

# PLANNING BOARD - TOWN OF KNOX - ALBANY COUNTY

P.O. Box 56, Knox, N.Y. 12107

*Established 1822*

## PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**Minutes:** 13 October 2016

**Present:** Bob Price, Bob Gwin, Tom Wolfe, Debra Nelson, Brett Pulliam, Betty Ketcham  
Meeting was called to order at 1935.

### Borrego/Whipple Large-Scale Solar Array Public Hearing

Chairman Price opened the meeting with an introduction to the Borrego/Whipple Large-Scale Solar Array project. Engineer Dean Smith shared graphic of the array with the audience and explained the array's features. Bob Price listed the documentation that has been submitted by Borrego for the project.

#### Public Comments:

Mr. Carl Sager of 384 Old Stage Road, handed out a list of five questions. The Board and audience all participated in a discussion related to the five questions.

There was discussion about the use of herbicides/chemicals and the audience was assured that the agreement is for no herbicides or chemicals to be used for vegetation management or panel washing—only water will be used. The Board also stated that all vehicles would be required to use the concrete wash-out station on Old Stage Road when entering or exiting the site.

There was additional discussion related to the impact of this particular project on other solar projects in the Town. The Board clarified that there are no plans for the Town to build a large-scale solar array project but there are other projects in discussion in the area. This project will not affect the ability to erect or mount solar panels on residential property.

Mr. Brian Fish of 1390 Berne Altamont Road, expressed concerns regarding visibility of the array from his home north of Route 156. There was discussion about the array not having sufficient visual blocking along the north side of the access road from Old Stage Road. Mrs. Fish asked if the power from the array was going to cause the power to her house to fluctuate and was assured by Borrego and the Board that it would not. Mr. Mike Moollock of 1448 Berne Altamont Road expressed concerns regarding visibility, as he also lives north of Route 156.

Borrego agreed to conduct a visual impact survey of the north side of the entrance road. Borrego will resubmit a visual screening plan (including photos) showing the areas of concern that were expressed at the public hearing. Borrego also agreed to conduct another visual impact assessment one year from projected planning date (Spring 2017) to determine if other trees need to be added to the buffer. Borrego agreed to escrow funds through Spring 2018 for vegetative or other visual screening.

Ya-Chi Lin of 1390 Berne Altamont Road asked if the power from the array was going to cause the power to her house to fluctuate and was assured by Borrego and the Board that, based on the interconnectivity studies, it would not.

Mr. Sager expressed concern about the existing problem of water flooding across Old Stage Road and if the array project had the potential to exacerbate the situation. There was discussion regarding the new 24-in diameter culvert at the intersection of Old Stage Road. Dean Smith explained that the SPDES permit to be issued by NYSDEC restricts runoff from the project to be equal or less than existing conditions. The Board agreed that the array would not affect the existing flood problem. Bob Price will discuss the issue with the Town's Highway department.

There was discussion about hours of construction. It was agreed that construction would be limited to the hours of 7 AM to 5 PM Monday through Friday. Saturday work would be limited non-noise generating activities between the hours of 8 AM to 5 PM.

Mike Vincent of the Town of Berne Planning Board inquired about details of the project that may assist his board in review of future large-scale solar projects.

Borrego will update the operation and maintenance plan to reflect the agreed-upon construction times, conduct the visual impact assessment after leaf off, and update the visual mitigation measures on the plan.

With no additional questions from the audience, Bob Price closed the public hearing at 2109 and made a motion to issue a Conditional Approval for the project. Debra Nelson seconded the motion. There were 6 Yea and 0 Nay.

Bob Price will send a confirmation letter specifying the items that will need to be completed along with the newly agreed upon issues of a visual assessment effort and its timing.

***Debra Nelson made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Brett Pulliam seconded the motion. There were 6 Yea and 0 Nay.***

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Meeting adjourned at 2140. Next meeting - Thursday, 10 November 2016 @ 1930.