

Adopted Minutes
Cayuga County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Board
Monday, June 6, 2022, 3:00 P.M.
6th Floor Caucus Room 1, Cayuga County Office Building
& Via Conference/Video Call

Board Members Present:

Jennifer Indelicato (Cayuga County Real Property Services, Director)
Michele Wunderlich as designee for Steve Lynch (Cayuga County Planning & Economic Development, Director)
Jason Cuddaback, (CCSWCD)
Dennis Eckel (Agribusiness Representative)

Others present:

Kari Terwilliger (CCPED Staff to AFPB)

Absent:

Andrew Dennison (Cayuga County Legislator)
Dan Welch (CCE Agriculture Educator Representative)
Jeff Ten Eyck (Agricultural Land Preservation Organization Representative)
Craig Culver (Farmer Representative)
Christopher Gross (Farmer Representative)
Vacant (Farmer Representative) x2

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Kari Terwilliger at approximately 3:03 P.M. without a quorum of members present. The Board proceeded with their business despite not having quorum requesting that Kari email draft letters in response to the NOIs on the agenda from NYSDAM (for which the Board has a deadline to respond) to all members asking them to weigh in and vote via email.

2. Approval of Minutes –January 12, 2022 meeting

Kari Terwilliger asked the Board if they had reviewed the minutes from the January 12, 2022 meeting and if they had any questions, comments, or corrections to make. There were none. She asked if there was a motion to approve said minutes. **Jennifer Indelicato made a motion that the minutes from January 12, 2022 be accepted as written. Motion seconded by Dennis Eckel. Motion carried.**

3. Solar NOI Review- NSF Aurelius Site 1, 2, 3 & 4 (2023 W. Genesee Street Rd, Aurelius)

Kari Terwilliger asked the Board if they had reviewed the NOI for this project, noting that while there are 4 parcels with smaller solar installations proposed, that it is really one solar project on this farm site adjacent to BOCES and the county's industrial park. The Board discussed the project and compared it to other projects that they have reviewed recently, noting that they are still not in favor of solar project proposed on good agricultural soils and would much rather see these projects proposed elsewhere, such as the brownfield site just down the road. The Board also discussed that this location is in close proximity to existing commercial and industrial development and that in their opinion it is likely that the rest of the surrounding area will transition to commercial or industrial growth in the future, so while there are good productive soils on this site it may be a better location than others in the area for solar development. Lastly, the Board discussed the existing drainage issues on this site and the adjacent BOCES site, noting that the bedrock is not very deep and the properties in the area routinely experience ponding and stormwater runoff related flooding. **Jason Cuddaback made a motion to have Kari draft one response letter to NYSDAM for all four sites and circulate it to the full Board via email for review and vote stating that the AFPB is generally not supportive of large scale solar projects proposed on good quality agricultural soils, that the NYSDAM solar development guidelines for pre and post-construction should be required and followed, and to encourage the town to require and review a SWPPP to ensure stormwater runoff from the site is minimized. Motion seconded by Jennifer Indelicato. Motion carried.**

4. Solar NOI Review- Sevoir Solar, LLC (NYS Rt 326 and Sevoir Rd, Aurelius)

Kari Terwilliger asked the Board if they had reviewed the NOI for this project, noting that this project and the next one on the agenda are owned by the same landowner and being developed by the same developer- agenda item 4 & 5 were then discussed together by the Board. The Board discussed the project and compared it to other projects that they have reviewed recently, noting that they are still not in favor of solar project proposed on good agricultural soils and would much rather see these projects proposed elsewhere, such as brownfield sites or other underutilized sites. The Board also discussed that unlike the previous agenda item, these sites are adjacent to other active farmland and will have a more detrimental effect on the loss of good agricultural land given their locations as compared to the solar project adjacent to BOCES. The Board did note that this developer seems to be trying to control stormwater with rain gardens on each project site and has included more buffers to lessen the visual impact on surrounding properties and passersby. **Dennis Eckel made a motion to have Kari draft one response letter to NYSDAM for both Sevoir Solar and Half Acre Solar and circulate it to the full Board via email for review and vote stating that the AFPB is generally not supportive of large scale solar projects proposed on good quality agricultural soils and that the NYSDAM solar development guidelines for pre and post-construction should be required and followed. Motion seconded by Jennifer Indelicato. Motion carried.**

5. Solar NOI Review- Half Acre Solar, LLC (2047 NYS Rt 326, Aurelius)

This item was discussed at the same time as agenda item 4 with the Board's motion requesting one letter to NYSDAM covering both projects.

6. Vacant Farmer Representative Board Positions (2)

Kari Terwilliger reminded the Board that they still have two vacant positions for active farmer (full or part time) representatives on the Board that really need to be filled so that the Board has a better chance of obtaining quorum for meetings. She asked the Board if anyone had spoken with any farmers that may be interested, and asked that they try to reach out again. The Board agreed to speak again with some farmers that they know who might be interested and may have the time available to attend meetings, and would ask them to complete the application Kari previously circulated to the Board.

7. Other Business

Kari Terwilliger asked if anyone had anything else they would like to discuss. Kari mentioned that Amy Olney from NYALT left that organization and is now working for Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT). This means that the review and selection of farms from Cayuga County by the NYALT Board would be on hold while they bring on a new Executive Director. The Board asked what the general timeframe was now for the PDR projects once the AFPB has reviewed them. Kari stated that it was hard to predict since the timeframe from our support to selection by a land trust is dependent on so many factors. She stated that what she has heard recently is that once an application is submitted to the state under these open rounds of funding, it usually takes a month or two to be approved and then six months or more to get under contract. Once under contract the state is still expecting the projects to be completed in no more than four years with two years being preferred.

8. Adjournment

Kari Terwilliger asked if there was any further discussion or business to come before the Board. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to adjourn. **Jason Cuddaback made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Jennifer Indelicato. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 3:45 P.M.**

Minutes prepared by Kari Terwilliger, staff to the AFPB