MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARINGS
SUN8PDC Solar Projects (Dryden Road and Turkey Hill)
May 9, 2017
6:00 PM
Dryden Town Hall
93 East Main Street, Dryden NY

IDA Members Present:  (TCIDA Board), Heather McDaniel (Recording), Martha Robertson, Jennifer Tavares

Ms. McDaniel called the hearing to order at 6:02 pm.

She introduced herself and gave an overview of the public hearing purpose, briefly described both projects, and detailed the financial assistance contemplated by the agency. She noted that the IDA does not have any authority over land use and does not consider those kinds of specifics in its approval process. She also noted that the applicant attorney has recused herself from representing the applicant and the IDA as she is also the IDA council. The IDA has engaged its bond council at Harris Beach to represent it on these projects.

The applicant gave a brief overview of the projects.

Pat Fitzgibbons – see attached comments

Tony Salerno – see attached comments

Jim Shippy – Wanted to point out the notion that we’re anti solar is wrong. I came tonight thinking SUN8 got far down the road pushing a 2% accelerator – now they are cutting it to 1% banking on locals’ fear they will pull out. They are not the only solar company out there. If not them, someone else. Dryden needs to win on this – don’t be bamboozled by the company by fear they will pull out. Let’s get the project right. Dodge road is not in Dryden School District it is in Ithaca City School District. SUN8 will make a boat load of money and it is a slap in the face of tax payers.

Jacques Schickel – he read a letter from Jeff Hart (Town Supervisor of Town of Newfield) – see attached letter
Amy Dickinson – I was born and raised here – I am trying to put a human face on the issue and why it is tearing the town apart. Harvey Carver, Lena Carver, Lena Stone Genon, Carl Genon, Homer Genon, Alfred Genon, Jane (her mother), Jack (her nephew), her dead relatives who are buried in the Willow Glen cemetery – she is not anti-solar but is concerned with the location of one of the projects next to Willow Glen cemetery. Native American's are also there. She feels the project disrespects the dead. There has been a total lack of oversight on this project. The project is asking the locals to subsidize it. Cornell should be ashamed. The IDA should know that the PILOT project is offensive.

Stacey Black (IBEW 241) – I sympathize with local residents and respects your wishes. But wanted to share some experience – We have done a number of projects with SUN8 that have gone well. They have a high standard of excellence. We value that relationship with Distributed Sun. Local electricians will be employed on this project. He sees this as a positive for the community in this respect.

Bob Watros – see attached comments

Art Berkey – see attached comments

Henry Kramer – In favor of energy development, but all forms should be treated equally. It’s called clean energy but there are dirty secrets – the making of solar panels are environmentally dangerous there are heavy metals in the panels, they are made in China. There is a problem with the disposal of the panels. Next the electric is described as clean, but when it is in the grid it is mixed with other energy. Also there are too many abatements going on. It is a subsidized industry but still asks for release from tax burden – they should pay their fair share of local taxes. Also, the IDA Board is not an elected board and should defer to the Town Board. And finally, I am appalled that we don’t have a quorum of the IDA Board here tonight. He feels Martha Robertson should recuse herself because she is pro solar.

Katie Quinn Jacobs – read by Martha Robertson – see attached letter

Craig Schutt – I have lived in Dryden my entire life. The main thing I want to address is that the Dryden School Board took a position against the exemption of property taxes for Distributed Sun so why is the IDA intent on overriding that? It appeared that the taxing entities could opt out – and the School Board did, but now the IDA says they need to accept the exemption. The company is getting such a break. If the IDA wants to help, they should go out and find companies that can pay taxes. There are not full time jobs with this project only temporary ones. What are we doing here?

Marie McRae – I find a lot to like about this solar project. I like the fact that the developer has a history in Tompkins County; I like the developer has listened to the neighbors; I like that they have a history of hiring local union labor. All construction jobs are temporary, we want these jobs here now. I like that this will bring locally generated energy to Tompkins County. I like the fact that it
does not destroy the land, it is land banking, and when the solar panels are removed that the land can go back to agriculture. I like that energy will be supplied to 7500 homes.

Pat Dubin – I moved here about eight years ago. Most of what I think of energy is through the lens of my grandchildren. I have a different opinion of the TCIDA. I am pleased that they are thinking about financial assistance for Distributed Sun. It is important to help renewable energy get its roots in Tompkins County. Tompkins County has goal related to energy use – and solar is part of this – to get to a carbon reduction goal. To reach this goal we need a project of the magnitude of the one under consideration here. The number of homes and businesses that will get clean energy is big and we can't wait for another project.

Janis Graham – see attached comments

Don Schutt – This issue about solar for me has been about taxes. What does Dryden need most? Dryden needs tax dollars. I call on the Dryden officials to make a statement tonight about this projects. There are five IDA Board members who did not have this meeting on their calendars. This is a bad deal for Dryden; the developer can afford to pay more. This cannot be approved the way it stands. Complaining without offering resolutions is called being a whiner – I am tired of being a whiner. I believe there are better issues here. Competition brings better deals. The Town of Dryden should set up things that will allow solar projects to bid for approval. The town of Dryden is getting hosed. I find it funny that the IDA attorney is the attorney for the Town of Dryden. Here are the bylaws of the IDA – has no code of ethics in the Bylaws – Martha Robertson sent an email out drumming up support for this project. I find that morally wrong. Finally there is an email from Cornell University (Sarah Carson Zemanick) asking for support of this project. It is a sham from day one and it has to stop.

Kathryn Russell – Member of CSED (Coalition for Sustainable Economic Development) – I am a rep to that body from the TC Workers Center. We have a long history of dealing with the IDA and having input on what we think. I urge you to look back at CSED’s recommendations. We should have abatements for people in the community. We would like to see them go for a project that 200 workers would be hired. Solar installations are what are driving the US economy. There is 17 times the growth rate in solar institutions than other parts of the economy. This is the future. The mission of the IDA – looking to retain quality jobs and strengthen the tax base – I think this project does that – it is also good for the planet and the economy.

Brad Perkins – Point of order – re filming at meetings. Opposed from IDA deviating from own guidelines. I am opposed on lightening the tax burden on Distributed Sun. If you must create a PILOT, the value of the project should come to a real value, so they are paying taxes on the real value of their project. Offensive that the company wants to negotiate with the IDA. The IDA should represent the people. He is also the president of the Willow Glen cemetery. Referenced 7500 permanent residents of the cemetery. Why would we abate taxes for a Washington DC that can afford to pay taxes.
James Skaley – Investing in this project is something we have to consider – it is going to be in somebody's back yard. So we are all going to compromise on absorbing some of the costs – relating to the idea of change. We will all have benefits in the long run.

Bruno Schickel – It seems like there are two problems – location and the magnitude of subsidy from the IDA to the company. There are better locations that these projects can be installed. The old county dump on Caswell Road. There is a myth that they can only go in certain locations. The link to the substation is only 5 miles, the company can pay for that so it seems that the company can go to other locations in the town. Also the taxes in the Town of Dryden have been raised 46% over the past years – the Town of Dryden residents are burdened with the highest taxes in the County. The size of the gift to the company – feels if the project were assessed differently they would be generating $30M over thirty years.

Judy Pierpont – Most are in favor to increased development. She agrees and feels that the Solar Arrays are a good match – she would encourage the IDA to continue to negotiate for a good deal. These projects will bring great community benefits. Once installed they will not ask for any municipal services. No fire, no water or sewer use, no increase in road use, no children going to the schools, no pollution, no waste disposal, no harm to the public or soil, no noise. They will provide additional income to the land owners. Local residents and businesses can save money by buying reduced energy, they help meet climate goals by reducing carbon emissions. Good jobs for local workers during installation. Encourage future installation.

Buzz Lavine – I am in favor of solar power here in my back yard and in our town. The “subsidy” is not a subsidy. Sun8 will become a very large taxpayer in the County. When we think of subsidies to energy companies – fossil fuel companies get larger subsidies. These projects will be an economic boon for us and our children.

Bert Bland – He has seen the IDA work with Cayuga Operating Company (Power Plant) – they work with companies that get as much as they can but still keep the company economically viable. A few years ago, there was a solicitation for solar projects on Cornell land – very competitive – Distributed Sun won. They built projects, did a good job, worked with the Town and neighbors. I am here to support Distributed Sun.

Kim Anderson – Spoke to her internal struggle with both sides of the project. We are not opposed to solar and the benefits to the Town of Dryden. She would like to see the PILOT go through. She mentioned that the fencing around the Willow Glen site has changed – no longer chain link. She commented on the high level of resistance and how that might impact future projects. No project will be “perfect.” Local residents will benefit from energy and lower payments. There is no tax burden only tax benefits. 200 jobs are great – even if they are temporary.

Laurence Heller – Referenced other Distributed Sun projects that were done in NYS without PILOT agreements. Why give them a tax break if they can make a go of it without them. They are a Washington DC based company familiar selling tax breaks. Cornell will benefit from tax credits.
due to this. How much is SUN 8 going to make on this? We should know. Feels they will make more money selling electricity to NYSEG because it is solar. He talked about cutting down 38 acres of trees as a bad thing. The lack of information and the seeming inaccuracy is ingenuous.

Diann Zeigler – Supports community solar project – the sooner the better. The US is so far behind other countries. It may not be perfect or “fair” but it will help lower energy bills and the environment. She does not see any problem with sites of the projects.

Linda Mix – Lives on Caswell Road. Referenced Dryden school taxes and how it impacts her property tax bill – her bill is very high. She is against a tax reduction for this project.

Cyrus Urminger – strongly in favor to the solar projects. Spoke regarding the “pollution” produced during creating solar panels – it is minimal. Visual impact on sites should be minimalized by the company and made as pleasing as possible. Benefits of solar energy far outweigh any risks.

Nathan Busby – He is for the solar projects. Would prefer solar panels versus housing projects near the high school in Dryden. He would like to see a better starting place and better accelerator in the PILOT agreement.

Heriberto Rodriguez – referred to videotape of proceedings and how it is posted on youtube – he is from Otsego County, Town of Butternut. He covers environmental issues, pipeline controversies. All comments are posted.

John Berger – He is conflicted. Likes community solar. But feels like the people are getting rushed.

Springbuck – Supports the solar farms. The greatest times are times of sacrifices. Hopes that we can look back at this as a time we can be proud of. She also works with recycling. She spoke about building solar projects on landfills – however the one on Caswell Road has issues.

Sara Zemarck – works at Campus Sustainability at Cornell University – Supports the projects – has worked a long time to reach this point.

The public hearing was closed at 7:54 pm
Question of legality of IDA’s action with respect to proposed PILOT.

RPTL 487 section 9a & 9b are clear that PILOTs are only permissible if the taxing jurisdictions have not opted out of the 15 year exemption and the PILOTS may only have a duration of 15 years.

The IDA claims that they have the authority from the state to override this law. I would ask that they provide us with the state law that allows for this override, as I have not been able to identify any such provision.

The total disrespect the IDA has shown for the elected governments within the county is truly disturbing. The elected governments in Newfield all opted out of the tax exemption, but the IDA stepped in and set up a pilot.

The IDA claims they are acting in the best interest of the municipalities as they are getting PILOT funds, which is better than no payments if the solar companies go elsewhere. I am confident that our elected board members are intelligent enough to comprehend this argument and have fully considered it in their opt out decisions.

I would question as to whether or not the fiduciary responsibilities of the IDA members are being satisfied. It appears to me they are more concerned with the wellbeing of the solar companies and imposing their desire to turn Tompkins count into a solar dumping ground than they are about representing the counties’ residents & taxpayers.

Pat Fitzgibbons, (315-401-1010) Dryden Taxpayer

637 Wilson Creek Rd.

Newark Valley, NY 13811

What is the status of Tompkins County Local Law 3394 (5/1/2012) which states "No exemption from taxation shall be applicable with respect to any solar or wind energy system ...."
Comments for the Tompkins Co, IDA public hearing on proposed Sun8 PILOT agreements. 5/9/2017

Good evening,

My Name is Tony Salerno. I have lived in Tompkins County since moving here with my parents when I was a young boy in elementary school (48 years). The last 30 years my wife and I have lived in the town of Dryden. We are heavily involved in Dryden community though various community groups and organizations. We care deeply for the community and our neighbors. Dryden is our home. More importantly, Dryden is home to our children and grandchildren. That is really what is important here. What is best for our children and grandchildren.

I will state right up front, I support the two proposed solar projects under consideration here. In the interest of time, I will not go through all of the benefits of locally produced solar power. The benefits of these projects to both the local community and the greater global community are well known and have been well stated. Put simply, bringing community solar projects to Dryden, even clustered as they are in these proposals, is the right thing to do.

Having said that, we need to keep in mind that these projects are being proposed by a “for profit” company. As such, they should not get a free ride. The town of Dryden, and more specifically, the town of Dryden within the borders of the Dryden School District, can greatly benefit from commercial development expanding the tax base. This will help ease the burden on residential and agricultural taxpayers.

I have directed a number of questions to Jason Leifer, Martha Robertson and others about the proposed PILOT agreements. As I review the information received along with other research I have done, many of my original concerns about these PILOT agreements with Sun8 have been addressed. I understand that power generation facilities all over New York State, regardless of fuel source, contribute to the local tax base via PILOT agreements. I understand why it is that the TC IDA vs the town and/or school district is working on these agreements. I understand that valuation and assessment of these facilities is not as simple as looking at what they cost to build. In fact, cost to build (investment) has little to do with valuation and assessment. However, there is one question in my mind that I have, so far, been unable to fully answer. Are the proposed PILOT agreements a fair deal for the local taxpayers? To answer that question I have asked, How do these proposed PILOT agreements compare to others? Getting an answer to that question has been difficult. I understand that you (the IDA) have access to financial information that is not public to help make these agreements. While I understand that some of it cannot be shared publically, I would urge this board to share as much information as they can about how the PILOT amounts were calculated and how they compare to other PILOT agreements or other valuation methods. From what I have been able to find and information I have, these proposed agreements seem reasonable, but I really don’t know for sure.

What it comes down to for me is this. If the PILOT amounts calculated are a fair deal for the local taxpayers, and, if the IDA can complete these agreements with as much transparency as possible to help us understand that these are a fair deal, then I urge the TC IDA to do whatever it can to complete these negotiations. Please put in place reasonable PILOT agreements with Sun8 that will allow these projects to be completed. If the propose PILOTs meet that criteria, then I am all for them going forward. As I said previously, local, clean, renewable power generation is simply the right thing to do.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
PILOT for Solar

Jeff Hart <jeffhart525@yahoo.com>

Tue 5/9/2017 2:29 PM

Inbox

To: jacquesschickel@hotmail.com <jacquesschickel@hotmail.com>; Jeff Hart <supervisor@newfieldny.org>

Read by Jacques Schickel

Hello,

I wish Dryden the best of luck coming up with a solution that will work for all parties involved.

This was my experience with the IDA on our PILOT negotiations with Delaware River Solar.

Once Delaware River Solar asked for the 20 year PILOT it had to be turned over to the IDA. We were told that the IDA would work together with the town on coming up with the PILOT amount. This couldn’t have been further from the truth. DRS (Delaware River Solar) agreed with the town of a rate of $9,250 per year with a 1% escalator per 2MW array. The IDA came up with a lesser amount of $8,000 with a 2% escalator. The town’s agreement would have net the town approx. $21,000 per 2MW system over 20 years, which doesn’t sound like much till you multiply it by the 5, 2MW systems currently proposed in the town, then you have $105,000 over 20 years. In a small town like Newfield that doesn’t have the tax base of a larger town this could have a serious positive effect on our budget (as well as the school and county that would share this amount).

The other part that I didn’t understand pertains to the public hearing held in Newfield by the IDA. At the public hearing not a single person supported the lower amount proposed by the IDA. Everyone that spoke at the hearing about the PILOT amount stated that the IDA should go with the higher amount the solar company and the town had agreed to. Even with the public’s input the IDA chose to go their own way. In our town when the public unanimously agrees about a topic, it is our job as public servants to listen to them. The public hearing I feel was a simple horse and pony show for the IDA.

I support solar, but I also believe the town’s shouldn’t be short changed either.

Thanks,

Jeff Hart
PILOT MEETING PROPOSAL FOR SOLAR INDUSTRIAL CORPORATIONS

STATEMENT BY ROBERT I WATROS
MAY 9, 2017

I BELIEVE THERE IS SUFFICIENT INCENTIVES ALREADY OFFERED THAT WILL RESULT IN THE HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT OF SOLAR ENERGY IN TOMPKINS COUNTY.

THE FACT THAT PUBLIC CORPORATIONS HAVE ALREADY DEMONSTRATED AN INTREST IN PROVIDING SOLAR ENERGY IN TOMPKINS COUNTY IS SUFFICIENT PROOF.

THE TAX ABATEMENT FOR LARGE CORPORATIONS ONLY TRANSFERS THE TAX BURDEN TO THE EXISTING TAXPAYER, MANY OF THOSE WHO ARE CONSIDERED MIDDLE OR LOWER CLASS AMERICANS.

I AM APALLED THAT THE PROGRESSIVE COMMUNITY WHICH HAS RAILED AGAINST CORPORATE WELFARE FOR YEARS IS NOW PROPOSING THAT WE SUBSIDIZE LARGE MULTI-NATIONAL COMPANYS.

I AM APPOSED TO OFFERING THE OPTION OF A PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES TO THE SOLAR DEVELOPERS UNTIL THERE IS A PROVEN NEED.

ROBERT I WATROS
14 EVERGREEN ST,
DRYDEN N, Y.
MY NAME IS ARTHUR BERKEY AND I LIVE AT 1205 ELLIS HOLLOW ROAD. COMMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

I SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF SOLAR WELL PLANNED AND SITE SENSITIVE. THIS CONCERN EXPRESSED BY MANY RESIDENTS DOES NOT MEAN - AS STATED BY LETTERS BEING CIRCULATED THAT WE ARE OPPOSED TO SOLAR.

I ALSO SUPPORT CONSERVATION OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES. THE COUNTY CONSERVATION COMMITTEE VOTED UNANIMOUSLY THAT A COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW BE CONDUCTED - WHICH I SUPPORT.

THE TOWN OF DRYDEN PLANNING BOARD VOTED FOR A SIX MONTH MORATORIUM ON SOLAR TO PROVIDE TIME FOR STUDY AND FULL INFORMATION. I SUPPORT THAT RECOMMENDATION OF THIS COMMITTEE WHOSE ROLE IS OVERSIGHT FOR QUALITY DEVELOPMENT. THE NEED FOR A SPECIAL USE PERMIT, I.E., AN EXCEPTION TO CURRENT ZONING INDICATES CAREFUL STUDY IS NEEDED.

FOR EXAMPLE:

THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWS FUNDED BY, AND REPORTED TO, THE SOLAR COMPANY NEED TO BE VERIFIED AS COMPREHENSIVE AND OBJECTIVE.

INFORMATION ON PRIVATELY HELD COMPANIES IS MUCH LESS ACCESSIBLE FOR VERIFICATION THAN COMPANIES THAT ARE PUBLICLY TRADED. A RECORD OF SUCCESSFUL PAST PROJECTS IS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR APPROVAL.

COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION IS ALSO NEEDED GIVEN THE RECORD OF OTHER SOLAR COMPANIES GOING BANKRUPT AT TAXPAYER EXPENSE - E.G. SOLENDRA FOR ONE HALF BILLION DOLLARS.

THE COST OF THE PROJECTS HAS BEEN STATED AS 54 MILLION DOLLARS. A 10% RETURN ON THE INVESTMENT IS 5.4 MILLION. THE TAXPAYER FUNDED FEDERAL SUBSIDY OF ONE MILLION PER MEGAWATT ALONE PAYS A 10% RETURN FOR MULTIPLE YEARS. A PILOT OF EIGHT THOUSAND PER MEGAWATT (SOME $132,000/ YEAR) WITH A 2% INCREASE/ YEAR) IS TOO LOW. PAYING $132,000 TAXES ON A 54 MILLION INVESTMENT AFTER ALREADY RECEIVING A 10% RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR MULTIPLE YEARS IN ADVANCE FROM TAXPAYER SUBSIDIES IS SIMPLY UNFAIR TO LOCAL TAXPAYERS.

THE ROLE OF THE IDA IS PRIMARILY TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH JOBS. THE INCREASE IN NUMBER OF 2000 JOBS IN THIS CASE IS TEMPORARY - SO CONSIDER THAT ALL LOCAL TAX SUBSIDIES BE TEMPORARY ACCORDINGLY.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK THIS EVENING.
April 9, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a Dryden resident and am writing in support of the solar farm projects proposed by Sun8. I encourage the Dryden town board and the Tompkins County industrial development agency to approve the projects as I believe the positive features of the solar farm outweigh the negative elements required by this effort.

I have listened carefully - for more than seven hours - to those opposed to the solar farms while attending Dryden town board meetings this spring. Most of the arguments I have heard boil down to viewshed issues, whether the solar farm is located on Cornell land that is currently open fields or next to the cemetery in East Dryden.

We need a better way to generate energy where we live. We need to cut our dependence on fossil fuels. We need to be thinking beyond our existing paradigm and be willing to make reasonable concessions for the future of our town, our planet and our children. We need this type of alternative development, not only for the energy it will produce, but also for the example it will set.

This is also a social justice issue. Solar farms allow those who live in cities or rentals and those without the means to finance their own home solar, an opportunity to tie in with locally produced renewable energy.

The reason I heard more than seven hours of commentary and debate regarding the Sun8 proposal was because I was there at the Dryden town hall this winter and spring to oppose a very different energy project: the expansion of the Borger natural gas compressor station in Ellis Hollow.

Although local residents do not use the natural gas running through pipes that thread through our county as part of the 200 mile long Dominion New Market pipeline, we absorb the externalities and the risk, including the added emissions coming from the Borger compressor station. People who live somewhere else consume the gas.

While sitting and waiting for my turn to speak at the board meetings during the Sun8 deliberations, the irony of local residents objecting to a project that provides a safe and reversible source of energy was not lost on me. The attention to detail of the developer and the opportunity local residents had to air their concerns, and then have those concerns addressed, incited a combination of awe and envy in me, given the lack of public input related to ramping up fossil fuel enterprises that I was encountering.

I was worrying about emissions of VOCs, formaldehyde, hydrogen sulfide and fine particulates that have gone untracked for decades into our air, while my neighbors deliberated over an aesthetically unpleasing repurposed field and the view from a graveyard. If only we could see
the methane leaking (Ingraffea, 2015) from the pipeline at a rate 1.5 times higher than the Ithaca baseline, a measurement taken by Dr. Anthony Ingraffea when the Ellis Hollow compressor station was not operational, perhaps then we could capture more fully the concern of area residents, Dominion Energy and local officials, I thought.

We have a cultural disconnect when it comes to energy. We don’t fully understand what it takes to fuel our way of life or where energy comes from and what sacrifices are made beyond our borders to bring it to us. We have become inured to the realities of fossil fuel consumption.

Development projects, like the Sun8 solar farms, begin to change that obscurity and literally bring the realities of energy production to light without forfeiting our health and the health of the planet. It is time to address the practical realities related to energy, whether it involves giving up a view or responding to unseen fossil fuel externalities in our local community.

Sincerely,

Katie Quinn-Jacobs
Sodom Rd
Town of Dryden
I oppose the IDA’s proposed PILOT agreement for what is being called The Turkey Hill Project (it has been labeled the Ellis Tract in most other official documents).

The PILOT proposed in the Notice of Contemplated Deviation dated 4-28-2017 differs from that which has been repeatedly outlined to citizens at multiple public hearings.

Understanding PILOT agreements can be challenging for many citizens. We all know people who struggle even doing their own taxes. So citizens trust their elected officials to explain complicated financial agreements accurately. They take on faith the information officials provide about what a PILOT arrangement will reap for a town. We have been repeatedly told that the PILOT will increase by 2% each year, with Power Point projections showing how revenues build over time. As recently as a few days ago, Martha Robertson sent an email to a large listserv urging support for the project in which she referenced a 2% annual increase. Yet, the PILOT under discussion today only increases 1% annually. Over the life of the PILOT, this represents a substantial difference in income—almost one and a half million dollars less ($1,449,234 less over the 30 year PILOT).

In addition, at a public information session held at the Neptune Fire Station, Martha Robertson told the crowd present that she and Dryden Town Board member Dan Lamb were negotiating for a better PILOT—one that provided the Town of Dryden a greater than the proposed 7% to 8% share of the PILOT monies. There was an implication that people should look favorably on the PILOT because this “better deal” was in the offering. This “better deal” has not materialized. In fact, what's on the table today—a 1% accelerator—is a much worse deal.

I think granting Sun8 this deviation, when the company was well aware of the IDA’s proposed Community Solar Policy, also sets a precedent for all the other solar projects coming down the pipeline, both in Dryden and the surrounding towns. Why would any future large-scale solar developer pay a 2% annual accelerator when it knows it could argue for 1%?
Is Cornell Really Behind This?
From a large listerv by Posted Sarah Zemanick, Cornell's Director of the Campus Sustainability Office

From: Sarah Carson Zemanick  Sent: Monday, May 08, 2017 9:16 AM  Subject: Dryden community solar still needs your support!

At the last Dryden Planning Board meeting, a resolution recommending the Town Board institute a new moratorium on solar development over 2MW was passed at the behest of those trying to stop the two proposed community solar projects - ostensibly to allow for a town-wide evaluation of all potential solar sites on privately owned land to prepare for a non-existent flood of impending large projects. As we know, the lack of places to interconnect large projects already prevents this, as does a finite customer base. This is an intentional end run to try to stop the legal approvals process already underway under the town’s newly adopted solar law. Community members who want to see the SUN8 projects go forward need to keep up the support! More about the projects at @ http://dryden.ny.us/departments/planning-department/permit-review-links/special-use-permits/ and http://drydenrunsonsun.weebly.com/

Written comments and in-person comments at every town meeting are important! Below are some “talking points” to consider.

• The county IDA holds a public hearing this Tuesday May 9, 2017 6:00 pm at the Dryden Town Hall, 93 E Main Street on the solar tax agreement (PILOT).
• Town Board next currently scheduled meetings are May 11 and May 18, 7PM, Dryden Town Hall (time and location subject to change, meetings posted on the Dryden website http://dryden.ny.us/ )
• Planning Board next currently scheduled meeting is May 25, 7PM, Dryden Town Hall (time and location subject to change, meetings posted on the Dryden website http://dryden.ny.us/ )
• Written comments should be sent to:
supervisor@dryden.ny.us
llavine@dryden.ny.us
DCipolla-Dennis@dryden.ny.us
dlamb@dryden.ny.us
kservoss@dryden.ny.us
rburger@dryden.ny.us
townclerk@dryden.ny.us (ask that they be distributed to all Town Board, Planning Board, Conservation Board, and ZBA members)
inaa@tcad.org

Dryden wants solar power, solar jobs, and a clean energy future for our children! Town Board – just say NO to the ill-advised, desperate attempt to stop solar progress with a sham moratorium, and say YES to community solar!

Dryden is ready for the future with our new solar law. SUN8’s projects have been advanced under this law with much thought and input from the community. I urge you to approve them as soon as possible with all of the mitigations and low-impact, best-management practices they have proposed. A politically motivated moratorium in the middle of a legal application process is not how we do business in Dryden.

We want Dryden to be open for solar, and open for business, not politics! Move forward with these solar projects on their merits – do not move backwards with a moratorium! I want Dryden community solar and Dryden community benefits:

• 200 jobs
• low-cost renewable electricity for everyone
• millions in new tax revenue
• clean, renewable power
• an "open for business" reputation

Dryden is a leader in creating the clean energy economy we all want – we need resolve to say YES to solar in our town, not a moratorium! SUN8 has provided more than enough information and mitigation to community concerns about potential impacts (including views from neighboring private property) to approve this project with confidence.

Thank you,
Sarah
Friends,

There's another important meeting soon where your support will be needed for community solar in Dryden!

Industrial Development Agency (IDA) Public Hearing
Distributed Sun proposal for the Ellis Tract and 2150 Dryden Road

**Tuesday, May 9, at 6:00 p.m**

Dryden Town Hall, 93 East Main Street, Village of Dryden

Distributed Sun will pay taxes through a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) at the rate of $8,000 per MW, plus a 2% annual accelerator. In the first year, the total will be approximately $232,000. Over the 30 years of the project, the total will be an estimated $8,000,000 to the Dryden and Ithaca schools, the Town, and the County. This is all new revenue. The Cornell land where the Ellis Tract will be located is now completely off the tax rolls. At the Dryden Rd. site, the underlying taxes will continue to be paid by the private landowner.

The IDA can only vote on the PILOT negotiation, not on siting, environmental impact, landscaping, or any other issue.

Your voice in support of this project can make a big difference! Please come out to the Dryden Town Hall and help us turn Dryden into a renewable town!

Thank you so much,
Martha Robertson

P.S. If you cannot make the meeting Tuesday night, you can email your comments to: Ina Arthur, at inaa@tcad.org. Ask her to forward your comments to the full IDA Board.

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Martha Robertson
Tompkins County Legislature
121 East Court St.
Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 274-5434
(607) 274-5430 fax
(607) 592-3119 cell
BYLAWS

TOMPKINS COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

October 3, 2008

ARTICLE I - THE AGENCY

SECTION 1. NAME. The name of the agency shall be the "Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency," hereinafter referred to as the "Agency."

SECTION 2. SEAL OF AGENCY. The seal of the Agency shall be in the form of a circle, and shall bear the name of the Agency and the year of its organization.

SECTION 3. OFFICE OF AGENCY. The office of the Agency shall be at the Tompkins County Courthouse, 320 North Tioga Street, in the City of Ithaca, New York, but the Agency may have other offices at such other places as the Agency may from time to time designate by resolution.

ARTICLE II - THE ORGANIZATION

SECTION 1. TYPE. The Agency is a corporate governmental agency, constituting a public benefit corporation.

SECTION 2. TERM. The Agency shall be perpetual in duration.

SECTION 3. PURPOSES AND POWERS. The purposes and powers of the Agency shall be as set forth in 858 of the General Municipal Law as amended from time to time.

SECTION 4. MEMBERSHIP*. Any one or more of the members of the Agency may be an official or employee of the County of Tompkins. In the event an official or employee of the County shall be appointed as a member of the Agency, acceptance or retention of said appointment shall not be deemed a forfeiture of his municipal office or employment, or incompatible therewith or affect his
tenure or compensation in any way.

The Agency shall consist of (7) seven voting members each having one vote who shall be appointed by the Legislature of the County of Tompkins and who shall serve at the pleasure of said Board. Membership is to consist of no more than three (3) members of the Legislature; one (1) member of the TCAD Board of Directors, nominated by its Chair and confirmed by the IDA; one (1) elected municipal official; one (1) elected school district official; and one (1) at-large member.

All members shall be County residents. The membership as a group should have representatives from both urban and rural areas of the County and should embody skills that would complement the work of the Agency including substantial finance and/or business experience and experience in workforce and labor issues. In addition, the Agency will seek to have a diverse representative board including but not limited to race, gender, sexual orientation, disability and other legally protected classes.

The County Administrator, County Planning Commissioner, and County Finance Director shall serve as advisors to the Board.

SECTION 5. COMPENSATION. Members of the Agency shall receive no compensation for their services, but shall be entitled to the necessary expenses, including travel expenses, incurred in the discharge of their duties.

SECTION 6. QUORUM. A majority of the members of the Agency shall constitute a quorum, provided that a smaller number may meet and adjourn to some other time or until the quorum is obtained. For the passage of any resolution or motion at meetings of the Agency, a majority of the whole number is required to perform and exercise said power, authority, and duty.

SECTION 7. TERM LIMITS. Members of the Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency who are also members of the Tompkins County Legislature shall be appointed annually by the Chair of the County Legislature subject to the approval of the Legislature, and shall serve at the pleasure of the Legislature.
Non-Legislator board members shall be appointed for a term of two years, with no more than three successive terms, subject to the approval of such terms by the Legislature. A member shall continue to hold office and may be reappointed to successive appointments until his or her successor is appointed and has qualified.

SECTION 8. COMMITTEES. The Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency will have the following Committees: Advisory, Audit, and Governance.

Advisory: An Advisory Committee may be formed on an ad hoc basis when purposes arise and may consist of advisors including the Tompkins County Administrator, Tompkins County Chief Financial Officer, and the Tompkins County Commissioner of Planning.

Audit: The Audit Committee shall consist of at least three (3) members of the board with the chair of the committee being appointed by the chair of the board.

Governance: The Governance Committee shall consist of at least three (3) members of the board with the chair of the committee being appointed by the chair of the board.

ARTICLE III - OFFICERS

SECTION 1. OFFICERS. The officers of the Agency shall consist of a chair, a vice-chair, a secretary and a treasurer, who shall be voting members of the Agency.

SECTION 2. CHAIR. The Legislature shall designate the chair of the Agency. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Agency and, except as otherwise authorized by resolution of the Agency, shall sign all agreements, contracts, deeds, and any other instruments of the Agency. At each meeting, the Chair shall submit such recommendations and information as (s)he may consider proper concerning the business affairs and policies of the Agency.

SECTION 3. VICE-CHAIR. The Vice-chair shall, in the absence of the Chair, fulfill the duties of the Chair.
SECTION 4. **SECRETARY.** The Secretary shall maintain or cause to be maintained the records of the Agency, shall act as secretary of the meetings of the Agency, record or cause to be recorded all votes, keep or cause to be kept a record of the proceedings of the Agency in a journal of proceedings to be kept for such purpose, and shall perform all duties incident to this office.

SECTION 5. **TREASURER.** The Treasurer shall maintain or cause to be maintained all funds of the Agency and shall deposit or cause to be deposited same in the name of the Agency in such bank (s) as the Agency may select. The Treasurer shall sign or cause to be signed all instruments of indebtedness, all orders, and all checks for the payment of money; and shall pay out and disburse said monies under the direction of the Agency. Except as otherwise authorized by Agency resolution, all such instruments of indebtedness, orders, and checks over $20,000 shall be countersigned by the Chair. The Treasurer shall keep or cause to be kept regular books of accounts showing receipts and expenditures, and shall render to the Agency at each regular meeting an account of his transactions and also of the financial condition of the Agency.

SECTION 6. **ADDITIONAL DUTIES.** The officers of the Agency shall perform such other duties and functions as may from time to time be required by the Agency, the bylaws of the Agency, or the rules and regulations of the Agency.

SECTION 7. **OFFICERS.** All officers except the Chair of the Agency shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Agency and shall hold office for one year or until the successors are elected.

SECTION 8. **VACANCIES.** Should any office become vacant, the Agency shall appoint a successor from among its membership at the next regular meeting, and such appointment shall be for the unexpired term of said office.

SECTION 9. **ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR.** An Administrative Director may be appointed by the Agency, and shall have general supervision over the administration of the business and affairs of the Agency, subject to the direction of the Agency. The Director shall be charged with the management of all projects of the Agency.
SECTION 10. **CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER.** The Chief Financial Officer of Tompkins County shall serve as the Chief Financial Officer of the Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency. Upon direction of the Treasurer, the Chief Financial Officer shall perform the duties of the Treasurer when needed.

SECTION 11. **ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL.** The Agency may from time to time employ such personnel as it deems necessary to exercise its powers, duties, and functions as prescribed by the New York State Industrial Development Agency Act, as amended, and all other laws of the State of New York applicable thereto. The selection and compensation of all personnel, including the Administrative Director, shall be determined by the Agency subject to the laws of the State of New York.

**ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS**

SECTION 1. **ANNUAL MEETING.** The annual meeting of the Agency shall be held in January of each year at the regular meeting place of the Agency.

SECTION 2. **MEETINGS.** Meetings of the Agency may be held as needed.

SECTION 3. **SPECIAL MEETINGS.** The Chair of the Agency may, when (s)he deems it desirable, and shall upon the written request of two additional members of the Agency, call a special meeting of the Agency for the purpose of transacting any business designated in the call. The call for a special meeting may be delivered to each member of the Agency or may be mailed to the business or home address of each member of the Agency at least two days prior to the date of such special meeting. Waivers of notice may be signed by any members failing to receive a proper notice. At such special meeting no business shall be considered other than as designated in the call, but if all members of the Agency are present at a special meeting, with or without notice thereof, any and all business may be transacted at such special meeting.

SECTION 4. **ORDER OF BUSINESS.** The following shall be the order of business at the regular meetings of the Agency:
a. roll call
b. reading and approval of minutes of previous meeting
c. bills and communications
d. report of the Treasurer
e. reports of committees
f. unfinished business
g. new business
h. adjournment

All resolutions shall be in writing and shall be copied in a journal of the proceedings of the Agency.

SECTION 5. MANNER OF VOTING. Voting on all questions coming before the Agency shall be by voice vote and the yeas and nays shall be entered in the minutes of such meetings.

ARTICLE V - AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1. AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS. The Bylaws of the Agency shall be amended only with the approval of at least a majority of the members of the Agency at a regular or special meeting, but no such amendment shall be adopted unless at least seven days written notice thereof has been previously given to all members of the Agency.

* The TCIDA Board approved the membership composition set forth in these bylaws to comply with the best practices recommended by the Public Authority Accountability Act. The Tompkins County Legislature, which is the appointing authority, has overruled this decision and therefore the membership composition is four members of the County Legislature, one TCAD Board representative, and two at large members.
Administration

TCIDA Contacts

The Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency is managed by Tompkins County Area Development. (http://www.tcad.org)

Heather McDaniel (mailto:heatherm@tcad.org)
Administrative Director Tompkins County IDA
VP & Director of Economic Development Services
Tompkins County Area Development
401 East State/MLK Jr. Street
Ithaca, NY 14850
607-273-0005

Mariette Geldenhuys – Attorney at Law
401 E. State Street, #306
Ithaca, NY 14850
607-273-2272

Russell Gaenzle – Attorney at Law
Harris Beach PLLC
99 Garsey Road
Pittsford, NY 14534
585-419-8801

Policies

Bylaws

2015 Budget

2016 Budget

2017 Budget
Hello,
Just wanted to send a message stating that I am in support of the Dryden Solar project.
Thanks!
Paulina Pavinski Bitar
109 Mary Lane
Dryden, NY 14850

Ina,

On the Pilot program (and as a tax payer, business person and Dryden resident) I am in full support of this Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) initiative for the Dryden Community Solar Project. It is a creative way to put some of the Cornell-lands back into a tax-generating mode; it taxes the activity - which properly should be taxed from a fair-business perspective since it competes with electricity generation on lands that is already on the tax rolls; and it makes it far more attractive to Cornell to put more of its tax-exempt lands available for such community uses: far more attractive that finding ways to force Cornell to no longer make these lands tax-exempt.

--Cor
Cornelis J Drost
10 Hickory Circle - Dryden resident and
President & CEO
Transonic Systems Inc.
p: 607.257.5300 ext. 206
www.transonic.com

Hi Ina,

I can’t make the upcoming meeting about the Distributed Sun PILOT negotiation, but as a Town of Dryden resident, I wanted to express my support for the Distributed Sun project in terms of the revenues it will provide to the community, and, of course, the overall goal of moving to a renewable energy infrastructure.

Please share my comments with the full IDA board.

cheers… -Adam

Adam C. Engst: CEO of TidBITS Publishing Inc. • ace@tidbits.com
TidBITS: Smart Apple coverage for over 27 years • http://tidbits.com
TidBITS Content Network: Articles for Apple pros • http://tcn.tidbits.com
Dear Ms. Arthur:

Please share with the IDA board our strong support of the Dryden Solar PILOT proposal. We cannot attend the Tuesday meeting but wanted to make our voices heard.

Thank you,

Kathy Zahler
Paul Lutwak
639 Midline Road
Freeville, NY 13068
(607) 539-6525

——

Dear Ms. Arthur:

Thank you for your interest in the proposed solar installations near Willow Glen Cemetery in Dryden and at two sites Ellis Hollow, also in Dryden. Distributed Sun, the Developer, has been responsive to community concerns with both professional courtesy and technical modifications appropriate to our town. I favor both community solar farms for multiple reasons.

Among these, community solar projects will bring significant tax benefits—PILOT of $232,000 in the first year and $8 million over the longer life of the project. At the same time, they will cost the town very little (no water and sewer, no fires to put out, and minimal road maintenance/winter plowing). Rarely do we experience windfall developments that replenish our property taxes with such low risk and such high public benefits (among these are 200 short-term jobs).

These installations are at public good and a public revenue generator for Dryden. I’m eager to see them approved to offset Tompkins County’s carbon footprint and set the stage for additional community solar. Would you kindly circulate this correspondence to the full IDA Board.

Sincerely,

Chuck Geisler
Charles Geisler
517 Ellis Hollow Cr. Rd. (Dryden)
Ithaca, NY 14850

——

To Whom it may concern,

I am in favor of the Solar installation on Dryden Road. Solar has become the new normal. Let’s start reaping the benefits.

The Indianapolis airport has a solar farm under their flight pattern, where no other building could be built. These solar cells provide all the energy for the airport serving the city of 2 million, plus they sell the extra to the city!!!!!
Along a busy highway is not a good place for housing, with so much noise from traffic, so why not a solar farm?

Thank you,

Carol Whitlow
Town of Dryden

My name is Karl Kolesnikoff and I live at 64 Hungerford Rd. Both my wife and I are in support of the two projects. I voiced my support at the last meeting. I will not be able to make the meeting on the 9th of May. Both my wife and I want to be tallied on the side of support for these projects. The Distributive Sun Company has done an excellent job of compromising and ameliorating the residents that have questions and concerns. I have not seen this willingness in awhile. There will never be consensus on this project. I believe that most of the serious concerns have been addressed. The project should not get bodged down in distractions. The benefit to the community of Dryden as well as the Tompkins County is very important and outweighs many of the personal objections that I heard at the meeting. Thanks. Karl Kolesnikoff and Lynn Garman

I am unable to attend the Dryden Town Hall meeting on Tuesday, so wanted to express my support of the Dryden Solar project. Increasing our use of clean, renewable energy sources is absolutely imperative for a sustainable earth. This project will insure that Dryden is seen as a progressive, environmentally friendly community, decrease our reliance on fossil fuels, and will bring in a new source of tax relief as well.

Please forward my comments to the Board, and support this fantastic project for Dryden.

Theresa Fulton
Steve Tanksley
17 Bridle Lane, Dryden

I am unable to attend the Tuesday May 9 meeting, but I want to voice strong support for the Dryden solar proposal. I live on Ellis Hollow Creek road and often walk and/or drive by the proposed Game Farm site. I’ve been able to switch my home from oil heat to geothermal and solar farm through Renovus, and I’m very excited that others in the area will be able to go fossil free if this new solar capacity comes on line.

Sincerely,
Marjory Brooks
501 Ellis hollow creek road

Marjory Brooks
mbb100@mac.com
To: Members of the Tompkins County IDA

Cc: Dryden Town Board

Subject: Dryden Solar Projects

May 6, 2017

I would like to question the appropriateness and legality of the IDA’s involvement in the PILOT programs related to the Sun8/Distributed Energy’s proposed installations in the Town of Dryden (Turkey Hill & Willow Glen).

Directly from the Tompkins County IDA web site….”The primary mission of the TCIDA is to offer economic incentives to Tompkins County businesses selling product outside of the region, in order to create and retain quality employment opportunities and strengthen the local tax base.”

…”The IDA targets the industrial sector and will only consider other sectors if certain criteria are met.”

1 Sun8 and the Dryden Town Board have been emphatic that these installations are not industrial solar. Why then is the IDA getting involved, as they target the industrial sector?

2 Mission of the IDA to offer economic incentives to Tompkins County businesses …..Distributed Energy/Sun8 is not a Tompkins County business.

3 Mission of the IDA to create and retain quality employment opportunities ….. no long term jobs are being created for town residents.

4 Mission of the IDA to strengthen the local tax base …. Roughly $8 million in PILOT funds over 30 years is a small percentage of the taxes that would be collected on the assessed value of such installations. Some might argue that the PILOT funds are better than nothing; I would ask is that the price of prostituting our lands and community character?

It would also appear to many that the IDA may be attempting to operate outside their legal mission. Per GML Article 18-A paragraph 852 states ………. Policy and purposes….preventing unemployment and economic deterioration (see full text below). These solar programs do nothing to prevent unemployment or prevent economic deterioration.

General Municipal Law Article 18-A

852. “Policy and purposes of article. It is hereby declared to be the policy of this state to promote the economic welfare, recreation opportunities and prosperity of its inhabitants and to actively promote, attract, encourage and develop recreation, economically sound commerce and industry and economically sound projects identified and called for to implement a state heritage area management plan as provided in title G of the parks, recreation and historic preservation law through governmental action for the purpose of preventing unemployment and economic deterioration by the creation of industrial development agencies which are hereby declared to be governmental agencies and instrumentalities and to grant to such industrial development agencies the rights and powers provided in this article. It is hereby further declared to be the policy of this state to protect and promote the health of the inhabitants of this state by the conservation, protection and improvement of the natural and cultural or historic resources and environment and to control land, sewer, water, air, noise or general environmental pollution derived from the operation of industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, commercial, recreation, horse racing facilities, railroad facilities, automobile racing facilities and research facilities and to grant such industrial development agencies the rights and powers provided by this article with respect to industrial pollution control facilities. It is hereby further declared to be the policy of this state to protect and promote the health of the inhabitants of this state and to increase trade through promoting the development of facilities to provide recreation for the citizens of the state and to attract tourists from other states. The use of all such rights and powers is a public purpose essential to the public interest, and for which public funds may be expended.”
The proposed PILOT arrangement also appears to be in contradiction to state law. Assessors Manual Volume 4, Exemption Administration Section 4.01 – RPTL Section 487- Summary-paragraph D. PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES: None required. States:
“However, each county, city, town, village and school district (except the school districts of New York, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers) that has not disallowed the exemption may require the owner to enter into a contract for payments in lieu of taxes. As part of such contract, the property owner may be required to make annual payments in an amount not to exceed the amounts which would have been payable without the exemption. Such a contract may not operate more than 15 years, commencing from the date on which the benefits of this exemption first become effective.” (paragraphs 9.a & 9.b of 487 also addresses these two points).

It is my understanding that the Dryden School Board has disallowed the exemption; therefore a PILOT program related to school taxes is not appropriate. It is also my understanding, based on what has been presented at various public meetings, that the 30 year time period that has been discussed for the PILOT is also in violation of the law. My view on these issues also seems to be supported by information found on the NY-Sun PV Trainers Network (training.ny-sun.ny.gov) in presentations prepared by Jessica Bacher of the Land Use Law Center of Pace Law School.

Also, from the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance, Recently asked questions about the real property tax law on the topic of solar energy systems, Issue #2 dated January 25,2016.

PILOTs
“If a municipality does not opt out – i.e., if it leaves the exemption in place – then qualifying solar energy systems constructed in the municipality will be exempt from taxation for a period of 15 years. However, the municipality then has the option to require the owners of such systems to enter into contracts to make payments in lieu of taxes, which are generally referred to as “PILOTs.”

Q: If a municipality leaves the exemption in place and requires owners to pay PILOTs, how much should those payments be?
A: That is largely a local decision, except that the statute sets limits on how large these PILOTs may be, and on how long they may last. Specifically, it provides that the PILOTs may not exceed the taxes that would have been payable if the property were not exempt under § 487. It also provides that the period over which the PILOTs are to be paid may not exceed 15 years. See § 487(9)(a). In effect, then, if a municipality leaves the exemption in place and imposes the maximum allowable PILOT obligation, the owner will be making payments to the municipality in the same amount as if the property were fully taxable. The primary difference is that those payments will have the legal status of PILOTs rather than property taxes.”

I am concerned that many atypical actions (such as the creation of landlocked parcels to arguably circumvent the 2 MW limit) and arguably legally questionable actions (concerning the PILOT programs) are being contemplated by Dryden’s Town Board as well as the Tompkins County IDA. Please only consider your fiduciary responsibilities to the residents and taxpayers of the Town and County and not let your personal views of solar energy enter into you decision process. There will be many adversely affected by these installations for a marginal electric savings for some and huge profits for an out of state company (Sun8). Unfortunately, it is easy to envision the law suits that people are talking about that may result against the Town Board and the IDA if these projects are approved in any semblance of their current form.

Sincerely,
Pat Fitzgibbons (315-405-1010; pbfitz1@hotmail.com), Dryden taxpayer
My husband and I live in Ellis Hollow (Thomas Road). We support the SUN8 projects. Many eloquent, knowledgeable people (among them ornithologists) have posted comments in support so I won't duplicate their input. I just want to stress that global warming has to be one of society's highest priorities and at this point in time, solar energy appears to be the safest option with the least negative impact. I understand the concerns of the people on Dodge Road who are opposed but I believe the project planners have taken those concerns into consideration by taking steps to reduce the project's potential impact.

We do not support a moratorium for further study. From the documents we have read, it appears that the SUN8 planners have undertaken a comprehensive appraisal of the best way to help our community move ahead with solar energy in Dryden. We agree with the posted comments -- If not now, when? If not here, where?

Thank you for your consideration of our feedback. Please keep this project moving ahead.

Sincerely,
Julia Bonney
Greg Bostwick
424 Thomas Road
Ithaca, NY

Greetings Ina,
I cannot make the Tuesday night meeting but would like to let you know that I would be in favor of the project if some things were different:
1. The amount our electric bills will be reduced is not enough to justify this project. They can do better.
2. Dodge Road is not a good location for the panels. Can we please use some Cornell parking lots that are already paved? The panels would keep the cars and black top cool.
3. Wind is a better alternative to solar. The energy that goes into producing the panels will never be replaced by the solar energy they trap for use. I understand this is complicated. This is why I can't wholeheartedly support this project. I would support it if #1 and #2 were in addressed.

Thank you for reading and considering these concerns.

Jane Kennedy
8 Nottingham Dr.
Ithaca, NY 14850

Statement Supporting solar panels at Dryden Rd. and Ellis Hollow
Kathryn Russell
434 Snyder Hill Road (for 20 yrs.)
Ithaca, NY

I am organizer for the Tompkins County Workers’ Center. In an important way, I see this debate over the solar arrays as a labor issue. Climate change is not only effecting the environment. With
many fits and starts, the labor force is shifting to a renewable energy economy. We need to plan for a just transition for workers and communities.

The U.S. solar industry employed 260,077 workers last year, a nearly 25% increase in the number of jobs from 2015. That jump was largely driven by a massive increase in solar panel installations like the ones planned in Dryden. Solar industry employment growth outpaced that of the overall U.S. economy by 17 times.[i]

This project would provide 200 jobs. I ask the Dryden Town Board to insist that Distributed Solar use a unionized, local workforce. Many of us in the labor movement want good, clean energy jobs, jobs we feel good about and that are lodged in the future rather than in the outmoded fossil fuel paradigm from the last centuries.

I’d also like to address the issue of the cemetery:
When we consider our ancestors, those who came before us, we must also consider our descendants. Graveyards are a symbol of our past, one we must honor and respect. Putting that past in motion, however, we see that it of necessity moves through time to the future. This trajectory tells us that our veneration must also look forward. I see solar panels as a symbol of that future.

I am also a member of Mothers Out Front, and I have 6 grandchildren—3 of them teenagers. They know about global warming and climate change; they also know I am working hard through activism to create local solutions. I want to protect them. The best I can do is to give them hope by showing how citizens and local officials are moving our country toward renewable energy solutions.

I’ve been proud to show my family the solar panels on our own property. During 2016 our panels generated 8,509 kilowatt hours of electricity, and we have reduced our energy costs substantially. We are eager for others in Dryden to benefit from solar energy if, unlike us, they do not have a sunny location to locate their own solar system.

My mother lived until 104. She was an Iowa farm girl, a pragmatist from the heartland. She wanted realistic, practical solutions to problems. These solar panels will produce an actual impact in reducing Tompkins County’s carbon footprint, and they will be a visible, practical demonstration of the viability of renewable energy. We have the land, the developer, the necessary interconnections from NYSEG and a willing sponsor, Cornell. Let’s bring them together and show that Dryden can do it! We can once again be the “little town that could”[ii] like we were in banning fracking.

Kirsten Korosec  Feb 07, 2017  This rise in installations was caused by a rapid decrease in the cost of solar panels and unprecedented consumer demand, according to The Solar Foundation, as reported in fortune.com. Also:
· One out of every 50 new U.S. jobs was in the solar industry.
· as it increased by over 51,000 jobs, for a total of 260,077 U.S. solar workers.
· The number of solar jobs increased in 44 of the 50 states in 2016.
Some people have alleged that "at the last Dryden Planning Board meeting, a resolution recommending the Town Board institute a new moratorium on solar development over 2MW was passed at the behest of those trying to stop the two proposed community solar projects - ostensibly to allow for a town-wide evaluation of all potential solar sites on privately owned land to prepare for a non-existent flood of impending large projects. As we know, the lack of places to interconnect large projects already prevents this, as does a finite customer base. This is an intentional end run to try to stop the legal approvals process already underway under the town’s newly adopted solar law." Wrong!

I have news for these people, the landsman are out in force again as they were during the fracking controversy. I’ve received a letter interested in leasing some of my acres off Ellis Hollow Road for solar panels. I’m sure I’m not the only owner of a larger parcel who has received such a letter. This leasing program is very parallel to what the natural gas industry undertook which was so strongly opposed by the Town Board. Now, the Town Board should apply the same standards in an even handed way to the solar industry as it did to the natural gas industry.

Dryden is thoroughly split over Distributive Sun's plan. In no way does the project offer a clean energy future. Solar power works only about 25% of the time, when it is daylight and not overcast. The Town Board should just say NO to a hasty, desperate attempt to force industrial solar development. This is industrial, not community, solar. A moratorium on solar development while there is more research done parallels what the Town did with natural gas. It is just and equitable. As people said then, there is a need for more study and input before allowing a major energy project. Make no mistake, the proponents of solar now are not in favor of business in Dryden and they are political, not interested in the cons of a massive solar development project. The same scrutiny should be applied to Distributive Solar as was applied to natural gas development.

There are serious environmental issues surrounding solar. Many solar panels are made in China where pollution controls are a dream. They incorporate heavy earth metals. At the end of their lifetime or when they break, disposal is a real problem because of these metals. There is no current recycler for them. Disposal is environmentally dangerous. The Board should look into these aspects thoroughly and demand that all solar panels be built in the USA and there be a substantial bond to cover their eventual disposal. If these panels are built overseas, Distributive Sun's authorization should require the use of U.S. wage standards and that U.S. environmental standards be imposed where they are made.

There is one way that the solar industry does differ from natural gas. The solar industry's product is non-economic without massive government subsidies provided with taxpayer dollars. Now, in addition to those subsidies, Distributive Solar seeks to escape from the heavy burden of local property taxes so they can make a profit in Dryden largely with our money. No thanks. The IDA should reject any PILOT and insist that this private for profit corporation pay taxes on the same basis as other private residents and businesses in this county. And some of the IDA members who have been promoting solar power but disparaging natural gas should recuse themselves from voting on this issue as they are biased. The solar industry will create only a relative few and temporary jobs. The cost of solar energy is not low after consideration of all the taxes we pay to subsidize it. It is clean and renewable, but it is unreliable power.

And, the solar industry has been tainted by scandals of solar companies that have taken huge
government subsidies, paid their founders huge sums, and folded. We should be wary of this industry. Distributive Solar does not publish its financial data. Until they do, they should not get a permit. Dryden should not be picking winners and losers in energy sources and all energy companies should be treated alike from coal to natural gas, propane, oil, nuclear, solar and wind. All should pay their own way and should be unsubsidized.

Henry S. Kramer
1524 Ellis Hollow Rd.
Ithaca, NY 14850 (Town of Dryden)
275-3653, ConsultKramer@twcny.rr.com

With so many advantages and no down sides whatsoever please let Dryden build this solar project. It's the direction we need to go both for our children's future and a decent environment now.

Please distribute this email of my support to the planning board. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Maude Rith

Dear Leaders in Dryden,

Our town should pursue the current opportunity to work with SUN8 to bring solar power, solar jobs, and increased tax revenue to our local economy.

I understand that these changes will affect some community members who feel that their quality of life will be affected. It is a very emotional situation. But in the big picture, some changes are inevitable, and in this case the benefits outweigh the costs. Some development is going to happen - it might as well be good for the planet AND the economy. Solar panels do take up space, but they are otherwise minimally invasive and cause no permanent damage to the land, unlike fossil fuel extraction.

We must consistently make difficult choices in favor of cleaner energy because climate-wide changes on Earth affect everyone, and are life-threatening for many people as well as other species.

Thank you for your attention to all public comments.

Best,

Tonya Bittner
Ringwood Road
Freeville

May 8, 2017

To the Industrial Development Agency,
I am writing to express my concern with the PILOT negotiations for the commercial-scale solar project proposed in Dryden. As a direct neighbor to the proposed Dodge Road site, I am against this project in its current form and therefore, I object to the IDA’s financial underwriting of it. This project is not right for the community in its present size and scale and therefore should not be supported by the IDA. Also, at every public meeting I have attended thus far, we have been told that there would be a 2% annual increase in the PILOT, yet the proposal being considered is a 1% annual increase. As someone who deeply cares about the environment, of course I want solar energy to be more accessible everywhere. I want more solar energy available in Dryden; I just cannot support this large-scale, commercial project in its current configuration.

Thank you,

Leslie Appel, DVM
78 Dodge Road

Hello-

I live in the town of Dryden at 28 Brooktondale Rd. My house is not suitable to have solar panels, I don't get enough sun and my house doesn't face the south. I had an estimate done from 2 solar companies and the result was that it would not make financial sense for me to purchase solar panels.

What would make sense for me is to buy into community solar power from a solar farm. I am very pleased that Dryden continues to be a leader in clean energy for our future. I support the SUN8 project going forward, which will create jobs in our community, low-cost renewable electricity, millions in new tax revenue and an "open for business" reputation.

I do not think a moratorium on solar development over 2MW is prudent. I would like to see this project move forward without further delays because the benefits are great and the detriments are small. SUN8s projects have been advanced under the new solar law adopted by Dryden and I urge you to approve them as soon as possible with all of the mitigations and low-impact, best management practiced they have proposed.

Sincerely,

Pam Gueldner

--

Pam Gueldner
Owner and Catering Manager
Mannible Cafe in Mann Library
Fork & Gavel Cafe in Myron Taylor Hall
Cell 607-280-0351
Hi,

Obviously, I assume that Dryden will negotiate appropriate PILOT pricing, but I just wanted to weigh in to say that I am strongly in support of the solar going in, even though some of it will be next to a cemetery and near homes in Ellis Hollow. cheers, -Tonya Engst, Town of Dryden resident

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Tonya Engst, co-founder of TidBITS Publishing Inc.
Read about the Mac and other technology at tidbits.com.

May 9, 2017
We write to express our strong support for the solar development projects currently being considered by the town of Dryden. We live in Ellis Hollow near one of the projected sites and drive on Stevenson Road almost every day, and we acknowledge the objections of those who live closer still. But we agree with Martha Robertson's highly informative assessment, and with the detailed commentary of Judith Pierpont in yesterday's Ithaca Journal. Like most residents of this area, including, I assume, those who oppose these projects, we strongly support the move towards solar power. We do not believe that other sites could be found with so few disadvantages, even in this relatively rural, unspoiled area. If these projects are not approved, it is hard to imagine that any others could be.
We have not been able to attend the public meetings, and are therefore writing to urge you to support the projects.

Yours sincerely,

Dorothy Mermin
David Mermin
75 Hickory Rd

April 9, 2017 To Whom It May Concern,

I am a Dryden resident and am writing in support of the solar farm projects proposed by Sun8. I encourage the Dryden town board and the Tompkins County industrial development agency to approve the projects as I believe the positive features of the solar farm outweigh the negative elements required by this effort.

I have listened carefully - for more than seven hours - to those opposed to the solar farms while attending Dryden town board meetings this spring. Most of the arguments I have heard boil down to viewshed issues, whether the solar farm is located on Cornell land that is currently open fields or next to the cemetery in East Dryden.
We need a better way to generate energy where we live. We need to cut our dependence on fossil fuels. We need to be thinking beyond our existing paradigm and be willing to make reasonable concessions for the future of our town, our planet and our children. We need this type of alternative development, not only for the energy it will produce, but also for the example it will set.

This is also a social justice issue. Solar farms allow those who live in cities or rentals and those without the means to finance their own home solar, an opportunity to tie in with locally produced renewable energy.

The reason I heard more than seven hours of commentary and debate regarding the Sun8 proposal was because I was there at the Dryden town hall this winter and spring to oppose a very different energy project: the expansion of the Borger natural gas compressor station in Ellis Hollow.

Although local residents do not use the natural gas running through pipes that thread through our county as part of the 200 mile long Dominion New Market pipeline, we absorb the externalities and the risk, including the added emissions coming from the Borger compressor station. People who live somewhere else consume the gas.

While sitting and waiting for my turn to speak at the board meetings during the Sun8 deliberations, the irony of local residents objecting to a project that provides a safe and reversible source of energy was not lost on me. The attention to detail of the developer and the opportunity local residents had to air their concerns, and then have those concerns addressed, incited a combination of awe and envy in me, given the lack of public input related to ramping up fossil fuel enterprises that I was encountering.

I was worrying about emissions of VOCs, formaldehyde, hydrogen sulfide and fine particulates that have gone untracked for decades into our air, while my neighbors deliberated over an aesthetically unpleasing repurposed field and the view from a graveyard. If only we could see the methane leaking (Ingraffea, 2015) from the pipeline at a rate 1.5 times higher than the Ithaca baseline, a measurement taken by Dr. Anthony Ingraffea when the Ellis Hollow compressor station was not operational, perhaps then we could capture more fully the concern of area residents, Dominion Energy and local officials, I thought.

We have a cultural disconnect when it comes to energy. We don’t fully understand what it takes to fuel our way of life or where energy comes from and what sacrifices are made beyond our
borders to bring it to us. We have become inured to the realities of fossil fuel consumption.

Development projects, like the Sun8 solar farms, begin to change that obscurity and literally bring the realities of energy production to light without forfeiting our health and the health of the planet. It is time to address the practical realities related to energy, whether it involves giving up a view or responding to unseen fossil fuel externalities in our local community.

Sincerely,

Katie Quinn-Jacobs Sodom Rd Town of Dryden

Hello

We are emailing to voice our support for the two solar projects recently proposed in the town of Dryden and approve the mitigations SUN8 has proposed.

Please do not institute a moratorium on solar projects.

Thank you.

John and Bobbi Krout

May 11, 2017
To: Dryden Town Board Members
Cc: Tompkins County IDA Board Members, Dryden Planning Board Members

Subject: SEQR related to Dryden Solar Installation
As you all know, from the NYS DEC website, “New York's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) requires all state and local government agencies to consider environmental impacts equally with social and economic factors during discretionary decision-making.” I have seen some of the SEQR forms at various stage of completion, but I have not seen anything that addresses the social and economic impacts of the proposed solar projects. If these studies exist, please point me to where I can find the information. If they do not exist, I truly hope that you require the assessments to be professionally completed by a disinterested outside party.

I would assume the SOCIAL impact study would fully address the issues of 1) dividing our community as evidenced by the proceedings at numerous public meetings; 2) the emotional impact on those with loved ones in Willow Glen Cemetery or those that own plots; 3) the irrevocable damage that will be done to Dryden’s number one resource, its scenic beauty. Although, these two installations will not totally destroy the landscape, they will lay the groundwork for a flood of such installations that certainly will destroy our beautiful town.
The ECONOMIC impacts should be much easier to quantify. A couple of the items that the study should fully address are:

1. The loss of property values for those close to the installations. The statement in Q & A handout from one of the public meetings (4/26 ?) stated that “there was little evidence that ground-mounted solar arrays impacted property values.” Possible conclusions that could be drawn from such a statement are 1) there is some evidence that they do impact properties values, and 2) that the concern has not yet been properly investigated.

2. The loss of future construction of residences in the areas near the installations. Not only depriving the landowners of future development potential but also negatively impacting the local construction trades and supporting materials suppliers.

3. The loss of the land for future housing development and/or business/industrial applications. All of which could potentially have a much greater positive effect on our tax base and job market.

4. The impact to the desirability of plots within Willow Glen and the dollars those plots will be able to command. If the impact is large enough, perpetual care could at some point become an issue; at which time the town would become responsible for maintenance by law.

5. The ultimate cost of impact to electric rates to all residents within the NYSEG grid array to which these installations will be connected. The verbal statement by the Sun8 representative that those subscribing to the service could expect to save 10% on the applicable portion of their electric bill is fine, but certainly is not contractual and no guarantee in terms of assuring a financial benefit to anyone in Dryden.

6. Although these two installations will not in and of themselves have a great impact, what needs to be considered is the potential impact to energy costs if Tompkins County comes anywhere close to achieving their goal of 4,720 acres of solar installations. As you know Solar only generates during daytime hours and is greatly affected by time of year, clouds, fog, rain, snow, and dirt. Also, there are no storage provisions for the electricity that will be generated. If the amount of electricity generated by solar for the grid becomes significant, the efficiency at which Milliken Station will be able to generate electricity will be severely impacted. (I hope the IDA is considering potential job losses at Milliken as well.) One could postulate that due to the highly fluctuating nature at which solar generates electricity, Milliken will either have to overproduce (ultimately higher cost to the consumer and little to no reduction in emissions) or the community should expect the eventuality of brown or black outs. There may be ways to effectively mitigate these concerns, but they need to be fully assessed by professional non-interested parties in order to proceed.

Even in situations where Milliken does not have to overproduce, one could expect that certain economies of scale will be lost, also ultimately increasing the cost of electricity to all within the grid area.

Will additional tax breaks be required in the future to keep our non-solar generating capabilities viable?

7. When I raised the following concern (proposed installations exceeding NYSEG’s 17 MW 85% allocation level) at one of the public hearings, I was told by the Sun8 representative,
in so many words, that I was wrong. I never received an explanation as to why I was mistaken. I encourage the board to fully evaluate the following in their decision process and to how it might impact the economics of the proposed arrays for the town residents and taxpayers.

“The March 2017 PSC order on the net metering transition plan eliminated the previous aggregate cap based on a peak load calculation. The PSC instead provided that all the projects interconnected after March 9, 2017 should not impact more than 2% of each utility’s incremental net annual revenue. The provision is put in place to limit the impact of VDER tariff on non-participants.

As a way of monitoring the impacts of the DERs the PSC requires the utilities to report when they hit 85% of the recommended capacity size allocations for each of the utilities. This will provide the PSC time to determine the subsequent action if necessary.

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<th>CHGE O&amp;R</th>
<th>NGrid</th>
<th>NYSEG</th>
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8. Also a full economic assessment should consider the federal and state tax dollars that are being used; a portion of those dollars are Dryden taxpayer dollars.

I strongly encourage the Board to assure that a full SEQR, including evaluation of all social and economic impacts, is properly performed.

Sincerely,
Pat Fitzgibbons 315-405-1010 (Dryden taxpayer)
637 Wilson Creek Road
Newark valley, NY 13811

To: Dryden Town and Planning Boards
CC: Tompkins County IDA

May 12, 2017

Subject: Net Metering

The amount of solar energy a utility must accept being fed into the grid is limited; the amount is relatively small. If Dryden allows large scale solar farms into our community we may essentially be barring the town’s residents (actually all those that live in the grid area) from ever being able to reap the benefits of net metering on an individual basis. I know there are those that disagree, but this may be one of the reasons that the state limited net metering to 2MW or less. Without net metering, few individuals or businesses will be able to justify installing solar.

Why should we allow all our generous state and federal subsidies to go to an out of state business? Why should we further entice them to usurp our subsidies by providing additional property tax breaks? Please consider the above in your economic impact assessment required in the SEQR process.

Sincerely,
Pat Fitzgibbons (315-405-1010) Dryden taxpayer
637 Wilson Creek Road
Newark valley, NY 13811
Greetings,

I have an additional comment I would like to make to the TC IDA related to the proposed PILOT agreements for the two solar projects proposed by Sun8.

As I stated previously, I am fully in support of these projects moving forward and urge the IDA to approve a PILOT agreement for these projects. However, it concerns me that representatives of Sun8 and others have been quoting a PILOT payment schedule that is different than what they have requested in this application. I have seen several presentations and received information from multiple sources in the Town, County and from the company representative that have all quoted $8,000/MW with a 2%/yr accelerator. The application asks for a 1%/yr accelerator. While I strongly support these projects, I am concerned at the appearance of a “bait and switch”. The difference between what was circulated and what is in the application has already been picked up by some who oppose these projects. Many have heard the 2% annual increase number but, if I calculated correctly, it appears the 30 year total number quoted ($8 million +) is the total if using a 1% accelerator. It appears there is a conflict in the numbers quoted. I would urge the IDA to stay with the $8,000/MW with a 2% accelerator PILOT agreement. I believe the 2% number to be reasonable given what my own property taxes have done over the last several years and is fair to the company.

As I said in my previous comments, these projects have many benefits and are simply the right thing to do. I hope they move forward. However, I believe for-profit companies need to contribute to the tax base in a way that is fair to Dryden Taxpayers. I believe the IDA can make this a win/win proposition.

Thank you for your time and consideration.