

Public Hearing
September 7, 2016

A public hearing of the Town Board of the Town of Homer on a proposed amendment to the Town of Homer Comprehensive Plan re the Adoption of Solar Energy System Regulations, held in the board room of the Town Hall building on Wednesday, September 7, 2016, was called to order by Supervisor Frederick J. Forbes, Sr., at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Frederick J. Forbes, Sr., Supervisor
Larry R. Jones, Councilman
Michael R. Park, Councilman
Barry E. Warren, Councilman
Kevin M. Williams, Councilman
Patrick M. Snyder, Attorney for the Town
Anita W. Jebbett, Town Clerk

OTHERS PRESENT

Kevin Walsh, resident, Cosmos Hill Road
Victor Siegle, resident, South Main Street
Linda Jones, Cortland County Legislator

Supervisor Forbes read the legal notice (attached). Attorney Snyder explained that the current Comprehensive Plan and the current Zoning Law do not address the issue of solar energy. He said that since the Zoning Law must be in compliance with the Town's Comprehensive Plan, the first step is to amend the Plan. Snyder read the proposed amendment, the wording of which is modeled on the current Comprehensive Plan:

Under Article VII, *Implementation*, Section A. *Town Zoning*, to add a new section 11 as follows:

There is an increasing demand for solar energy projects. Renewable energy is considered to be desirable by the state and local governments, as well as the public. The Town should allow solar energy projects in any zoning district, consistent with sound land use planning.

Solar energy projects should be subject to site plan review to insure that adequate setbacks are achieved, glare onto adjoining properties is avoided, and visual impacts are mitigated. Solar energy projects should not be constructed on prime farmland if other alternatives are feasible. Removal of trees and other vegetation should be minimized or offset by other plantings. The solar energy regulations should also address the decommissioning and removal of the equipment when it is no longer in operation.

Supervisor Forbes asked the public for any comments.

Victor Siegle read a statement in which he recommended that any solar energy project be accompanied with an energy storage solution, preferably a battery system, to improve reliability. He also recommended waiting until prices in the business have stabilized and emphasized the purchase of systems manufactured in upstate New York (see statement attached). After reading his statement Mr. Siegle stated that he thought the wording of the proposed amendment to the comprehensive plan was fine and he had no objections to it.

Kevin Walsh suggested that the issue of batteries be considered along with the zoning for solar energy projects.

Supervisor Forbes said that the Town Board is relying on the experience and expertise of the Town's Planning Board to propose changes to the Town's Zoning Law. Attorney Snyder said that the Planning Board has been reviewing a model zoning law that addresses many of their issues and concerns. Forbes thanked Siegle and Walsh for their comments.

The public hearing was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Anita W. Jebbett
Town Clerk