

**TOWN OF PERTH PLANNING BOARD
JANUARY 24, 2022
6:00 P.M.
PERTH TOWN HALL**

MEETING NOTES

PRESENT:

**RON CETNAR, CHAIRMAN
FRAN SIKORSKI
BOB GORDON
JEFF GREEN
MICHAEL DIMEZZA
TRACY GUTOWSKI**

**SEAN M. GERAGHTY, CONSULTANT
AARON ENFIELD, SR. PLANNER
MARK CONCILLA, CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER
CARM GRECO, TOWN ATTORNEY**

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST REGULAR MEETING:

MOTION: To approve the minutes to the December 13, 2021 meeting.

MADE BY: Tracy Gutowski

SECONDED: Michael Dimezza

VOTE: 6 in favor, 0 opposed

**III. BORREGO SOLAR SYSTEMS – SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR SOLAR FARM
ALONG COUNTY HIGHWAY 132:**

A. Background:

Borrego Solar would like to construct a 5 megawatt AC Solar Farm along the west side of County Highway 132 in the Town of Perth (Tax Map Parcel No. 180.-1-4). The existing parcel is approximately 20.05+/- acres in size and is owned by Robert and Joan Pawlak.

B. December 13, 2021 Meeting:

During its December 13, 2021 meeting, the Town of Perth Planning Board began discussing the Draft Scoping Document that has been prepared for Borrego Solar's project along County Highway 132. The Planning Board recognized that, as the Lead Agency, it has the responsibility to solicit as much public comment as it can on the document before preparing the Final Scoping Document for the applicants.

Following last month's meeting, the Planning Board opened a public comment period on the Draft Scoping Document for Borrego Solar's Project along County Highway 132. A notice that the Draft Scope was available was forwarded to the Environmental Notice Bulletin for publishing. All Involved Agencies were notified and sent a copy of the Draft Scope. A public notice along with a Press Release was sent to local newspapers and the document was posted on the Town's website.

This evening, the Planning Board will listen to any public comments that are offered on the Draft Scoping Document. The comment period for written comments will conclude on Monday, January 31, 2022. To date, the Planning Board has received written comments from:

Jeanne Pitkin
296 County Highway 132
Hagaman, NY

Chris and Abigail Johnson
271 County Highway 132

Rich Scales
129 Morreale Road
Amsterdam, NY 12010

Aaron Bagwell
739 County Highway 110
Broadalbin, NY 12025

Forrest Higgins
127 Ridge Road
Glenville, NY 12302

Bob and Kathy Bagwell
330 County Highway 132
Hagaman, NY 12086

(See attached.)

DISCUSSION: Mr. Geraghty explained that, so far, there are a few pertinent issues that have been mentioned in the written comments. He stated that the majority of the comments were not directed at the Draft Scoping Document itself and are, therefore, not going to be addressed at this time.

Planning Board Member Mike Dimezza noted that there are comments from individuals outside of the Town.

Mr. Geraghty pointed out that, while there is written correspondence from individuals that do not live in the Town of Perth, the Planning Board still has the ability to consider those comments if the Board feels that they are relevant. Mr. Geraghty explained that it is not unusual for a Final Scoping Document to be very similar to the Draft Scoping Document. He indicated that he went through the document and had a few minor changes he would like to incorporate into the final draft. In order to generate some discussion, Mr. Geraghty pointed out that another community in Fulton County is considering asking developers to avoid using Landscaping Plans for screening projects and instead asking the developers to construct enormous berms that can screen projects and require no maintenance.

Planning Board Vice Chairman Fran Sikorski stated that, regardless of whether or not a landscaped berm or a larger berm is constructed in order to screen the project, there will still be a Solar Farm in the neighborhood. He stated his bigger concern is that the adjacent residential property owners will see the value of their homes decrease as a result of the Solar Farm being located near their homes.

Mr. Geraghty also talked briefly about the applicant's proposal to provide a financial surety for the maintenance of the landscaped berm on the project site. He stated that he would like to clarify how that issue is addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). He also talked about language in the Town's Master Plan promoting Solar Farms while, at the same time, encouraging the protection of adjacent residential property owners.

Mr. Geraghty indicated that the County Planning Department will wait until Monday, January 31, 2022, to compile the comments that have been received. He indicated that there are a couple of issues that have already been expressed in the written comments that he would like to have considered in the Final Scope. He stated that, once all of the written comments are in, the County Planning Department will put together the Final Scope and send it to the applicant.

MOTION: Authorizing the Fulton County Planning Department to put together the Final Scope for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Borrego Solar's Solar Farm Project along County Highway 132.

MADE BY: Bob Gordon

SECONDED: Ron Cetnar

VOTE: 6 in favor, 0 opposed

IV. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Chairman's Update:

1. Meeting Date:

Planning Board Chairman Ron Cetnar reminded Board members that the third Monday of February is President's Day, so the Planning Board will need to change the date of its February meeting to either the second or fourth Monday. He indicated that he would send out an e-mail to Board members to see which date works the best.

2. Gmail Accounts:

Mr. Cetnar asked if Board members still intended to create G-mail Accounts for all Planning Board correspondence? Board members seemed in agreement that G-mail Accounts should be established for each person so that personal and work e-mails no longer have to be used. Mr. Cetnar pointed out that County Senior Planner Aaron Enfield has already put together some instructions for setting up each of the accounts. He encouraged Board members to set those accounts up as soon as possible so that future correspondence from the County Planning Department goes directly to those new emails.

3. Training:

Mr. Cetnar stated that anyone who has training certificates from recent training sessions should get those to him so that he can deliver them to the Town Clerk. Both Bob Gordon and Tracy Gutowski indicated that they have certificates that they will get to him.

4. Amended Solar Farm Setbacks:

Mr. Cetnar asked Town Attorney Carm Greco if he could work on establishing new setbacks for Solar Farm Projects in the Town? Attorney Greco indicated that, typically, a recommendation will come from the Planning Board itself and be sent to the Town Board for its consideration. Mr. Geraghty stated that the County Planning Department will put together some proposed language for that change and bring it to the Planning Board for review.

5. Vireo Health:

Mr. Cetnar stated that he recently went to the Tryon Technology Park to see Vireo Health's new manufacturing facility. He encouraged Board members to take a drive to the Park and see how large the building is.

6. Retirement:

Mr. Cetnar indicated that Fran Sikorski will be retiring from the Planning Board after this evening's meeting. He thanked Mr. Sikorski for his 11 years of service to the Board offering his expertise.

Planning Board members wished Mr. Sikorski well.

V. CLOSE OF THE MEETING:

MOTION: To close the meeting at 6:19 p.m.

MADE BY: Mike Dimezza

SECONDED: Fran Sikorski

VOTE: 6 in favor, 0 opposed