



# CAYUGA COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

MINUTES  
August 15, 2018

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## MEMBERS PRESENT

Patricia Bianconi (Aurora); Derek Ostrowski (Brutus); Cynthia Stephenson (Town of Cato); Randall E. Frech (Village of Cato); Donald Wilson, Jr. (Village of Cayuga); Geoff Hanford (Fair Haven); John Baker (Fleming); Deborah Ross (Ledyard); Donald Francis (Locke); Michael Riley (Mentz); Frederick Palmer (Town of Moravia); Terry Green (Niles); Darrin Rooker (Port Byron); Ann Robson (Scipio); Jeremy Bacon (Sennett); June Ouellette (Sterling); Steve Helzer (Throop); Stephen Talcott (Venice); Chris Cramer (Victory); John Abraham (Weedsport).

## OTHERS PRESENT

David Nelson (County Planning Staff); Kari Terwilliger (County Planning Staff); Gillian Sloan (County Planning Staff).

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chairman Darrin Rooker (Port Byron) called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm in the Conference Room at the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES, 1879 West Genesee Street Road in Aurelius.

### 2. INTRODUCTIONS BY MEMBERS

Each person present introduced himself or herself.

### 3. INTERNAL BUSINESS

a. Approval of Minutes from March 28, 2018 Meeting:

Motion by Ann Robson (Scipio) to approve the minutes as submitted. Seconded by Michael Riley (Mentz). All members vote AYE. Motion carried.

### 4. ISSUES OF COUNTYWIDE IMPORTANCE

- a. Questions or comments on county planning updates provided: Mr. Nelson asked the Board if anyone had any questions on the handout of the project and countywide planning activities that he provided the members. The following questions were received:

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- Michael Riley (Mentz) asked for an update on the Owasco Flats project. Planning Staff stated that the road had been constructed and, as far as they knew, the project remained on schedule.
  - Don Wilson (Cayuga) noted that there was no mention in the minutes of the assistance Ms. Terwilliger provided to the Village of Cayuga with their Zoning Law Update project. Don gave a brief update on the process and that the Village is now preparing for a public hearing and potential adoption in September. He said the Village was grateful for her help with facilitating two public meetings and working with the Steering Committee to finalize the draft zoning law.
- b. Review of Minutes of the GML 239-l, m & n Committee: Mr. Nelson informed the Board that they received copies of the Committee's minutes from March 2018 through June 2018; and asked if anyone had any questions or comments regarding the GML 239-l, m & n Committee. No questions or comments were received.

**5. LOCAL STATUS REPORTS**

HABs: Michael Riley (Mentz) said that he watched a show on TV today on HABs and that it was a great show with good experts; and encouraged others to search for it online.

Manure Lagoon: Mr. Riley also spoke about the manure lagoon issue in the Town of Mentz. He spoke briefly about the issue from his perspective from working with Soil & Water; and then said that as a Town Planning Board Member he has a slightly different perspective and was taken by surprise because there was no notice given to the Town or the Planning Board that this project was going to happen. He said he feels some of the public's concerns could have been mitigated if proper notice was given to the Town prior to construction. He said that misinformation spread quickly because there was no notice or information provided by the property owner or project manager in advance. He also said that the timing of the project in relation to the Town's recently adopted Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan and current process of updating the Town's Zoning Ordinance is unfortunate because there are some nervous town board members that seem to want to walk back the adoption of the plan and support of agriculture due to the misinformation and rumors that are spreading about the project. Mr. Riley also said that the most recent article in The Citizen did a good job of clearing up some of the misinformation and was really informative. Kari Terwilliger noted that she has heard from the Town Clerk that the issue will be brought up again at the Town Board meeting on 8-21-18; and that the Town is planning on hosting a public meeting with a neutral party facilitator on 8-28-18, likely to be held at the school to better accommodate the anticipated crowd. The town hopes to have representatives from CH4 and DEC at that meeting. Ann Robson (Scipio) asked if the manure pond is being developed by an independent operator. Mr. Riley stated that as far as he knows, and from what was in the paper, it is being built by CH4 who is leasing the land it is on from the Hourigan Farm, but Hourigan Farms will be responsible for maintenance of the structure and will use the digestate on the adjacent fields as fertilizer. Jeremy Bacon (Sennett) stated that the larger issue is that CH4 is an out-of-state company

operating an industrial-scale facility and selling carbon credits back to other states. He said the issue shouldn't be about having a manure pit or right-to-farm laws but that this out of state company operating in New York is not benefiting anyone living in New York.

Solar Farm: Ann Robson (Scipio) briefed the group on a solar farm project proposal that has been submitted to the Planning Board in the Town of Scipio by Duke Energy of North Carolina. She said that project is for the lease of 96 acres of active farmland. This is a utility solar project with no direct access for local users, generated energy will only going directly into the grid. She stated that the Town has begun the SEQR process and looking at the time frame for a Special Use Permit review with the Town Board. She mentioned that Ms. Terwilliger was a huge help and that she and Mr. Nelson prepared a technical guidance memo for the Town to help them understand the review process and their options for a project of this magnitude (referencing their own zoning code sections and guidance documents prepared by others such as model regulations, etc.). Ms. Robson also said that these large utility companies are targeting towns without strong solar language in their comprehensive plans, noting that Scipio's was last updated in 2011 and does not really mention solar. She said some of the issues that the Planning Board is looking at are the topography of the site, fire protection, the impact on neighbors, having an appropriate decommissioning plan (land to go back to agricultural use after panels reach useful life), etc. She also mentioned that there will be no compensation to the town, except if the assessor raises the assessment on the parcel since 96 acres will no longer be used for agriculture. Mr. Nelson mentioned that some towns and villages in the county have adopted solar regulations and asked if anyone wanted to share their experience. Michael Riley (Mentz) asked about the solar installation on Skinner Hill Rd in Moravia and whether that was considered a utility or not. Mr. Nelson said he believed it was a utility installation but was not certain. John Abraham (Weedsport) stated that the Town of Brutus was approached about a solar farm that has been installed and was told that anyone in a large area south of Cato could sign up and get 10% of their energy from there. Mr. Riley stated that everyone should drive around the Finger Lakes, particularly in Madison County where there are large solar projects; and that he is surprised at how far behind Cayuga County is with solar development. He said that municipal buildings, closed landfills, etc. are great places to install solar.

Changes to SEQR: Patricia Bianconi (Aurora) asked Mr. Nelson if it was true that DEC's SEQR changes were finally going into effect on Jan1, and if the County could provide a training in early 2019 on what the changes will be; and particularly how that will affect historic districts and subdivisions. Mr. Nelson said confirmed the effective date of the changes and that the County will reach out to DEC and see if we can either get them to come do a training or get some materials from them on the changes to help us to a training.

Mr. Nelson reminded everyone that due to a temporary staff reduction, the November training session has been cancelled; however, the November Planning Board meeting will be held since

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2019 officer elections will need to take place. He also said that he plans to have the 2019 training schedule set and distributed to everyone at the November meeting.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourned at 6:38 pm.

Minutes submitted by David Nelson (staff).