

Conservation and Sustainability Advisory Committee meeting

Minutes of September 15, 2016 meeting

present: Roxanne Marino, Brice Smith, Bara Hotchkiss, Robert Oswald, Andy Hillman, Sue Poelvoorde; Town Planner Darby Kiley, Town Councilperson Nancy Zahler

Meeting called to order at 7:00

Minutes from 7-11-16, 8-25 meetings are being finalized, will have for approval at next meeting

Update on Town Board issues or actions related to Sustainability / Conservation

Roxanne reported on actions at the 9-13-16 Town Board meeting: a resolution was passed pledging to become a Climate Smart Community; a TCCOG working group has formed to assist municipalities who are interested in working on the action items toward certification, and to consider opportunities for funding to assist with related tasks. The CSAC will likely be asked to work with Town staff on this. A resolution was passed to send letters to developers who notify the Town of an interest in building a large scale solar facility that the Town intends to charge a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes). The Board will study this further to consider the potential cost / benefit to the town and solar development; CSAC asked to give input.

Darby reported on progress with the County GIS specialist working with us on a GIS map with overlays of agricultural soil types, steep slopes, wetlands, current tax parcels, and most favorable interconnection lines where large scale solar facilities would be cited (from Brice's 8-25-16 presentation). Our committee will review at a future meeting.

Continued Review of large scale solar installations

Brice walked the group through a presentation with updates on glare evaluation for solar farm siting, originally given to the Planning Board in May. Details of the assumptions, variables, and omissions in the glare evaluation tool (Sandia Ntl. Lab) were outlined. There was discussion towards a draft standard for glare evaluation, to propose for inclusion in the solar law (LL#3 of 2015), in response to request from the TB and Planning Board that our committee look at this issue. The committee favors standards that might encourage developers to proactively consider glare minimization with design choices.

PILOTs (Payment In Lieu of Taxes) for large scale solar

Darby reported that she had talked with County Assessor Jay Franklin, no set way of determining assessment value yet (lots of discussion; PILOTS must be limited to no more than assessed value would be), in Tompkins County, PILOTS are usually done by the IDA. Does this have to be the case? RPT Law allows negotiation with individual municipalities. Further discussion of costs and benefits to the Town (promoting or discouraging solar, revenue) was tabled until a future meeting.

Adjourned at 9:00