

Minutes

Planning & Economic Development Committee

June 15, 2022, 6:00 pm, Legislative Chambers

Livestreamed on Facebook

Gerace Office Building, Mayville, NY

Members Present: Muldowney, Harmon, Penhollow, Wilfong, Rankin

Members Absent: Lawton

Others: Lee, Tampio, Chagnon, McCoy, Paradis, Reynolds, Rinow

Complete video of meeting can be viewed on the County's Facebook Page

Legislator Harmon called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes (5/15/22)

MOVED by Legislator Rankin, SECONDED by Legislator Wilfong.

Unanimously Carried

Privilege of the Floor

Karen Engstrom, Mayville, New York. I'm here to offer you some options that I hope you can consider because we're seeing our energy prices, gas prices, everything continue to climb and it's very detrimental to all of us, but primarily to the poor. We are concerned because our government, the State of New York is beginning to imitate Texas and California with their energy policies that endanger the grid. We feel that if- the things they experience in California and Texas would be much more serious here because we have far different winters than they do. The energy policies that New York is forcing on our western communities is devastating our farmland and our forests. We're seeing nationally that states like Ohio and others have allowed their communities to make decisions for themselves about the energy projects including solar and wind and other kinds of energy. 350 plus communities have refused- have decided that that is too damaging both to their economies and to their environments. We want to work for the best interest of our residents. Cattaraugus County, two weeks ago passed- the IDA in Cattaraugus County made the decision to put a moratorium on its solar projects because their experience- the article is very limited. I recommend that you call the head of the IDA and get the details. Their experience is, and it's quoted here, we have been misled here by the project developers. There are no local jobs involved and our mission as the IDA is to provide good local jobs. So, they have rejected from their experience. There is also a note in this article that solar projects are taking good farmland and clearcutting forests. We know that the Amish here are very much

impacted. 60 families have written a letter to my town, the Town of Chautauqua asking that the solar projects not go in because they rent them- they don't own the land that they use, they rent it and when a developer offers them four times as much money for the land for a solar project of course the owner has to take that. My neighbor up the hill has an organic dairy farm and he has no more hay. His hay has been eliminated. Luckily, the conditions that are going on in the world today have made it difficult to find the solar panels, so the project that is threatening him is on hold, but it doesn't mean it won't come back. We value the Amish, we value their concerns and their way of life and think that this is an important thing. Now, the things that can be done- first of all at the state level, which we don't have anything to do with, but if we upgraded the grid to what it should be we wouldn't be losing electricity to the (*inaudible*)- we could increase the availability of electricity by 30%. (*Inaudible*) so we wouldn't have to damage our county at all by improving the grid. This particular legislature led the way of western counties when it put forward a no PILOT resolution regarding wind. This body said, well, they get national money, they get state money, why should they get subsidies. So, it was recommended to the IDA to put forward a no PILOT resolution – a payment in lieu of taxes. 8 counties thought that it was a really positive thing to do to slow this down. This was going way too fast. There isn't any accountability of how much electricity is made. We can see these things- they're piling up- the parts. They're leaving them- Any of these could be a law or resolution. Niagara County did a law- passed a law that said we want to recycle (*inaudible*) modules. Recycling them minimizes the hazardous waste and recovers the very (*inaudible*.) Recycling is a really wonderful option. Then there's the no PILOT resolution and then there's what the Post-Journal has recommended- solar components be made in the United States. Why would we get our essential energy from China, which might at any moment be an adversary? Most of the parts come from China. It is a potential security risk to our full energy system. As I said, 350 communities have refused because they see that it is detrimental to them. (*Inaudible*) every citizen deserves to have a property value guarantee if they're going to be faced with- that includes the Amish- with this. The Wall Street Journal yesterday had a wonderful article about the fact that there is no debate, that it's being forced on us and that the censorship is continuing and will continue and that the truth about the grid becoming increasingly unreliable and the very bad parts of any lithium ion batteries that you discuss will be misinformation, so I have to come to you in person to tell you what I know. That's what I know. I hope you will take some steps to slow this down to protect our community.

Chairman Muldowney: Thank you.

Proposed Resolution – Environmental Assessment of Projects for 2023 2% Occupancy Tax Projects – *Presented by Dave McCoy, Chautauqua County Watershed Coordinator*

Unanimously Carried

Discussion – Land Bank - *by Gina Paradis, Executive Director of Chautauqua County Land Bank Corporation and Mark Geise, Deputy County Executive for Economic Development & CEO of the County of Chautauqua IDA*

Discussion – CCE Master Gardener Program – *Emily Reynolds, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension and Shannon M. Rinow, Master Gardener Program Coordinator for Cornell Cooperative Extension*

MOVED by Legislator Penhollow, SECONDED by Legislator Rankin to adjourn.

Unanimously Carried (7:13 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted and transcribed,
Olivia Lee, Clerk of the Legislature