

**Town of Elmira, New York
Planning Board**

Meeting – December 2, 2024 7:00 pm EST

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Chairman Mark Miles

Members: Ron McConnell
Mike Kohberger
Nick Kapnolas
Paul DiPietro
Robert Knapp

ABSENT:

William Maloney

ALSO PRESENT:

Eric Crandall, Code Enforcement Officer
Patty Carozza, Recording Secretary
Scott Moore, Town of Elmira Attorney

Chairman Miles opens the regular meeting at 7:00 pm and welcomes everyone. He states that there are five items on the agenda tonight, a public hearing and three site plan applications.

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Miles opens the public hearing for Carson Power who has applied for a Special Use permit for a Solar Farm on Hillcrest Rd. Chairman Miles notes that the legal ad ran in the Star Gazette on 11/19/24 and mailed letters of intent for the property to residents in that area.

Chairman Miles then addresses the audience and asks if anyone wishes to speak in favor of the proposed business. The following resident spoke in favor of the project – Steve Agan, 1058 Chatham Lane (on behalf of his brother Rob Agan- who is leasing the property to Carson Power. Chairman Miles then asked if anyone who is opposed would like to speak. The following residents spoke in opposition of the project: John McGlenn, 155 West Hill Road, Lawrence Storch, 199 West Hill Road, Susan Storch, 211 West Hill Road, and Schuyler Schmidt, 266 West Hill Road.

Hearing from no one else he asks for a motion to adjourn the public hearing until next month's meeting.

MOTION by Mike Kohberger to adjourn the public hearing until January 6, 2025 to allow this board to address concerns regarding the project.

Seconded by Paul DiPietro

Ayes: Miles, McConnell, Knapp, Kapnolas, DiPietro, and Kohberger.

Nays: None

Chairman Miles asked members if they had read the minutes of the November 4, 2024 meeting and if anyone had additions or corrections, and hearing none, a motion to approve.

MOTION by Ron McConnell to accept the minutes as written.

Second by Robert Knapp

Ayes: Miles, McConnell, Kapnolas, DiPietro, Kohberger and Knapp

Nays: None

Chairman Miles states the board will further review the Hillcrest Solar Site Plan. He invites the representative from Carson Power to address the board. Vardaan Gurung starts by discussing the revisions that have been made as requested by this board. He mentions the change in conveyance swales, retention pond, lay down area has been moved, and there will be no pesticides used. The visual impact of the area was also a concern – they are not planning to preserve any trees within the project area. There will also be routine maintenance on the property.

Mr. Gurung stated that he has been in touch with Jimmie Joe Carl with concerns regarding the project. There is another meeting set up with him and this board is requesting the opportunity to review any reports provided from Jimmie Joe. Vardaan will be returning for future meetings when more information is available to give to this board.

Some other points of interest include: the site plan was sent to the City of Elmira Fire Chief Mallow for further review but haven't heard back from him yet, the battery system is a Tesla Mega Pack and it will be in a storage container, and if it is decommissioned – the bond doesn't cover the cost to remove the battery storage – it would be the responsibility of the land owner. Mark Miles asked Eric Crandall if this application has gone to the county and Eric stated that the it did and was sent back to the Town with a few recommendations.

One last note: a resident from West Hill Road inquired how important is the public input on these projects. Chairman Miles stated that they are extremely important and if anyone else in that neighborhood has concerns – they should voice them.

Next on the agenda is a Preliminary Site Plan for a Solar Project located at 264 Crane Rd. Chairman Miles states that Vardaan Gurung of Carson Power is involved with this project as well. Mr. Gurung states that this project is very similar to the Hillcrest Solar Project. Miles then asks if the board has any questions regarding this project. Some of the questions included: can it be a phased project (doing 5 acres at a time): will it have a battery storage, has an engineer been selected, and if there are wetlands -will they be avoided. Most of these questions were answered and Chairman Miles asks if the board has any other questions. Hearing no other questions – per the request of the applicant, he asks for a motion to become the Lead Agency for the environmental review of this project.

MOTION by Robert Knapp to designate the Town of Elmira to become the lead agency for the State Environmental Quality Review.

Seconded by Ron McConnell

Ayes: Miles, McConnell, Kapnolas, DiPietro, Kohberger and Knapp

Nays: None

Next on the agenda is another Site Plan for 2770 County Rt. 60 from Larsen Engineers/ Abundant Solar Power. Jack Buholtz from Larsen engineers and Andrew Van Doorn would like to get a Special Use Permit for a community solar project as they are in an AR zone.

Their site would only be solar – no battery, with nonglare panels, it will cover 14 acres, will have emergency access road and there will be a site clearing. Due to the location of the site – it will not be visible from the road, it will have woods as a buffer, and will use “Green Giants” as screens. They came as a preliminary visit to ask questions, answer questions and request that the Town be designated as the lead agency. They also made a request to do a presentation before the public hearing to provide more information.

Chairman Miles asks the board if any would like to make a motion for the town to become the lead agency of the project.

MOTION by Mike Kohberger to designate the Town of Elmira Planning Board to become the lead agency for the State Environmental Quality Review.

Seconded by Robert Knapp

Ayes: Miles, McConnell, Kapnolas, DiPietro, Kohberger and Knapp

Nays: None

Chairman Miles asks if there are any comments from members of the public to the board. There are none.

Chairman Miles asks if there is any other business or comments to be brought before the Board

New Business: There is a webinar for the credits required for this planning board if anyone is in need. Miles sent the email in regards to that.

Chairman Miles asks for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION by Paul DiPietro to adjourn

Seconded by Mike Kohberger

Ayes: Miles, McConnell, Kapnolas, DiPietro, Kohberger and Knapp

Nays: none

The meeting ends at 8:49 pm EST.

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