

TOWN OF POMPEY
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER 20, 2021

The Town of Pompey Planning Board meeting was held on Monday, September 20, 2021. Chairperson Sue Smith called the meeting to order at 6:47PM.

In attendance: Chairperson Sue Smith. Members: Kevin Coursen, Roy Smith, Dan Bargabos, John Shaheen. Planning Board Attorney Jamie Sutphen, Town Engineer Steve Snell, Town Codes Enforcement Officer Tim Garney.

Absent: Carl Fahrenkurg

Recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Sue Smith made a motion to accept the minutes from the meeting dated August 16, 2021. Kevin Coursen seconded the motion. All members voted in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM

F. Beecher Graham 2 lot subdivision. 4066 Oran Gulf Rd. Tax map #007.-02-29.1.

DISCUSSION

The applicant, F. Beecher Graham was present.

Board member Kevin Coursen asked if the large lot was going to be preserved? Ms. F. Beecher Graham stated she is leaving the land in a trust to keep her wishes to keep the large lot as a preserve.

Chairperson Sue Smith reviewed the questions of the Part 2 SEQRA with the Board. Based on the answers to the SEQRA review, Chairwoman Sue Smith made a motion for a negative declaration. Kevin Coursen seconded the motion. All members voted in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

Per Onondaga County Planning Board referral, they found no significant county-wide implications.

Chairperson Sue Smith made a motion to open a public hearing. John Shaheen seconded the motion.

Adjacent Landowner Robert Fredericks asked if the subdivision would affect his property. He lives at 3981 Oran Delphi Rd.

Adjacent Landowner Michael Miller asked if the large parcel that backs up to his property become a conservation?

The Board relayed to the concerned adjacent landowners that at this time they are approving this subdivision based on face value. If in the future the landowner wants to turn the large lot into a development, then they would have to go through this process all over again. The applicant F. Beecher Graham stated again that she does not plan to turn the land into a development. Chairwoman Sue Smith stated again to the landowners that if the land was going to be developed, they would have to come back before the board.

No further comments from the adjacent landowners.

John Shaheen made a motion to close the public hearing. Kevin Coursen seconded the motion. All members voted in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

After discussion thereon, Kevin Coursen made a motion to approve the subdivision plan as presented with the condition that the map be updated to the most recent date that the revisions were made as this map presented was last dated 7-17-21. date of when the revisions were made. John Shaheen seconded the motion. All members voted in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Sue Smith moved Komar Farm up on the agenda Mr. Komar was present for the applicant. The Chairperson wanted to give an update of where the matter stands. Currently, only a map has been presented and the applicant needs to complete application and the fees. Planning Board attorney, Jamie Sutphen reviewed the application and determined it was incomplete at this time. The applicant was given guidance as to how to complete the application. This will be a 2-lot subdivision. There was a discussion of the next steps that the owner of Komar Farm must take before he can come back.

Mr. Gordon Woodcock was present representing Pivot Energy.

DISCUSSION- This is the first application for a Tier III Solar Farm for the Town of Pompey Planning Board.

The Board began discussing the process. First, concept review, if after that The Planning Board agrees this should be up for consideration, then the Board would write a letter of recommendation which is turned into the Town of Pompey Board. If the Town Board approves by issuing a solar overlay zone in that area, then you will need to come back to the Town of Pompey Planning Board for actual site plan review.

Significant discussion ensued among the Board members and the applicant. Herein is a summary of the major discussion items.

Mr. Gordon Woodcock stated that 22 out of the 96 acres would be used for the 4.25-megawatt community solar project. The proposed project would produce enough energy for approximately 900 homes. Mr. Gordon Woodcock then stated he would like to answer any questions the board had.

John Shaheen asked: Why place the panels East & West and not North & South?

Mr. Gordon Woodcock answered: The panels will be placed on single axes trackers. This will make the panels move as the sun moves east to west. Keeping the panels facing the sun.

John Shaheen asked: Will there be large inverters?

Mr. Gordon Woodcock answered: A three phase string inverter. They are a little bigger than a desk top computer. Very efficient and a low footprint. You can mount them right on the racking. There will be about 40 inverters.

Kevin Coursen: How many panels are on a pole?

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: There will be a series of poles that will attach to driven pile system. They are grouped into sections of 96 modules.

John Shaheen: Is the N.W. Corner in the middle of wet land?

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: Yes. The DEC has provisions for this. We are trying to avoid the wet land.

Chairperson Sue Smith: Out of the 96 acres, how much is currently active farmland?

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: I don't have the exact acres; I am going to guess 40 acres?

Landowner Mr. William Osuchowski: 35 acres.

Chairperson Sue Smith: How much is the larger field that you would use?

Mr. Michael Osuchowski: 20 or 22 acres.

Kevin Coursen: Discussed the topic of grazing sheep and pollination.

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: All our arrays are planted with native pollinator habitat friendly vegetation. It is common to have grazing to keep the vegetation down. You can also use mechanical mowing.

Kevin Coursen: Grazing works well.

Dan Bargabos: What is the life expectancy of the panels?

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: 30-35 years maximum. Minimum 25 years. Estimates vary.

Dan Bargabos: After 35 years, then what?

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: NY has pushed ahead the adoption of decommissioning plans, and the Town has a plan for decommissioning to make sure the monies are there.

Dan Bargabos: What do you usually use for decommissioning?

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: We typically use a decommissioning bond

Planning Board Attorney Jamie Sutphen: I have seen this in other towns, and they require cash. Bonds need to be kept track of and needs to be renewed.

Dan Bargabos: How do you determine how much you need?

Planning Board Attorney Jamie Sutphen: There is a formula.

Dan Bargabos: What will be done with the old panels?

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: The old panels would be repurposed, and or disposed of properly.

Dan Bargabos: Would they go in a landfill?

Kevin Coursen: No

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: Depends on the panel.

Chairperson Sue Smith: Is this concept a fit? With the Town of Pompey? The town encourages agriculture, view sheds and renewable energy. The location of the panels needs to be within the view shed. We need to check the soils apart from the wet land, what is prime farmland, and what is the active rotational farmland.

Kevin Coursen: Is the max height 10 feet? Will sheep grazing meet the agriculture market?

Chairperson Sue Smith: there is a business for the sheep grazing.

Kevin Coursen: I believe it meets the agriculture market.

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: The land once it has been decommissioned will be better than it was before.

Chairperson Sue Smith: any thoughts Roy?

Kevin Coursen: how many acres?

Mr. William Osuchowski: The County put in a drainage ditch, and it is all soaking wet, so I can't till it. So, the 35 acres are not all tillable.

Kevin Coursen: So, Can I build on 21 acres?

Planning Board Attorney Jamie Sutphen: yes. Depending on the layout

Kevin Coursen: We can use land for other things.

Dan Bargabos: It's not attractive.

Planning Board Attorney Jamie Sutphen: View shed on Sweet Rd? Who's view shed are we talking about? Traveling public?

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: Existing vegetation along Sweet Rd we can use as a covering; screening vegetation.

Planning Board Attorney Jamie Sutphen: looking ahead to the site plan, if it is screen able or do, we want it screened?

Kevin Coursen: What is the distance off Sweet Rd?

Dan Bargabos: It looks like 100 feet off Sweet Rd.

Planning Board Attorney Jamie Sutphen: resident nearby. Question is we should hear from that neighbor regarding the view shed.

Mr. William Osuchowski- She can't see the field that we are going to use. I sold the Stacer's their house. I cleared that land 5 to 6 years ago not thinking about the solar. I needed the field for hay because I run a beef farm.

Kevin Coursen: do you plan do farm the acres?

Mr. William Osuchowski- I had logged the land, which is agricultural. I plan on logging it again before this goes through.

Dan Bargabos: how much objection would here be moving it to the wooded area?

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: we would have to get people out there to check it out.

Dan Bargabos: Sweet Rd is one of the significant view sheds in the town.

Mr. William Osuchowski- you can't see it from Palladino's/Carley Farm, not from Sevier Rd

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: view shed analysis needs to be done. GIS analysis and photorealistic simulations can be done.

Dan Bargabos: what do you consider to be a well done, well screened field?

Kevin Coursen: Did you take into consideration the view shed etc.?

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: very limited in Town of Pompey. We will try to evaluate before going in front of the board. Once this is built, it is good energy with low maintenance.

Dan Bargabos: Did they overestimate productivity

John Shaheen and Kevin Coursen: our systems generally over produce the estimated energy.

Kevin Coursen: what about environmental impacts?

Mr. William Osuchowski- Energy is produced here to keep it here.

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: Panels make energy that goes out to the grid and then goes to where it is needed. Using energy locally and the homes buy at a discounted rate.

John Shaheen: does this feed off Southwood substation? Or Duguid substation?

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: Believe Southwood

Chairperson Sue Smith: How far distance from the tallest tower? Is it beyond 1,000 feet?

Mr. William Osuchowski: Way beyond the 1,000 feet.

Dan Bargabos: The town board will handle the taxes?

Chairperson Sue Smith: the biggest issue is the view shed.

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: we can drive out to the sight and show you where.

Neighbor Stan Gorman: 7154 Sevier Rd- Stated the solar overlay law spells out what needs to be done. Is this being addressed? When does the ECC get this?

Chairperson Sue Smith: upon receipt of application. This is all preliminary at this point. We are going over the process.

Planning Board Attorney Jamie Sutphen: We do a recommendation only; the Town Board wants more eyes on it.

Stan Gorman: no formal application yet?

Kevin Coursen: correct

Chairperson Sue Smith: concept fits the Town Plan view shed is major concern.

Kevin Coursen: Form a letter to go to the Town?

Chairperson Sue Smith: yes

Planning Board Attorney Jamie Sutphen: yes. We do not want to rush this process

Chairperson Sue Smith: sounds good.

Kevin Coursen: discuss at next meeting.

Chairperson Sue Smith: Gordon, you have heard the concerns and bring something back next month.

Roy Smith: not all the land is agriculture? This is better than planting alfalfa.

Neighbor Mary Baum: Address 3405 Sweet Rd. Mary is concerned she will see it along with Sean Stacer. Will we get savings on our utility bill?

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: yes. 10% saving.

Town resident Helen Bailey: Concerns- Will this contaminate the land? Who will clean up? Does the town have any say about what type of panels? A deer fence all around? Will you allow any hunting?

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: There is no contamination to speak of

Neighbor Barbara Stacer: We were advised our address is being used for this project. We can see all the fields from our house. Who will maintain the area, who will clean up? Will it leak into the soil? Will it affect wells? Any chemical issues?

Kevin Coursen: unless the panels are ground to a pulp, it will not affect the soil or water table.

Chairperson Sue Smith: This is a conceptual meeting. The view shed is the big issue. An overlay for the whole parcel?

Planning Board Attorney Jamie Sutphen: We will need to revisit this and related concerns.

Kevin Coursen: Everyone agrees to get the view shed analysis?

Discussing when to do the view shed analysis regarding the overview.

Town Supervisor Renee Rotundo: I want this to be the right process. We can tweak things as we go along.

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: does this have potential?

Planning Board Attorney Jamie Sutphen: Give us a chance to go over everything then we will turn it over to the Town Board.

Chairperson Sue Smith: Slope is level. Woods go steeper. Do the view shed analysis. You would prefer to have it on that site, do a larger area. People are concerned with their view.

Mr. Gordon Woodcock: We want to provide the information the town needs. The matter will be taken under further review in the context of the new regulations on solar, and the matter was tabled.

Chairperson Sue Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kevin Coursen seconded the motion at 9:00 PM. All members voted in favor and the motion carried.

Respectively submitted by,

MaryBeth Pazaras