

Minutes of the May 10, 2022 Meeting of the Town of Stephentown Planning Board

The meeting was called to order at 7:08pm by Chairman Gardner.

Attendees: Derrick Gardner, Chairman, Mark Prescott, Robert Lobdell, Alexander Hailey, Zachary Leonard, Attorney Craig Crist and Attorney Christopher Langlois

Long Road Development -Milk Run Solar LLC

Overview of sketch plan presented by Haley Orvedal (development director) and Rubin @ LaBella.

This is a community Solar project which would be the first in Stephentown. This project is certified under NYSERTA. This will be a 5-megawatt solar project. A 10% discount on energy bill will be available for town residents.

Mark Prescott – do we know what the incentive is?

Hailey – starts at 17 cents and goes down.

Rubin – community solar – utilizes himself. This will be at the back portion of the lot. There is a NYSEG transmission line on property. They are in the process of refining solar panel layout. SEQRA has already been submitted. There will be three separate pod arrays with a series of utility poles with a tie into NYSEG transmission easement. 5 megawatts from each array, there will be 5 utility poles and everything else will be underground electric.

They will be using the existing driveway but needs DOT approval. There are three separate pods due to topography of land. These will be individually fenced pods so that NYSEG has access to their poles and also due to public fishing rights.

Each array has a series of modules. Power is moved to transformers and then pushed into the public grid.

Wetlands will be delineated -SEQRA pat one identified and submitted. They can pull road back a few feet if necessary. The next step will be for the planning board to declare themselves the lead agency.

Mark Prescott – is this equal to about three windmills.

Robert Lobdell – there is no storage onsite

Rubin – no collection just distribution

Haley -project life is estimated at 30 years.

Zach – what is the plan after 30 years, is it toxic?

Haley -preparing decommission plan according to NYSERTA.

Zach – who pays taxes on land

Chris-pilot (payment in lieu of taxes) Solar improvement is exempt but land is still taxable.

Owen Cassavaugh – accessor will be working with planner. Land is part of the Agri district

Haley – the project will need to be reviewed by the department of Agri & markets.

Zach – are the panels made of plastic or glass?

Haley – they are made of glass that are monitored 24/7. Historically only some small fractures that are encapsulated and won't be hazardous.

Mark- what is the size of the fence?

Rubin - it will be a 7-foot chain link or possible agricultural fence.

Mark -how far off ground are the panels?

Haley -5 foot at most? Anything larger is cost prohibitive especially due to steel prices.

Alex -what are the plans for maintenance on the land? For the grass?

Haley -operation/maintenance not yet determined. Will be available in future with further information. There are plans to plant pollinator friendly vegetation

Alex – does this cause a fire hazard?

Haley -there will be a mowing schedule and seasonal plantings.

Zach – can anybody sign up for the discounts in town?

Haley -yes anybody that lives in town. There will be consolidated billing. There will be a line item showing 10% discount.

Zach – how do people sign up?

Haley -third parties usually get the word out after the permit process.

David Cass – 10% off supply charges?

Mark – Beacon power won't be associated?

Zach – there will be a tie into Beacon Power? Does our code allow us to ask for certain things like pollinator plantings?

Chris – there can be certain requests within reason Life plan of panels are approximately 30 years.

Mark – modules have changed in the last 20 years

Rubin – yes, the technology is always changing.

Derrick- the area of the parcel is approximately 77 acres but the proposed site is 22 acres? Are you purchasing or leasing the property?

Haley – we are purchasing property

Rubin – if in future the solar panels are no longer feasible the land can go back to agricultural land

Chris – NY DOT, any other agencies required?

Rubin – Agri & markets ZIPPO, will need to do storm water prevention plan for DEC

Derrick- in past we have used an engineer to recommend the town

Derrick - what does this do to property values? Does it drastically lower values?>

Haley -no impact good or bad – nothing conclusive

Chris -neighboring properties on map

Rubin – not really

Mark – is there any noise from these panels?

Mark – made motion to set a public hearing at next meeting which is June 14th

Robert – second motion

All in favor, public hearing set for June 14th at 7:30pm

Derrick- will circulate first and then declare lead agency.

2. Garcia Application

Craig – non binding recommendation 30X40 foot metal garage. Needs area variance. Setback should be 50 feet. Garage would be within 14 feet.

1st resolution as type II under SEQRA.

Mark – motion made for type II

Alex – motion seconded

All in favor, motion carried

Craig – read town law regarding area variance.

Mark -doesn't impact any points of town law

Robert – any issue with issuing permit

Mark – the property owners are hard workers

Derrick -Recommend motion to approve

Mark -seconded motion

All in favor, motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm

Meeting notes reviewed on June 14,2022

Motion to accept minutes: Zach Leonard

Seconded motion: Alex Haley

All in favor, meeting note approved as written.