

PLANNING BOARD MEETING  
MARCH 29, 2023  
SPECIAL MEETING ON SOLAR LAW

This meeting was held at the Canajoharie Municipal Building at 75 Erie Blvd in Canajoharie for the purpose of presenting Draft 2 of the proposed Solar Law.

Planning Board members present were Michael Cole, Raymond Kiefl, Dennis McEwan, Ivan Easton, John Toomey, and Elam Kauffman. Zoning Board of Appeal Chairman Michael Ehrenreich was also present. Town Board Members present were Benny Goldstein, Town Supervisor, Rodney Young, Michael Muhlebeck and John Peruzzi.

Town Supervisor Benny Goldstein welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending this meeting. He noted that the solar companies will bring additional funding to the Town by way of PILOT Programs. As well as income to the landowners. He also noted that he has been contacted by various solar companies looking to have the Solar moratorium lifted, and otherwise showing an interest in developing projects in the town.

Attorney Kirsten Dunn and Kylie Ferguson, from Dunn & Dunn, PLLC and Adam Yagelski from Delaware Engineering gave a presentation on the proposed Solar Law. They outlined the differences between the old law and the new law, which has more concise requirements regarding siting, installation, and decommissioning of solar panels. They also noted that the new law only regulates installations 25 megawatts or smaller. New York State regulates the larger installations.

Michael Cole noted that when he first became Chairman of the Planning Board, he attended a meeting in Palatine Bridge that was discussing their proposed solar law. After talking with people there he felt that the Town of Canajoharie should really investigate getting legal help with creating a new solar law. He approached the Town Board to request funding for legal consultation and professional engineering services to create a new law. The Town Board did include funding in the current budget, and some in the preceding year. This will be a process of many drafts and public input is desired. This is an agricultural area, and we need to preserve our land use. There are many beautiful vistas that should also be preserved as well. Michael also noted that there have been previous meetings geared to reaching out to the farming community and they were well attended. He also noted that more informational meetings will be held. Michael also noted that the law is not telling people that they can't change their land use, every landowner has the right to control how they use their land. This law will try to protect the agricultural use of the land.

A few citizens voiced their concerns over the large projects currently under review. Attorney Kirsten Dunn encouraged people to write the State regarding their concerns over the larger projects that are currently being developed. She noted that comments and ideas on the law could also be sent to her office.

Board member Michael Muhlebeck noted that this is also a historic area and has a large Amish community that contributes a lot to our economy. The new law will have tighter regulations to protect our agricultural heritage.

Board member Rodney Young noted that although the Town cannot control the large projects, this new law will control the smaller ones. He encouraged people present to talk to their neighbors about their views on solar projects. If people don't allow their land to be used for solar projects, then the larger projects can't get a "toe hold" in our community.

Some people were concerned about notifications of these meetings. It was noted that this meeting was advertised on the Sign at the Village Green Park, and in the newspaper. It was suggested that mailings should have gone out as well as emails. However, the cost of mailing out notices would be prohibitive, and the Town does not have a database of emails. The Town tries to get information posted on the website operated by Montgomery County.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy S. Kretser  
Secretary