

## Minutes of the Sandy Creek Regional Planning Board

Wednesday, June 5, 2024

### Sandy Creek Town Hall

Members Present: Frank Dixon, Bill Joyce, Sybil Cummins

Absent: Larry Rice (working out of the country), Pat and Richard Machemer (medical), Shirley Rice

Also Present: John Wood Jr. (Sandy Creek Town Board), John Wood III, Andrew Van Doorn and Matt McGregor from SOLARBANK, Abundant Solar Power.

With only three members present, there was no quorum of members. Therefore, no official business took place. Also, these must be considered notes of the meeting as opposed to minutes, as there was no official meeting.

This is the first time in memory that the Board failed to make a quorum. It was unexpected. Bill explained the situation to those present that no official business may take place. However, a discussion among those present concerning the proposed solar farms in two locations within the town of Sandy Creek may take place to try to understand the nature of the project and to be prepared for any future meetings, i.e. Site Plan Review.

Things noted are as follows:

According to the most recent revision of the Local Law for Solar Energy in the Town of Sandy Creek, all power lines shall be buried. Bill explained that the three solar farms that have been developed in the Town and the Village of Sandy Creek received a great deal of negative feedback concerning the Power Poles that are the tie-in lines to the power grid. He explained that the recent changes to the Local Law reflected the desire to preserve the aesthetic values of the Town per the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2014. And that therefore, those tie-in power poles would necessarily be eliminated from any future project. The preliminary sketches for the two properties showed these poles to be a part of the project. As the discussion went further, it became clear that SOLARBANK would discuss with National Grid the possibility of erecting a pad with all necessary inverters and transformers on it, with a line buried to a single pole which may be located in line with the existing power poles along County Route 15. All parties conceded that this would be an excellent alternative that would greatly diminish the loss of aesthetic values of the previous three projects. Also, the 300 foot setback from Co. Rt. 15 would allow for generous screening of the proposed pad.

Concerning the old Town dump site, the SOLARBANK representatives were surprised to find that there had been very little, if any, remediation of the site when it was closed circa 1970. John Wood said that records of the closing were "sketchy at best" and that it would appear that no official cap had been put in place, nor was there any form of monitoring of the site after closing. Therefore, it was discussed that perhaps any installation may have to be only surface mounted, that power lines within the site may have to be placed in a boxlike structure above ground to the proposed pad of transformers etc. Also, Mr. Van Doorn asked if the Local Law would allow for the looped wiring at the end of each row of panels to remain above ground. It appeared that, as explained, this would be a viable option.

A brief discussion concerning the importance of fencing to prevent any casual or intentional entrance to the site followed. All agreed that this would be of importance. When asked if it would be their intention to do the Site Plan Review for both sites at one time, the representatives said that yes, this would be their intention.

Bill made it clear that a 239 Review with the County would also be required as both sites are located on a County Highway. Also, the second site may be within 500 feet of an Agricultural District (to be determined) which would require an Ag Data Statement.

Bill will need to determine whether a full EAF Form will have to be completed as part of the Site Plan Review, particularly as the old Town dump site is being considered.

All parties appeared to be encouraged by this discussion. The SOLARBANK reps will attend the Town Board Meeting on Wednesday, June 12, 2024 to request a resolution concerning the leases of both proposed sites.

At this point, with no further discussion, all parties left the premises.

Respectfully submitted by Sybil Cummins, Recording Secretary