MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN BOARD
TOWN OF SANDY CREEK
1992 HARWOOD DRIVE, PO BOX 52
SANDY CREEK, NEW YORK 13145-0052

Date: June 29, 2017
Kind of Meeting: Special Meeting
Place: Sandy Creek Town Hall

Board Members Present:		**Others Present:**
	Nancy Ridgeway @ 7:23pm	
	Ruth E. Scheppard	Tammy L. Miller
	John W. Wood Jr.	Bryan Stumpf
	Dave Warner	Dan Yerdon
	Nola J. Gove	Sharon L Turo
		Grant Rohrmoser
		Ed Domick
		Gerhardt Brosch
		Gordon Block
		Dan Compitello @7:18pm

CALL TO ORDER:
Deputy Town Supervisor Ruth E. Scheppard called this special meeting to order at 7:07pm. The purpose of this meeting was to learn about local solar farm development. Representatives from Cypress Creek Renewables (CCR), Bryan Stumpf and Dan Compitello were present to answer questions and share facts and information on this topic. Information is also available on their website at ccrenew.com/newyork.

The meeting began with Mr. Stumpf answering several of Councilman Warner's questions. To develop a community solar facility a parcel of property with a minimum of 20 to 50 acres is necessary, of which 10 to 15 acres must be suitable for the solar array. A 2 megawatt (MW) farm will generate enough energy to serve 500 to 600 homes. Cypress Creek currently has one proposed 2 MW project in the Village of Sandy Creek.

The project site must be near a substation, which usually has a maximum capacity. The property must not be in a wetland, and must be dry and flat without trees. Some trees may be cut. A 10 to 12 MW facility is the maximum in most towns. Residents in a solar farm community may benefit because consumers can opt for credits on their electrical bills. The locally harvested green energy would be sent to National Grid. Cypress Creek would have an agreement with the utility company. National Grid will base their rates on the amount of solar energy they receive.

There are no Cypress Creek Renewables projects currently generating energy in NYS. The company began exploring New York in 2016 and 5 or 6 projects have been approved in 2017. There are some municipal-owned solar arrays. Private lease payments are made for land use.

Mr. Compitello arrived at 7:18 pm and explained New York State's Reforming the Energy Vision (REV) mandate. The Community Distributed Generation (Shared

Renewables) program was established in July 2015 by the New York Public Service Commission. Currently solar energy is the most affordable. It generally costs 5 to 8% less than other forms of traditional power. The rates are locked into a service contract from 1 to 20 year options. Cancellation fees are approximately $2 per month. Solar farms are tied into the existing electrical grid.

The life expectancy of solar panels is at least 25 years and hopefully 40 years. Some from the 1970's are still functioning. They do lose efficiency over time as the glass degrades. This rate varies with weather conditions and the panels can be replaced. They normally produce less energy in the winter and overproduce in the summer months.

The solar panels do not contain any toxic materials. Cadmium is used to produce the panels, but is rendered inert after production. Biodegradable mineral oil is used in the transformers.

Cypress Creek Renewables assumes all costs associated with their solar farm development and pays landowners for any increase in their property taxes. CCR encourages municipalities not to opt out of tax exemptions that impact wind and solar energy. They will offer a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT). CCR had a project in the Town of Wolcott, NY approved in mid-April. Their Industrial Development Agency (IDA) negotiates PILOTS for them. A standardized PILOT template is being developed by CCR. KWatt assessment is standard across the country. They are looking at models.

CCR brings the property back to its original condition after a solar farm is decommissioned. If a lease expires, the site will be decommissioned. Salvage value of the system's equipment usually meets or exceeds the cost of decommissioning.

There are not many solar panels commercially made in the United States. Most come from Canada or Asia. However, the metal racking and other equipment is made in America. CCR likes to hire local workers for construction.

Panels are built at a maximum of 12 feet off the ground and are oriented to the south with a fixed tilt. Although goats and cows should not be fenced in the solar farm, grazing sheep and planting clover for the bee population is encouraged. The lease stays with the property if sold, etc.

CCR is based out of Santa Monica, CA and Durham, NC and is present in 32 states. This team has projects in VT, Mexico and several in the Rochester area.

Snow normally melts off the solar panels. CCR does have an emergency response plan. They will snowplow paths and the solar farm's access roads will be maintained. The site is monitored remotely. CCR claims to have a very good safety track record. They work with nearly every utility company in the US right now. They will provide training for local fire departments. They will maintain an Emergency Response Plan, a Site Plan, access roads and construction safety. There will be an emergency shut-off switch near the road that the fire department can access. The site can be accessed with a key or cable

cutters if necessary. Cables will be run underground and utility poles outside the project area will be used. The solar panels are warm to the touch, but will not burn people or animals. They have automatic safety shut-offs and can be turned off remotely as well. If there is a problem with a panel, it will be replaced within the same day whenever possible.

CCR is also in the very early stages of a proposed project in the Town of Volney.

The proposed project in Sandy Creek will be 2 MW with a step-up transformer and approximately 9,000 panels. A fence 7 feet high with barbed wire at the top will keep the area secure. However, there will be a small gap at the bottom of the fence that will not impede the movement of small animals through the area. There is usually only one solar array per parcel of property and they are registered with the state. Drones may be flown over them. A location within 2 miles of a substation is preferable. If a landowner is interested in solar farm development and the property appears suitable, CCR sends a team to study the land, slopes, etc.

There are DEC and NYSERDA programs that encourage green energy and the reduction of the carbon footprint. Grants and programs for brownfield and landfill redevelopment are available to municipalities.

CCR likes the Town of Sandy Creek's draft local law regulating solar energy systems and will likely use it as a model.

RESOLUTION 63-17
On motion made by Ruth E. Scheppard, seconded by Nancy Ridgeway, the following resolution was **ADOPTED** – 5 Ayes Ridgeway, Gove, Warner, Scheppard, Wood
0 No
Resolved that the Town Board of the Town of Sandy Creek will enter executive session at 8:13 pm to discuss the employment history of a particular individual. Everyone left the meeting, except Town Clerk Miller waited in her office for the open meeting to resume.

RESOLUTION 64-17
On motion made by Nancy Ridgeway, and seconded by Ruth Scheppard, the following resolution was **ADOPTED** – 5 Ayes Ridgeway, Gove, Warner, Scheppard, Wood
0 No
Resolved that the Town Board of the Town of Sandy Creek will exit executive session at 8:35 pm.

On motion by Ruth Scheppard, seconded by John W. Wood, Jr., and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy L. Miller, RMC

Town Clerk