

March 20, 2023

PINE PLAINS PLANNING BOARD WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
Saturday March 11th, 2023
10:30 AM
In Person and Zoom

IN PERSON ATTENDANCE: Michael Stabile, Chairman
Al Blackburn
Scott Cavey, Alternate
Ethan DiMaria
Dick Hermans
Steve Patterson

ZOOM ATTENDANCE:
(Members attending via Zoom do not count towards the quorum or voting.)

ABSENT: Vikki Soracco
Helene Marsh, Alternate
Kate Osofsky

ALSO PRESENT: Warren Replansky, Town Attorney, in person
George Schmitt, Town Engineer, in person
Sarah Jones, Town Liaison, in person
Frank Fish, BFJ Planning, in person
Andrew Gordon, Carson-Power, in person
Eric Redding, Bergmann Associates, in person
Multiple Members of the Public, in person

Chairman Stabile opened the workshop meeting at 10:30 am.

Carson-Power, LLC Workshop: Stabile said he would have Fish and Replansky go over the process of the application and then Stabile would go over the document created by the board with questions and concerns of the public and the board. Stabile said if there was time there could be public comment.

Fish then went through the SEQR process. Fish said a tier 3 solar project requires a special permit, public hearing, and site plan. Fish said there are five requirements for the permit, visual impact, property operation and maintenance plan, preservation of agricultural lands, preservation of natural habitat, and minimum lot coverage. Fish said the planning board

March 20, 2023

needs to make a determination of the project's significance using the SEQR process. Fish said the planning board is the lead agent, which is the most powerful agency in the process. Fish said if the project is a Type I Action, then it would require a long form EAF (environmental assessment form). The planning board would complete part II of the FEAF. There are 18 categories of part II to determine impact. Fish said there were three that jumped out at the board; habitat, impact on visuals, and consistency with the community character. Fish said the board would then have to make a negative or positive declaration. If the project has a significant adverse condition then the board would declare a positive declaration, which leads to a full environmental impact statement. Fish said the board must go through the SEQR process before anything can be approved.

Replansky said he would like to have an executive session with the board after the workshop to answer any questions they may have regarding the SEQR process.

Stabile asked Replansky if a negative declaration is determined that doesn't mean that the board is approving the application, correct? Replansky replied correct, the negative declaration only applies to the environmental issues.

Stabile said the board is now at the end of the beginning of the process and is heading towards the SEQR determination.

Stabile then went over the document of the issues and questions from the public and the board (see attached).

Stabile then allowed for public comment.

The first speaker was Pavan Gattani of 504 Bean River Road who is concerned about the toxicity of the panels.

The next speaker was Denise Bottiglieri of 389 Skunks Misery Road who agreed with Gattani that the solar rays were probably toxic since they are manufactured in China. Bottiglieri is also concerned where all the panels will go after 25 years. Bottiglieri also feels getting the panels here, and the construction, will cause a lot of CO2 emissions that could be avoided by not having the solar panels.

The next speaker was Ed Bona of 389 Skunks Misery Road. Bona agreed about the CO2 emissions and the manufacturing in China. Bona said they bought their property two years ago and have put

March 20, 2023

a lot of money into it and he is concerned about having the solar field nearby. Bona said they pay a lot of land taxes and is upset that they weren't made aware of this project. Bona would like the board to proceed slowly and really evaluate it.

The next speaker was Michael Goldman of 426 Tripp Road. Goldman said he would like to see how much of a net gain there is by switching to solar energy. He would also like to see a realistic diagram with a topo map. Goldman would also like a third party to observe that only the trees come down that are supposed to. Goldman would also like the balloon test to be done.

The next speaker was John Lyons, an attorney from Rhinebeck. Lyons said he is a lawyer who is representing ten citizens who are neighbors to the proposed project. Lyons said he submitted documents advocating for a positive declaration for the project. Lyons said they do not agree with all the conclusions reached and have some real questions regarding visual assessments. He urges the board to follow the visual impact studies laid out by the DEC. Lyons said the document presented earlier in the meeting is a wonderful start to a scoping document. Lyons said an environmental impact study will really help to pin everything down and is very important for communities. Lyons said an EIS also discusses alternatives, something that Lyons feels has been lacking from this application.

Pavan Gattani then spoke again asking about the purchase of the land. Stabile said this was not in the planning board's purvey.

Stan Hirson of 76 Bean River Road then spoke and asked how much carbon is being saved by building this solar field. Hirson asked what the responsibility of the community is to help extend the life of the planet.

The next speaker was Allison Galliher. Galliher said her family has owned farmland in the area that has been put into conservation to protect the land. Galliher said they are a part of the community. Galliher asked the board to think about what the positive impacts of the project are. Galliher is concerned about her land value if the project goes through. Galliher doesn't feel Carson-Power has a long-term interest in Pine Plains.

Anna Gattani then spoke for her son who was not present. Gattani's son said he urges the community and board to do their due diligence. He said Carson-Power is an upstart company and

March 20, 2023

are only in existence to develop farmland for their needs and then sell fast. They have no long-term interest in the community. He feels the firm will only last as long as the New York State's tax incentives do.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30pm.

The board then went into an executive session with Replansky for the purpose of an attorney/client session regarding SEQR questions. No action was taken in the executive session.

Respectfully submitted by:

Tricia Devine

Michael Stabile