

Minutes
Planning & Economic Development Committee
January 18, 2023, 6:00 pm, Legislative Chambers
Livestreamed on YouTube
Gerace Office Building, Mayville, NY

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

Others: Lee, Chagnon, Slagle, T. DeAngelo, Domst, Engstrom

Complete video of meeting can be viewed on YouTube

Chairman Muldowney called the meeting to order at (6:00 p.m.)

Approval of Minutes (12/14/22)

MOVED by Legislator Rankin, SECONDED by Legislator Penhollow.

Unanimously Carried

Privilege of the Floor

Karen Engstrom, Town of Chautauqua and Village of Mayville and I am here bringing to you a letter from the Amish. We are of course, facing our solar situation which I update you on periodically and I'd like to read this letter that was addressed to the Town Board of Chautauqua from the Amish community and you will note that there are 5 pages of signatures. They are writing and I will quote them "We as an Amish community in Mayville, Dewittville and Stockton desire our farmland to be preserved for our future generations. For our children and grandchildren and we are opposed to solar panels in our area. No farms, no food." I know we represent more of the rich people here as the Legislature than we do the others but these people will be here long after all the rich place ruin this place and leave. So according to the Chautauqua County Farm Bureau, these people are really under the pressure. 84% of the land targeted for utility scales solar is agricultural land. These people do not own all of their land, they rent it and their capacity to survive the fact that developers offer twice, three times, four times as much to land owners for the use of the land for solar makes it impossible for them to function. NYSEDA also states that solar in this region produces 14% of the electricity claimed by the developers. Is that worth it? 14%? There is another farm that is in jeopardy among many in our area. It was featured in yesterday's Post Journal. The MidKnight Dairy farm in Fluvanna which wrote a letter to you I think. You each got a copy of it and you know, the farmers concerns are many. They can't have these solar things as neighbors because they contaminate the soil in many different ways. They compact the soil. The runoff from the construction into the water of the streams affects their livestock's ability to have clean water for drinking etc. it goes on and on. These multiple projects plan for this area are not consistent with the comprehensive plan of Chautauqua County. The goal of which is to protect rural character of our community and we know that we depend on tourism and conservation is very important – tourism and recreation. Cattaraugus County IDA has taken steps to protect their community which they call (*inaudible*)

because there is no economic return, solar and wind do not accomplish the main IDA criteria nor do they create and retain local jobs. The Cattaraugus County IDA has attempted to block them by calling for them to be built as they should be everywhere in brownfields. We have lots of brownfields where we can put solar. The Town of Chautauqua recognizes the danger of PFAS. PFAS is a real danger for everyone. It's been recognized by the EPA as an accumulative and present in a lot of things but it's also present in solar panels so the Town of Chautauqua requires in its solar special use permit proof that there is no PFAS in solar components. This is a protection that we definitely need. Everyone should have this protection and it can be put into law. Another law that has passed in our neighboring County, Niagara, is that all solar components be recycled. This we feel is an important element in our effort to be good environmentalists. Ripley solar has come to our attention that the projects forest removal mitigation plan has been rejected because there is 538 acres more to be cleared of forest to put up what? Nothing good. These grifters continue to attempt to take over the agricultural land that we value immensely. There is also a lawsuit which you have all gotten material on in the past so we'll go *(inaudible)*. So we hope for proof of no PFAS. Moratorium as has been done in Cattaraugus County to better access this and to respect the wishes of not the rich of this county and those who are land owners that simply don't do what farmers and their philosophy is do no harm and protect the land, not destroy it. So I will be back.

Legislator Rankin: *(Inaudible)* would like to see Chautauqua County do?

Ms. Engstrom: You can do what the Town should probably do and call and inquire that there be no PFAS. We already got it in the Chadakoin River. It's a serious danger coming at us. *(Inaudible)* if these people are legitimate and they are conscientious, they will do what it takes to protect the community. If a developer, as in the Town of Chautauqua's case, can't comply, then they disappear and that's as it should be. We are seeing from the Wall Street Journal that investment and when in solar is – use to be like 15 *(inaudible)* it's now 5. Smart money's gone to advanced nuclear – that's where, I won't name the people but you know the big investors are putting the money carefully and Mr. Gates is one of them *(inaudible)*. We don't want solar here. Of course not that's *(inaudible)* we can have utilizing what is already there and in our *(inaudible)* perfect example of what could have been done to do a dual cycle guess and still could be a public utility. It still could be taken over and made into something productive *(inaudible)*. We also have the necessity of updating the grid. As Senator Borrello points out, 35% of our electricity is lost on the outdated wires that just can't carry so they're turning off those wind turbines up there. 1 out of 3 is turned off because they can't even send the power anywhere so until they correct the system, everything they are telling you, you have to do *(inaudible)* is critical. Niagara Falls is being *(inaudible)* as well to say we need *(inaudible)* and as Senator Borrello points out when we're in trouble, we get our electricity from Pennsylvania *(inaudible)*. So all we can do is protect ourselves here and then the solutions have to come from what's there to be done. NYSERDA called it. NYSERDA pointed out that the wind and the lake doesn't make any sense at all. So there are people, engineers, in those places that will say “well look, we do have power plants that are existing. We can do something with them. We can use the *(inaudible)* we already have produced power that's clean, it's green. It's real clean. This is not clean, this is dirty. This in where it comes from, I told you many times before it just doesn't make any sense to make the dirt in somebody else's back yard and then pretend that you're clean. All you have to do is protect yourself and us and especially the Amish. They won't come and talk to you but they need

you. I value them, I respect them and I think that their way of life maybe what we all end up with if they destroy this place.

My name is Courtney Domst. I am a junior planner with the counties planning department and we would just like to request that our yearly update be added to the agenda for the next February meeting.

Proposed Resolution – Confirm Appointment – Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board –
Presented by Pierre Chagnon, Chairman.

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Confirm Appointment - Chautauqua County Planning Board – *Presented by Courtney Domst, Junior Planner for the Planning Department*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Confirm Re-Appointment - Chautauqua County Food Policy Council –
Presented by Courtney Domst, Junior Planner for the Planning Department

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Confirm Appointment and Re-Appointments- Chautauqua County Land Bank Board of Directors – *Presented by Pierre Chagnon, Chairman*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Confirm Appointment - Chautauqua County Chautauqua County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors – *Presented by Pierre Chagnon, Chairman*

MOVED by Legislator Penhollow, Seconded by Legislator Wilfong to Amend by including additional appointment names – Unanimously Carried to Amend

Unanimously Carried as Amended

Other –

Discussion - Kinzua Region ATV Association – *Presented by Tim DeAngelo*

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

Unanimously Carried (6:50 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted and transcribed,
Olivia Lee, Clerk of the Legislature/Kristi R. Zink, Deputy Clerk