

**Town of Geneva
Planning Board
April 18, 2023
DRAFT**

Present: Eric Reuscher, Robert Gringeri, Mary Ann Bell, Gary Johnson, Jeff Trickler

Absent: Kenneth Nardozzi

Staff: Floyd Kofahl, Code Enforcement Officer, Amy Naegele, Clerk of the Board, Steve High, Town County Planning Board Representative, Pat Nicoletta, Town Engineer

Others Present: 3 members of the public

Chair Eric Reuscher called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Eric made a short statement welcoming Mary Ann Bell back and thanking her for her service as Planning Board Chair.

Public Hearing – Seneca Springs – Site Plan Review PB2023-001

The applicant wishes to postpone, and the project and application have been put on hold until further notice. Eric Reuscher accepted the applicant's withdrawal on behalf of the Planning Board.

**Presentation – Geneva CSG 1 & Geneva CSG2 –
Site Plan Review PB2023-002 & PB2023-003**

The applicant is applying for site plan approval of two community solar gardens. Nick Walsh, from Dimension Energy, presented to the board members. He gave an overview of Dimension Energy and their work with community solar gardens, highlighting their presence in New York, the fact that they will own and operate the system, and their financial stability. He also gave an overview of community solar gardens and how the subscription would work for these two projects. Nick went on to describe the projects, which are each a 5-Megawatt project with motorized solar panels that follow the arc of the sun. The land will be leased over the duration of the project, which will be 25 years, with two 5-year extensions possible. He also confirmed that the plans meet the Town's Codes. He noted a wetland area in the northeast corner and confirmed that they would be 100 feet away from the area. He also spoke about access to the site and confirmed that they would be using the easement from Pre-Emption Road but were willing to make it a condition that all truck traffic had to come from the north to prevent left-hand turns.

Bryan Beyer, from CNS Engineers, also spoke to the Board. He discussed some of the site plans, highlighting the landscaping. He confirmed a SWPPP had been prepared and also talked about the Wetland Delineation Report. He mentioned that they had gotten a letter of no effect from SHPO and spoke about the visual simulations that were completed for the project. He also spoke about SEQR and the suggestion from MRB to complete the SEQR process together for both.

Gary Johnson asked about what was currently there. It was confirmed that there were apple trees there. There was a discussion between the applicants and the board members regarding stormwater runoff. The applicants confirmed that the SWPPP met the specific

guidelines for solar projects. The board members discussed recent drainage concerns in the Town and possible actions for the Board to take, unrelated to this project. Bryan went into further details about the swales and level spreaders that would be used on the site. Eric Reuscher asked about the potential access from a road by Walmart and the applicants explained why it wasn't feasible.

Eric asked Pat Nicoletta for his comments. Pat explained that MRB had completed the reviews for both projects and that the comments were similar for both. He talked about the possibility of combining the projects into one SEQR. There was a discussion regarding the timeline for the project and if the change would affect it. The applicant agreed to the change. Pat went over the comment letters. He highlighted that a detailed decommissioning plan would be needed. He also confirmed with the Board that SEQR would be combined, but the Board would still be reviewing and approving the site plans separately.

Floyd presented his comments to the board members. He confirmed that he would meet with the fire chief to complete the review now that the point of access was confirmed. He also asked the applicants about the noise levels. There was a brief discussion on the motor noise, the movement of the panels, and when they reset. Nick confirmed that a noise study had not been completed but gave examples from previous projects. Floyd also noted that construction signage would need to be discussed due to the access point on Pre-Emption Road.

Eric asked Steve for his comments. Steve confirmed that the County had reviewed, and the Board had received the comments back. The projects were class 1 referrals and were part of a block vote to return with comments.

Eric opened the discussion to the Planning Board. Robert asked for confirmation on the acreage. The overall site is 117 acres (two parcels) and the projects will cover about 25 acres each. There was a short discussion on the screening and on the vegetation.

Eric Reuscher set the Public Hearing for the next planning board meeting, which is scheduled for May 16, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

The Planning Board took a vote to combine the SEQRs for the projects into 1. All in favor.

Eric confirmed that the SEQRs would be combined, but the applications would be kept separate for each site.

Organizational Meeting

Floyd spoke to the board members. He explained they needed a formal vote to change the meeting time.

Motion made by Eric Reuscher to set the new meeting time for 6:00 pm. 2nd by Robert Gringeri. 4 in favor, 1 opposed. Motion carried.

Floyd also went over the scheduled dates of the meeting, confirming there did not seem to be any scheduling issues.

Other Business

Floyd updated the Board on other projects in the town.

The Bay Heights Project will now have the additional option of choosing a modular. This is to help keep the cost down. He discussed some of the options that will be available and confirmed the timeline plan.

The Solar Village Project on Carter Road is currently shut down and in negotiations to be sold as is. The new owners will be taking over the construction. Floyd confirmed there was a performance bond on the project.

The City has received the grant for the water treatment plant and Floyd discussed the timeline for completion.

Meeting Minutes of February 21, 2023

Motion made by Eric Reuscher to approve minutes. 2nd by Robert Gringeri. All in favor, motion carried.

Steve High's Report

Steve spoke about the current solar projects before the Planning Board and another project in Manchester. Between these projects 225 acres of prime farmland will be removed. He explained the County's concern about this and how they are urging local municipalities to guide companies to use less than prime farmland. There was more discussion between the board members and Steve on this.

Motion made by Eric Reuscher to adjourn the meeting. All in favor, motion carried at 7:11.