Solar Committee Meeting

1/21/2020

Attendees: Hannah, Charlie, Ken, Chuck, Wayne and Phil

Hannah brought the meeting to order. Minutes were reviewed. Minutes approved; Charlie 1st, Wayne 2nd. All yea.

Hannah announced that Chuck would be leaving the committee and Phil Rose would be replacing him.

Hannah reminded the guests that the committee has been formed to study the impact, effects and possible controls on ground solar facilities.

Committee members reported on items they researched:

Chuck was tasked with looking at the town’s land use, maps available from Madison County. He suggested that we need to go to the county planning board for more information. He discussed net metering which is a buy back program for energy research. Money is not exchanged but based on a storing credits model. This program may have little impact on what the town is considering as it applies to residential and small commercial projects. It is heavily regulation and technical.

An email sent from Lisa on 12/5 regarding a similar project in the Town of Newfield. Perhaps we should ask those town officials if they would have a conversation with us about their experience. Conversation ensued.

Charlie was tasked with obtaining the Ag & Farmland Protection Plan from the county. He has a draft that to be reviewed by the committee members; it is not for public distribution at this time. This plan will give good guidelines to all the towns regarding land use. He mentioned that having soil and land classification maps will help as we develop our 10-year comprehensive plan.

Wayne was tasked with getting information regarding the line going thru Fenner (Cortland Fenner 3-115 line). National Grid takes responsibility of the line and equipment, performing continued assessment. The Homer solar energy center is looking to develop on the same line. They have been working on the project for 2 years and are 276 in the Article 10 queue (the state application process). The line queue position for the solar farm is critical.

Ken referred to the December town board minutes regarding funding that Cypress is offering to Fenner.

Hannah asked Dan Smith to comment on his concerns regarding town roads. Dan stated that the town has not been compensated appropriately for the care of our roads. We are allocated $147,000 from the state each year to maintain the roads; in 2019 the town provided an additional $30,000 to complete projects. When a new road is cold paved it has to last for 10 years before it can be done again. We oil and stone during that time to prolong the road’s life. Our roads are not built for heavy equipment. He is asking that is the town does decide to go ahead with any energy project that we find out which roads will be impacted by trucking. We should ask for upfront maintenance costs of those roads and funding to repave them after the project is done, if needed. The maintenance of our roads should be incorporated into the town’s 10-year plan.

The committee has asked/addressed the following:

1. Ask Lisa to resend email regarding Newfield; originally sent on 12/5/19
2. Charlie will get copies of the soil map and also ask for contours
3. Hannah will research the impact solar has on property values
4. Phil will research viewshed
5. Ask Lisa to make copies of the town’s land usage map for the committee

Future homework/conversations:

1. Changing farmland designation to commercial – what is the tax and resale impact
2. Everyone read the County’s land plan and review the land usage map before the next meeting
3. What impact do solar panels have on water runoff? Are there any wind concerns? Should there be a disaster plan?

Agenda for next meeting:

1. Discussion on town maps, including soil and usage
2. Discussion of the County’s land plan

Next meeting is scheduled for 2/13.

Meeting adjourned. Ken 1st, Charlie 2nd.

Respectfully submitted, Chris Mandel