

Conservation and Sustainability Advisory Committee

Minutes of November 17, 2016 meeting

Present: Roxanne Marino, Robert Oswald, Sue Poelvoorde, Bara Hotchkiss

Excused: Andy Hillman, Brice Smith

Call to Order at 7:05 pm

Minutes from previous meetings

Bara will supply minutes from 9/14, Roxanne will supply minutes from 9/21, Sue will do 10/13

Old Business

A) Large-scale solar installations in the town

Discussed revised draft maps of Town Land suitable for energy production, map needs to be finalized, to recommend to the Town Board.

Premise: Allows the Town Board and Planning Board to see where solar farms are most likely to be proposed / feasibly sited in the town, with overlays for prime farm land as well as features such as wetlands and steep slopes that are not appropriate for solar farms.

Suggestions: have clearer key to show the 2000' buffer for Map with Soils and Circuits, indicate the sources for information on the map / key / legend somewhere?

Need clarification, aren't "stream buffers" following streams that aren't appropriate for solar facilities? Committee noted that there is no UNA filter or state park consideration as parcels unsuitable for solar development, should indicate these? Show parcels that are only realistic size for locating a large scale solar facility as defined in the town's law (2 acres or greater?); no rationale for restricting parcel size. Titles are confusing, the group had suggestions, Roxanne wrote them on the maps. For the suitable areas (within 2000 feet of suitable circuits, excluding steep slopes and stream buffers), try a patterned fill rather than a color? Keys could be clearer, as well.

These maps show pretty clearly that very little land in Ulysses is NOT agriculturally valuable. Thus, adopting a prohibition on prime and statewide important ag land (as in the CNY model law we were asked by the Ag Committee to consider) would pretty much rule out locating large scale facilities for community shared solar, etc in the town. This demonstrates the need for well-defined standards for where a larger solar facility could be located along the 2000' buffer from suitable circuit. For the summary the committee gives to the Board, we want to include the potential buildout (specify numbers) as the infrastructure exists to date. Brice gave an estimate, in an earlier document of solar facilities that might be expected in the near future.

i) Town Solar law Review

Roxanne forwarded an updated document including the draft glare standards from Brice, that the committee worked on at a previous meeting, for review and discussion at our next meeting.

ii) Discussion of PILOTS for large scale solar projects
Brice supplying information for review and discussion at a future meeting.

B) Zoning update

Roxanne and Sue have attended steering committee meetings, the draft of the ag district revisions is coming along slowly. At their next meeting (early December) they hope to pass a draft to key stake holders, such as our committee. Liaison privilege of the floor has been eliminated from the meetings. Our committee will receive and review the draft.

C) Climate Smart Community (DEC) and Clean Energy Community (NYSERDA)

Roxanne reported on the TCCOG Energy Task Force meetings she has been attending. Several TC towns may join together to apply for grant money, under the Clean Energy Communities program; the group is working on defining goals for such a grant, and also on helping towns to understand and meet the CEC requirements (4 out of 10 items). Ulysses has passed a resolution to work toward a Climate Smart Community designation (have to fulfill certain number of criteria to gain specified number of points). The Board feels we need a natural resources inventory, which our committee may be asked to have a large role in working on. This could be a project eligible for grant funding.

New Business

Roxanne presented a draft letter, based off one that was being sent around by Brian Eden and others, to encourage Governor Cuomo to sign the NYS income tax credit for geothermal energy installations that has been passed in State Senate and Assembly. Sue moved, Bara seconded, and the committee unanimously approved that we submit the letter to the governor on behalf of our committee (Roxanne will sign as chair, and submit to the governor's office tomorrow).

Potential agenda items for next meeting (scheduled for Thursday 12/15/16, 7 pm)

- Discussion of possible grant application to NYS for Town, fair board partnership to remove tree hazards along Rt 96 and replant (Don Ellis, Andy are gathering info)
- Review overall objectives and goals, tasks, and intended outcomes within the Committee's charge (next 3-6 mo), and best mechanism(s) for achieving these

Adjourn at 8:50 pm