

**TOWN OF DUANESBURG PLANNING BOARD
RESOLUTION APPROVING SPECIAL USE PERMIT, SUBDIVISION AND SITE PLAN
FOR THE EDEN RENEWABLES OAK HILL SOLAR ENERGY PROJECTS – 1206 OAK HILL ROAD**

RECEIVED

SEP 20 2019

TOWN OF DUANESBURG
TOWN CLERK

Date: September 19, 2019

WHEREAS, on or about May 7, 2018, Eden Renewables (“Eden Renewables” or the “Applicant”) applied to the Duanesburg Planning Board (“Planning Board”) for a Special Use Permit and Site Plan Review pursuant to the Town of Duanesburg Local Law No. 1-2016, for the 5-MW Oak Hill Solar Energy Projects 1 and 2 (collectively, the “Project”) to be located at 1206 Oak Hill Road in the Town of Duanesburg, Schenectady County, New York on the lands owned by Richard Murray (SBL# 74.00-2-5) (“Property”); and

WHEREAS, on or about May 17, 2018, the Applicant appeared before the Planning Board in furtherance of the proposed Project and the Planning Board requested that the Applicant meet with the Town Planner/Code Enforcement Officer to discuss the proposed application; and

WHEREAS, on or about July 18, 2018, the Applicant appeared before the Planning Board and requested a lot line adjustment and minor subdivision in order to install two 5-MW solar fields on each created parcel, in addition to the Special Use Permit sought pursuant to the Town of Duanesburg Local Law No. 1-2016; and

WHEREAS, on or about July 18, 2018, the Planning Board adopted a resolution pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act [ECL Article 8 and its implementing regulations at 6 NYCRR Part 617, collectively referred to as “SEQRA”] in which it assumed the role of SEQRA Lead Agency, declared the proposed action as a Type 1 action and conducted a coordinated review;

WHEREAS, on or about August 16, 2018, the Planning Board adopted a resolution appointing Doug Cole of Prime AE Group of NY as the Town Designated Engineer to assist in its review of the application from Eden Renewables; and

WHEREAS, on or about September 11, 2018, the Town’s Designated Engineer provided written comments on the application; and

WHEREAS, on or about March 11, 2019, the Applicant submitted revised site plans, minor subdivision and lot line adjustment plans, revised applications, a revised Full Environmental Assessment Form (“Full EAF”), and a decommissioning plan, accompanied by a letter addressing comments from the Town’s Designated Engineer; and

WHEREAS, on or about March 21, 2019, the Applicant appeared before the Planning Board in furtherance of the site plan review process, and the Planning Board requested receipt of additional information and other actions from the Applicant; and

WHEREAS, on or about June 6, 2019, the Applicant submitted additional information to the Planning Board and addressed the outstanding actions identified by the Planning Board; and

WHEREAS, on or about June 20, 2019, the Planning Board reviewed the materials submitted by the Applicant, issued a negative declaration of environmental significance for this Type 1 action, after reviewing Part 1 of the EAF and completing Parts 2 and 3 of the EAF, and scheduled the Public Hearing for July 18, 2019; and

WHEREAS, on or about July 11, 2019, acting on a referral of the application from the Planning Board pursuant to GML § 239-m, County Planning recommended approval of the Project;

WHEREAS, on July 18 and August 16, 2019, the Planning Board held two well-attended public hearings on the applications and heard comments for and against the Project;

WHEREAS, the Planning Board directed the applicant to respond in writing to the public comments and the applicant submitted two sets of responses after each public hearing;

WHEREAS, the Planning Board directed the Town Designated Engineer, Mr. Cole of Prime AE to review the responses to the public comments and the additional information submitted by the Applicant, all as set forth in Mr. Cole's letter of September 10, 2019 providing comments on the Applicant's materials and recommending that the Town should condition any approval on the Applicant obtaining a permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers, if one is required by the agency, advising that the supplementary Visual Impact Assessment demonstrates that the existing Biggs and Otis and any other nearby residences will be adequately screened by existing vegetation, distance and topography such that the solar array will not be visible; and finding that the revised Decommissioning Plan is reasonable for the proposed system; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board has carefully considered the documentation in the record including the supplemental information provided by the Applicant, the comments by involved and interested agencies, the recommendation of County Planning and the comments, both oral and written, by the members of the public;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Planning Board as follows:

1. That the applications for Minor Subdivision, Site Plan Review and Special Use Permit submitted by the Applicant for the Project were determined to be complete under the Town of Duanesburg Solar Law, the Duanesburg Zoning Law, and the Town of Duanesburg Subdivision Regulations; and
2. That having received and reviewed the application materials submitted by the Applicant, including but not limited to, site plans, subdivision plans, lot line adjustment plans, decommissioning plans, a Full Environmental Assessment Form, statements of proposed construction impacts and ongoing operation and maintenance, and having completed Parts 2 and 3 of the Full EAF, hereby determines that the Project will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment (as duly noted in the Full EAF) and, therefore, hereby confirms and issues a Negative Declaration as set forth in the EAF Part 3 and its attached reasons supporting the determination read into the record and incorporated herein based on the following findings;
 - a. The Project will not have any significant impacts on federal wetlands or waterbodies as determined by the full wetland delineation conducted on the Project site, that any necessary approvals would be covered by the ACOE nationwide permit program, and that there are no impacts on State wetlands or streams;
 - b. The Project will not create any permanent impacts from odors, noise or traffic nor to groundwater and surface waters, there will only be insignificant and temporary impacts during construction;

- c. The Project avoids and/or minimizes impacts on plants and animals, due to the very limited vegetative clearing that will result from the Project, once construction is complete vegetation will cover the ground under the panels and the property will continue to be used for limited agricultural purposes, such as sheep grazing and bee keeping;
 - d. The Project will not create any impacts to historical or cultural resources as shown in the Letter of No Effect from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation dated June 4, 2019;
 - e. The Project will minimize any visual impacts due to the existing topography, the retention of existing vegetation as shown on the final site plans and will not create any impacts from glare as demonstrated by the Applicant;
 - f. The Planning Board hereby requires that the Project provide evergreen landscaping plan showing the establishment of a substantial evergreen buffer on the Applicant's property within 10 feet of the property boundary currently containing houses within approximately 600 feet of the project site boundary for a length of approximately 1600 feet at the back of the parcel with 2 staggered rows of trees planted 20 feet on center with the trees having the height at the time of planting of 6 to 7 feet and with the trees being species spruce and fir evergreens. The applicant shall also provide a maintenance and replacement agreement for the evergreen buffer to be planted;
 - g. The Project does not impact any Critical Environmental Areas and is not located in a flood zone;
 - h. The Project will have a positive economic benefit as it will result in revenue to the Town pursuant to a Payment-In-Lieu-Of-Taxes ("PILOT") Agreement and it will result in jobs during the construction and operation of the facility;
 - i. The Project will provide renewable energy in the production of electricity and will contribute to the State's goal of replacing fossil fuel generated electricity with renewable sources of electricity;
 - j. The Project will also not change the community character as it has been sited to not be visible to the maximum extent possible to surrounding homes and roadways, and an evergreen landscaped buffer will be created on the property containing the project as set forth above;
 - k. The Project is also a use of land that will be discontinued in the future and as such a decommissioning plan is in place to return the property to its current condition; and
 - l. The Applicant has indicated that it intends to continue to have the property in agricultural uses, such as sheep grazing and beekeeping, which also makes it consistent with the community which contains agricultural uses.
3. That Planning Board's findings set forth below demonstrate the proposed construction of the Project, a Solar Energy System (Major), at the Property satisfies the requirements of the Town of Duanesburg Solar Law:
- a. The Project is in the R-2 Zoning District and as such is a permitted use subject to Special Use Permit and Site Plan approval by the Planning Board;
 - b. The projects are located on parcels in excess of 97.24 and 87.18 acres and when constructed will have a lot coverage of 45.71 and 45.63 acres, respectively, thereby satisfying the lot coverage limitation of 60%;
 - c. The Project provides the required 100' setback between its components and the boundary of the Property, provides the required minimum of 25' buffer of vegetation to screen views of the Project and, in fact, that the Project exceeds this standard to address the concerns of adjoining property owners;
 - d. A fence meeting or exceeding the applicable requirements of the Zoning Law has been proposed;
 - e. The Project preserves existing on site vegetation to the maximum extent practicable and does not propose to clear cut all trees in a single contiguous area exceeding 20,000 square feet on the property;
 - f. The Town of Duanesburg Planning Board reviewed the plans showing brush hogging and tree clearing that had been undertaken by the property owner and determined such tree clearing did not exceed the above requirement;

- g. The SEQRA regulations require that a project sponsor may not commence any physical alteration related to an action until the provisions of SEQR have been complied with and the Planning Board specifically finds that the property owner brush hogging the property and taking down some limited trees for agriculture and silviculture purposes was consistent with the past uses of the property and not directly related to the development of the solar farm;
 - h. The Project is not located within an active farm field but is vacant hay field periodically cut by the property owner and historically used for more intensive agricultural purposes;
 - i. Native grasses and vegetation will be maintained below the arrays;
 - j. The site plans demonstrate that the Project:
 - i. Provides through its siting and through the implementation of an evergreen landscaping plan to be approved by the Town of Duanesburg, a project design that minimize visual impacts from public roads and existing residential dwellings on contiguous parcels to the satisfaction of the Planning Board;
 - ii. layout ensures that the solar panels will not reflect solar radiation or glare onto adjacent buildings, properties and roadways and that the solar panels include a non-glare coating and are designed to absorb the maximum amount of solar rays such that the panels will not misdirect or reflect solar rays onto neighboring properties or public roads in excess of that which already exists;
 - iii. existing vegetation on the site is preserved to the maximum extent practicable;
 - iv. all transmission/interconnection lines on the Property shall be underground and within necessary easements and in compliance with applicable electrical and town codes excepting aboveground lines as required by National Grid;
 - v. no artificial lighting is proposed;
 - vi. that any signage will be in accordance with applicable town requirements and the manufacturers and/or installers identification and appropriate warning signage shall be posted;
 - vii. the average height of the solar panels are 8' feet above grade – below the 20' height limitation;
 - viii. all disturbed areas shall be restored in accordance with the zoning law's requirements.
4. That the decommissioning plan is approved and the Planning Board requires that financial security be provided at least 30 days prior to the commencement of construction to the Town Clerk by the Applicant in the form of a bond or letter of credit in the amount \$422,762.00 (\$211,381.00 per project) with the form of financial security acceptable to the Town's attorney, with such funds to be used for decommissioning of the Project in the event that the Project is not decommissioned by the Project owner or the landowner; and
 5. That this project approval is conditioned upon the Applicant obtaining any other State or federal approvals required for the project including but not limited to any such permits required by the NYSDEC, the USACOE and the NYSDOT; and
 6. That this resolution and negative declaration shall be filed in the office of the Town Clerk and shall take effect immediately and that the notice of negative declaration be published in the ENB, that the negative declaration be provided to all involved agencies and that it be filed as required by SEQRA.

<u>Roll Call Vote:</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain/Absent</u>
Phillip Sexton	✓		
Jeffrey Schmitt	✓		
Elizabeth Novak	✓		
Martin Williams	✓		
Thomas Rulison	✓		

Michael Harris
Joshua Houghton

