

Regular Meeting of the Great Valley Planning Board
October 9, 2019
(no August or September meetings)

Present: Chris Schena (chairperson)
Al Puszcz
Don Roll

Others: Dan Brown
Aaron Tiller
Becky Kruszynski
Rich Rinko
Nathan Rizzo – Solarliberty
Adam Rizzo – Solarliberty
Mike – Solarliberty
Paul Lavoie – Solarliberty
Clair Conklin
Fred Perkins

The meeting was opened by Chris at 7 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Solarliberty talked about a project they would like to do in Great Valley. They are located in Buffalo, NY and currently have approximately 2300 installs across New York State. National Grid has 395MW (mega watts) of available credits in New York State with 100MW remaining. The proposed site is approximately 100A on property owned by Nelson Noble on Martin Rd. but could be reduced because of National Grid studies. Solarliberty has a lease with Noble if the project goes thru. They have submitted an application to the utility company and are currently first in the queue for feeder and substation. The proposed project failed the first step of the process because of the size and it is now in a study for 60 days. If approved, Solarliberty has 90 days to pay 25% of the interconnection fee and 120 days to pay the remaining 75%. If this doesn't happen they are out of the queue. There are 8 projects in the queue. Great Valley does not currently allow solar. Dan suggested it could be up to 6 months before the town has solar law which may not match Solarliberty's time frame. Solarliberty said they need community support and would offer any assistance needed.

They are proposing a 15 year PILOT after which the property would be assessed at fair market value or the PILOT would be extended. The solar panels have a 25 year warranty. NYSERDA helps to assess property values and they have an online calculator to help determine PILOT dollars. If the taxes or the PILOT is too high the project won't work. There is funding available from NYSERDA – first come first served. If the town opted out of the PILOT there would be no project and it could also discourage future development in the town. Dan asked if the town can change its mind on the PILOT and was told it would be difficult. Article 10 supersedes town rules. The school has opted out of the PILOT because it can have a negative effect as they can be told how to use the money. Solarliberty said they can proceed without a school PILOT and that they would work with the school. Discounted electricity would be offered to residential and commercial customers.

There is a 25 year warranty on the solar panels. At the end of the project 99% of the materials are recycled and 1% goes to the landfill. There is nothing toxic. Posts are pounded into the ground with no cement. The panels would be located away from the wetlands – 100' from the center of the creek and would be 9' high. There is concern about what would be seen from Route 219 and Holiday Valley. They would have anti glare panels and are silent. There could be pollinator friendly plants or “lambscaping” for vegetation maintenance instead of mowing.

Clair Conklin and Fred Perkins were looking for clarification on how to get a permit for a convenience store and coin shop on commercial property that is owned by Clair. This would be an allowed use. NYS State Law requires commercial property to be ADA compliant and must meet DEC requirements. They were told to have an engineer do the design. The design would come to the Town Planning Board and also to the County Planning Board because it is within 500' of Route 219. Then there would have to be a public hearing.

Nancy Norton asked to have the Notice of Decision that was approved October 8, 2014 for tax map no. 73.002-1-22.2 renewed. A motion to update that Notice of Decision was made by Don with a 2nd by Al. All in favor.

A motion to accept the minutes of the July 10, 2019 meeting as submitted was made by Don with a 2nd by Al. All in favor.

There was discussion on developing solar law for the town. Chris suggested a solar committee. Rich suggested to put a limit on the acreage for a solar project. It was brought up that the public survey that was done by the town showed that residents live here because it is rural and want it to stay that way and to leave the ag land alone – Solarliberty sees it as a temporary use of farmland. Becky suggested to involve the community. Chris questioned if Gary Palumbo could be hired to do solar law for the town.

Don moved to adjourn at 9:02 PM with a 2nd by Al . All in favor.