

TOWN OF COXSACKIE PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
PEGASUS RESTAURANT
July 16, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bruce Haeussler called the meeting to order at Pegasus Restaurant at 6:30 PM.

ROLL CALL

The following members were in attendance: Chairman Bruce Haeussler, Vice Chairman, Frank Gerrain, William Whitbeck, Linda Deubert, and Hal Beaumont. Also in attendance were Kevin Schwenzfeier, representing Delaware Engineering; Jacqui Murray, representing Freepoint Solar, as well as Peter Ford, Reed Willis, Heather Valiant and members of Standard Solar; Shane Pilato, Mark Flach, Gabriella Flach, Nancy Harm, Lisa Gerrain, Linda Friel, and Carol Metz.

MEETING

Chairman Haeussler began the meeting by introducing Jacqueline Murray and asking her to describe the Freepoint Solar project. Ms. Murray described the 67.8 parcel and explained that the project would only be using about 30 acres to house a 5 megawatt solar array to be surrounded by an 8 foot fence, as well as the 2-foot berm topped with 8-foot trees to buffer the project from the road. The project was introduced back in March of 2019 and they have participated in 14 meetings where there has been much input into the project. It has been a comprehensive and collaborative process. During this time, they have been able to achieve several milestones, such as no impact on historical, cultural, archeological resources, or wetlands. The project meets the setbacks required by Town solar laws. There are no DEC regulated wetlands and will be 50 feet back from the small wetlands designated by the Army Core of Engineers. All DEC's guidelines were met. It is a community solar project. Residents from the town of Coxsackie will receive 15% off their energy bills. A pilot agreement will generate about 40,000 dollars per year for the Town. Immediately, it will generate about 50 jobs contributing to an economic benefit to hotels and restaurants and local shops. During the environmental review, materials were developed, and a negative declaration was granted by the Planning Board. A letter from Coxsackie Hose #3 acknowledging that they were consulted and that Freepoint will be contributing funding to help upgrade firefighting capabilities to be fully prepared for fires in this type of facility was also submitted.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

The meeting was then opened for public comments and questions.

Carol Metz inquired about the 50 jobs, and their permanency. The jobs would be available during the 3 or 4 months of construction, and then they will operate through a local solar company for operations and management. No one will be on site daily. The plan is to continue the use of local contractors throughout the 20 years. It will also be a pollinator, so an uptick of 1 or 2 people will be

needed every month while it develops and there will be a mowing crew. Mr. Willis indicated that he has spoken with Mr. John Halsted who will be putting out the bidding.

Linda Deubert asked if there will be a landscaping contractor? Mr. Willis indicated that there is a maintenance agreement included, and they have been introduced to local contractors.

Chairman Haeussler said that the Board would like the chain-link fence to be galvanized, and if possible be green, black, or brown to reduce the industrial look. It was duly noted and agreed to.

Nancy Harm asked whether the discount for Coxsackie residents would be annual and was told that the discount would come off monthly. The price is based on the delivery, transmission, and energy credits through Central Hudson. There will be a little fluctuation each month depending on the energy produced and the energy used, and there will be a separate bill as well.

Linda Friel asked if the 15% applies for the whole 20 years, and whether there was a fee to join. There is no fee, and the discount will roll over year to year as long as the customer is a resident of Coxsackie.

Heather Valiant presented an aerial view of exactly where the panels would be located, as well as landscaping maps, and Mr. Willis described the landscaping once again. There were some slight changes to some of the trees because coming North you would see the panels in the winter, so they are adjusting to evergreens to help all year long.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to close the meeting at 6:55pm was made by Bill Whitbeck and seconded by Linda Deubert which passed unanimously.

The Planning Board will be reconvening on August 6th for the regularly scheduled Board meeting at which time the Board will prepared to vote.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Patricia McIntyre, Secretary