

**TOWN OF CLAVERACK  
PLANNING BOARD  
Meeting Minutes  
January 3, 2024**

Chairman Scott Cole called the January 3, 2024 meeting of the Town of Claverack Planning Board to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members in attendance were: Chairman Cole, Lisa Bowe, Pat Fecher, Stephen King, Tim Wyman, Rob Fitzsimmons; attorney, Jodi Keyser; secretary  
Absent with regrets: Virginia Ambrose, Alberta Cox & George Schmitt; engineer

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

Motion to approve the Minutes of the October 2, 2023 meeting was made by Lisa Bowe with a second from Tim Wyman. All members were present. Motion carried.

Correspondence

**CONTINUING APPLICATIONS FOR 1/3/24:**

**Columbia Tent Rentals Site Plan/Special Exception Modification: Tax Map #(SBL) 101 . – 2 – 52 Located at 8 Bender Blvd. Columbia County Commerce Park. Site Plan Application to modify previously approved Site Plan to add a 4,500 square foot gable roof storage area to the current 10,000 square foot building as well as a 4,200 square foot pole barn for storage. RESTAMPING**

Chairman Cole restamped and resigned the previously approved Special Exception maps. Mr. Dusenbery had requested the restamping and resigning due to lapse in time for applying for a building permit. Maps were resigned 1/3/24.

**Parton, Timothy Site Plan/Special Exception: Tax Map #(SBL) 132 . – 1 – 83 . 3 Located at 32 Miller Farm Rd. Site Plan/Special Exception for the installation of a ground mounted residential solar array.**

Richard Countryman was present for the application. Mr. Countryman supplied 3 more large maps and survey maps. Mr. Countryman continued that the project is to construct a 25Kw ground mounted residential solar array. Mr. Countryman continued that a new dedicated line within conduit will run through a trench from the array to the residence. Mr. Countryman continued that this will be a fixed array. Chairman Cole asked if the residence is under construction at this time. Mr. Countryman answered yes. Mr. Countryman continued that the architect and the surveyor have worked together on the project so they also planned the array. Stephen King stated that he sees that this is a remote area but asked what types of vegetation exist. Mr. Countryman answered that there are cedars and Russian olive trees with mixed brush in a heavily propagated parcel. Mr. Countryman informed the Board that his client Mr. Parton has spoken to his direct neighbor, Chris Jones and he is fine with the project. Mr. Countryman continued that the area of the array is situated within the easement for the Columbia Land Conservancy building envelope. Mr. Countryman directed the Board members to a letter within their application packets from the CLC of approval. Stephen King asked what the height of the arrays will be when complete. Mr. Countryman answered that the arrays will be 12-feet on mostly flat parcel with no up slopes.

**Tim Wyman stated that 25Kw is a huge array. Mr. Countryman answered that it is the allowable amount by NYS and is necessary to power the house and massive geothermal system as well as two electric vehicle charging stations. Rob Fitzsimmons asked if the project includes any battery storage. Mr. Countryman answered no batteries.**

**Motion to accept the application as complete and set public hearing for February 5, 2024 was made by Stephen King with a second from Lisa Bowe. All members were in favor. Motion carried.**

**Continued to February 5, 2024.**

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Rob Fitzsimmons reviewed the Town of Claverack Campground law revision that will be up for public hearing and voting the following evening. Mr. Fitzsimmons continued that the Town of Claverack Zoning Law regarding campgrounds was written in the 1970's and was meant to allow campgrounds in the simplest form of a tent or trailer that would be set up and then removed after a couple of days. Rob Fitzsimmons continued that things have changed dramatically over the years and now we have tiny houses etc. Rob Fitzsimmons continued that the Town received an application in 2022 for a campground that consisted of tiny houses spread out throughout a property to allow for overnight stays. Rob Fitzsimmons continued that the Town Building department sent it to the Planning Board for a Site Plan/Special Exception because it is an allowed use in the RA zone but the neighbors filed an appeal with the Zoning Board of Appeals for an interpretation. Rob Fitzsimmons continued that the TOC ZBA voted that they interpreted that the use was not that of a campground because it was operated 24-7-365 and therefore was not seasonal or temporary as defined in the campground law. Rob Fitzsimmons continued that the campground owners then filed an Article 78 of which the Town of Claverack was found justified in the ZBA ruling. Rob Fitzsimmons continued that the Town of Claverack decided to enact a moratorium on campgrounds until they could review the existing laws regarding campgrounds. Rob Fitzsimmons continued that the Town Board reviewed several other campground laws in other towns and have revised the town law for campgrounds that will include length of stays, months of operation, changes to setbacks, and some other requirements to keep the just of a campground as temporary and seasonal and to protect the neighbors of any campgrounds in the future.**

**Rob Fitzsimmons informed the Board that the he has been contacted by a couple of solar companies that they are now seeking large parcels of property to install what they call large battery storage facilities to store energy gathered from the large solar fields. Rob Fitzsimmons continued that this is being run through NYSERDA as a public utility. Rob Fitzsimmons continued that the Town Board will consider a moratorium on these facilities until they can research and review the Large Scale Solar law which might need to be revised to include these types of facilities for the future. Stephen King asked if the current Large Scale Solar Law has anything about these battery storage sites. Rob Fitzsimmons answered that the Solar Law does have requirements for battery back up and storage but nothing that addresses anything of this scale and size. Rob Fitzsimmons continued that he was told that this would be 250-megawatt energy storage units and that these companies are saying that they are equal to a public utility and therefore are allowed but the Zoning Laws still need to address town concerns and safety.**

**No further questions.**

**Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Pat Fecher with a second from Tim Wyman. All members were in favor. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Jodi Keyser, secretary**