

**York Solar meeting
York Town Hall
3/21/2018**

In attendance: Amos Smith, Steve Beardsley, Sam Swearingen, Mary Underhill

Others in Attendance: Carrie Swearingen, Fr. Stephen Muller

Discussion Summary:

Abbey solar project

- Working on contract, in process
- Discussion with applicant (Fr. Muller) on contract, and landowner considerations for solar lease. Father believes contract has decommissioning, financial surety (letter of credit or bond).
- May propose up to 500 acre solar project, wish list.
- 10-acre small scale solar for the Abbey's use now? Per Town, can be pursued, not part of the moratoria.

Status of local solar zoning (that County Planning Dept. is aware of)

- Existing zoning for large scale solar: Towns of Mount Morris, Caledonia & Groveland
- Existing moratoria for large scale solar & investigating and/or actively working on solar law development:
 - Towns of Avon, Lima, Livonia & York
- Investigating and/or actively working on solar law development, no moratoria in place:
 - Towns of Geneseo, Nunda, West Sparta

Ag Districts

- NYS Ag Districts- how does solar impact parcels in Ag Districts?
 - Inclusion in an Ag District is for an 8-year period.
 - Per the Department of Ag & Markets, a farm in the District can produce up to 110% of the farm's energy use with solar installations and the use can be considered an ag/farm use. If the solar installation produces more than 110% of the farm's energy needs, DAM would view this as a commercial use rather than an ag use. The DAM would not protect that use under Ag & Markets Law.

Regulations/zoning

- Preservation of natural features
 - Maps distributed. If the Town has additional mapping needs, let County Planning know.
- NYSun will be releasing the revised Model Solar Law by end of month.
 - NYSun/NYSERDA has decided not to pursue Model Solar Overlay Zoning. They will be developing a guidance document on Site Plan/Special Use Permit regulations for solar development.

Regulations/zoning continued

- Some municipalities have created solar regulations that permit/specially permit large scale solar uses, applying the regs of the district in which they are in (i.e. setbacks). Municipalities are encouraged to ensure that existing bulk regs/zoning are appropriate for this large scale use.
- Discussion on decommissioning, buffers, vegetation.
- Discussion of mixed use- solar and ag (i.e. animal grazing)
- Discussion on solar interest in the Town, quiet with existing moratorium. Solar is common in other areas.

RPTS/PILOT

- Per County Real Property Tax Service, Schoharie County has a solar PILOT in place.
 - NYSERDA Solar PILOT template & Schoharie County PILOT provided to the Town
- Discussion in taxes, assessment of solar.

Landowner guidance

- Solar company could contract for entire parcel, control development of whole parcel when solar is only on part of the parcel.
- Decommissioning clause, financial surety clause

Community Solar

- Solar installation on a property, users can be off site or on adjacent properties. Access to solar for those that might not otherwise have access.
- Geneva has community solar. Look for community solar examples.

Training

- York Solar Presentation scheduled for May 7th. Second date likely May 14th.
- Discussion on venue for training – County facilities, School café, auditorium
- May 7th- NYSun. May 14th- DAM and attorney tentative. Looking for solar installer.
- Advertising training to Town/Village Clerks, Code Enforcement Officers, past training participants on file w/ County Planning, Planning/Zoning Board Chairmen & Clerks, Farm Bureau, Town website, media

Next meeting will be Wednesday, May 16, 2018 @ 6:30 p.m. at the York Town Hall.