

APPROVED 4/27/22

**TOWN OF CLAVERACK
PLANNING BOARD & ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
JOINT MEETING
MINUTES
September 7, 2021**

Chairman Scott Cole called the September 7, 2021 joint meeting of the Town of Claverack Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Cole led the Board and members of the audience with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members in attendance were: Chairman Scott Cole, Virginia Ambrose, Lisa Bowe, Alberta Cox, Stephen King, William Michael, Tim Wyman, engineer; George Schmitt, attorney; Rob Fitzsimmons and secretary; Jodi Keyser

ZBA members in attendance were: Chairman David Graziano, Douglas Colwell and Steven Melnyk

Motion to approve the Minutes of August 2, 2021 was made by Stephen King with a second from Lisa Bowe. All members were in favor. Motion carried.

CONTINUING APPLICATIONS FOR 9/7/2021:

Clover Meadow Solar/Edward & Sandra Casivant/Eden Renewables Site Plan & Special Exception Review: Tax Map #(SBL) 100 . – 1 – 1 . 5 Located at 129 Humane Society Rd. Site Plan Review and Special Exception Permit for the installation of a large-scale solar farm.

Gillian Black and Anna Rehder were present for the application. Mr. Black informed the Board that no changes have been made since the last meeting. Anna Rehder gave a brief review of the applications. Ms. Rehder informed the Board that the solar field is the third of three large scale solar fields located on Humane Society Rd. and will be constructed on property owned by the Casivant family. Ms. Rehder continued that the previous two large solar fields on Humane Society Rd. were approved by the Town of Claverack Planning Board and received Area Variance from the Town of Claverack Zoning Board of Appeals. Ms. Rehder continued that the Casivant property was subdivided into three separate parcels and they were able to squeeze in the third solar field. Ms. Rehder informed the Board that this solar field is situated on an abandoned section of Humane Society Rd. Ms. Rehder continued that this parcel will meet the 100-foot setback on all sides except one where only 20-feet is achievable in order to reach the adequate number of solar panels to make the field viable. Ms. Rehder continued that this area variance is currently before the Town of Claverack Zoning Board of Appeals. Ms. Rehder continued that due to the large amounts of wetlands located on this parcel the need for relief of the setback is needed. Ms.

Rehder informed the Board that this site will produce 5-megawatts of energy, will include bird and bat boxes for habitat and will be fenced which is still being decided on what to plant or grow on such as ivy or another climbing vine for screening. Chairman Cole asked if there are any other questions for the Zoning and Planning Board members in attendance. No further questions from the Zoning and Planning Board members. Chairman Cole continued the public hearing at 7:08 p.m.

Peter Johnson asked what portion of the agricultural property will now be transferred to industrial use.

Mr. Black explained that the property will not be transferred to industrial use but will remain as a solar field with an ecology including native birds, bees and plants that will also give the soil a substantial time to re-energize and heal from decades of crops which deplete the nutrients from the ground. Ms. Rehder added that crops deplete the nutrients of the soils over time and the solar field allows for the soils to recover. Ms. Rehder stated that at the end of the solar field the property will return to agricultural use and the soils will be richer and better for use.

Mr. Johnson asked what the total acreage of the site will be. Mr. Black answered 18 acres.

Mr. Johnson asked what is the longevity of the solar field. Mr. Black answered 40-years and beyond if the owner chooses to continue the lease.

No further questions. Chairman Cole closed the public hearing at 7:15 p.m.

George Schmitt reviewed the SEQRA for the Planning Board members as Lead Agency.

Motion to grant a negative declaration for purposes of SEQRA was made by Virginia Ambrose with a second from Stephen King. All members were in favor. Motion carried.

Rob Fitzsimmons reads the Resolution of Approval for an 80-foot Area Variance.

Motion to grant an 80-foot side yard Area Variance to allow a setback of 20-feet was made by Steven Melnyk with a second from Doug Colwell. All members in attendance were in favor. Motion carried. Zoning Board of Appeals Chairman David Graziano informed the applicant and Board members that he believes that the variance is substantial and self-created but after review by the local Fire Chief Brennan Keeler it allows for adequate emergency access. Steven Melnyk stated that the portion of the roadway has been abandoned by the Town of Claverack he has no concerns with allowing the variance.