

# Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency

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ADMINISTRATION PROVIDED BY 

MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING  
Delaware River Solar (NY Newfield I, II, III)  
February 6, 2017  
6:00 PM  
Town Hall of Newfield  
166 Main Street, Newfield NY

Present: Michael Stamm (for Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency), Jim Dennis, Martha Robertson, Jennifer Tavares (TCIDA Board), Daniel Winch, Jeff Hart, George Schumacher, Joanne James, Dr. Cheryl Thomas, Mike Koplaka-Loehr, Greg Griffith, Daniel McKenna, Stacey Black, Jim Van Allen, Terry Streduak, Jim Grouchucinski, Christine Laughlin, Gene Van Zile, Brenda Lapp, Michelle Henry (members of the public), Richard Winter (Delaware River Solar)

1. Michael Stamm called the first public hearing (NY Newfield I) to order at 6:00 PM
2. Public hearing notice was read.
3. Call for comments. (comments apply to all three projects)

Gave overview of project – 20 year PILOT for three 2MW sites – total of 6 MW total – payment of \$8,000 per MW annually with 2% increase each year. Also, Sales Tax Exemption and a partial Mortgage Recording Tax abatements would be given.

Greg Griffith – asked for a break down from projected revenue – how was justification for tax relief developed? Basically the question was how the IDA would evaluate the company's need for incentives. Also are the incentives transferable if the company is sold. Any new owner would have to get approval from IDA to do this. Also, of the sites how many would need transmission lines? A company representative will address this.

Brenda Lapp – concerned about use of farmland. Also pointed out the public hearing notice talking about 400 houses being provided energy by 2MW – but other sources say only 300 houses. She spoke to variables in this area, sunlight, energy usage. Feels like the public is being misled. Another question about PILOT and 2% increase annually and the amount the town would get per MW – referenced the

# Tompkins County

## Industrial Development Agency

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town's thought about getting \$9000 per MW. Why are we not asking for more money from the company.

Gene Van Zile – Loss of farmland is his concern. What happens to the people who have worked the land their whole lives? The land will not kept up for farming. What right does the company have to take the prime farm land and make a profit for themselves? Why can't they use other land that is not prime farm land.

Dan Winch – Statement on land use. Two documents – studies from EPA and national renewable energy lab report. He is not against solar, but against appropriateness and land use of the solar site. Land impacts from these types of projects can be lessened by siting them on other land types – like brownfields etc. Also concerned of possibility that federal subsidies will go away in the future. Spoke to high cost of installation and the need to clean the solar panels monthly. Upgrading of the transmission sites will be costly. Very concerned about the loss of farmland. For these projects there will be in excess of 80 acres of farmland that will be lost.

Jeff Hart – Newfield Town Supervisor – Wants to address a few things. Town will be proposing moratorium on solar farm projects so that a law can be developed that addresses residents concerns. Thanks the company for trying to reach out to the public. Jeff's comments are on the PILOT agreement. The Town had an agreement with the company for more (\$18,500 for 2W) than what the IDA's draft policy is currently (\$16,000 for 2MW). The town's agreement with the company would bring more money to the town. Every dollar needs to be maximized. The IDA PILOT would not benefit the town as well. Does not want a PILOT for less than what the Town could probably get. Part of the reason the IDA is considering this is that they need a PILOT over 15 years.

Cheryl Thomas – NCSD Superintendent – School opted out of 487 – not opposed to PILOT, but supports Town's proposal. Would like the IDA to consider a higher amount per MW.

David McKenna – Commented about farmland use. Is opposed to use of prime farmland for solar panels. Suggests reconsidering location of projects.

Jim Dennis – IDA does not have land use control – that is the Town's prevue. The IDA is supporting renewable energy in the County. The IDA understands a countywide policy will not fit every location or project.

Terry Strednak – Spoke to the IDA's draft solar policy that would impact the whole county. Suggested that individual towns should be able to negotiate a higher PILOT amount and that the IDA policy would be the lower limit. He also was concerned about the possibility of not using local labor for the project. He also suggested that any contract should include a requirement that land be restored to the original state after the project is done.

Stacey Black – IBEW 241 Electric – Referenced that the project application did not say they would use local labor – Rich Winter has since looked at two local union shops to submit bids.

Time frame? Not considered for final approval at February meeting.

# Tompkins County

## Industrial Development Agency

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George Schumacher – curious about \$8,000 mw figure – did they look at loss of income from farmland? What is the difference in what is currently being paid in property taxes now versus what the PILOT would bring in.

Michelle Henry – Concerned about using prime agricultural land for commercial solar. Referenced maps where trails and streams were omitted. Talked about sheep grazing around solar panels. Decommission issues – must be part of the plan. Concerns about glare from the panels.

What about run off of water? Who will enforce and protect? The Town of Newfield has prevue over this.

Mike Koplinka-Loehr – concern about IDA policy that could be a countywide template. Could other communities go above and beyond the policy?

Michael Stamm – the IDA has a Uniform Tax Exemption Policy (UTEP) – describes types of projects that incentives will be delivered to – state law and policies do not allow for individual municipalities to negotiate beyond these. The IDA can deviate from the UTEP based on input during review process.

Jim Grochucinski – Encouraged letting NCSD Board know about this.

Martha Robertson – Policy is to encourage renewable energy – if the project were on the tax roles without the incentives provided by IDA, we wouldn't see these projects happen. Thinks town's idea of pre-identifying sites that will work for these types of projects.

Jim Van Allen - Do you know what will happen in five years with solar arrays? What about property values near by? This is the first solar project that has come to the TCIDA. Talking with the County assessor might help with property values.

Barymand ?? – lives on Millard Road in Newfield. Hopes that due diligence has been done.

Upgrades to transmission lines – feels the cost should not be passed on to the town of Newfield.

Christine Laughlin – hope you consider Town's original PILOT negotiations.

4. The hearing was adjourned at 7:20 PM
5. Michael Stamm called the second public hearing (NY Newfield II) to order at 7:20 PM.
6. The hearing was adjourned at 7:25 PM
7. Michael Stamm called the third public hearing (NY Newfield III) to order at 7:25 PM.
8. The hearing was adjourned at 7:30 PM