn't see staging area and soil stockpiling area on the plan.

**Paul Lubera:** We can show something for equipment staging but there is not a lot of grading so we won't be stockpiling.

**Chris Koenig:** The soil cut out to build the road, will you thin spread that? You are in the Ag. District so you will need to comply. There are requirements from Ag & Markets for managing topsoil.

**Paul Lubera:** We will get clarification on that.

**Chris Koenig:** Hold off on scheduling a public hearing until the application is deemed complete; also hold off on the County referral as well. All submissions need to be site specific. Coordinate with the Fire Department and the Highway Superintendent regarding the driveway cut on Blodgett Rd.

**MOTION** by Zachary Middleton, Seconded by Max Fruchter to declare lead agency status for SEQR review **ALL AYES**

**Chris Koenig:** Send Aimee a list of involved agencies and if you will be seeking a PILOT then include Schuylerville School District in the list.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION** by Max Fruchter, Seconded by Joseph McMurray to adjourn the meeting at 8:00pm **ALL AYES**

Dated: August 2, 2023

---

Aimee Mahoney, Clerk