

Renewable Energy Advisory Committee

September 14, 2017 Meeting

In Attendance: Mike Carpenter, Art Godin, Jude Lemke, Mimi Mehaffey, Walt Smithers, Dan Walker

Not Present: Marcus Gingerich

This meeting focused primarily on issues related to the regulation of solar energy systems. Rebecca Carpenter, a long-time NYSERDA-approved installer of solar energy systems, attended the meeting as a resource person for our discussion.

Walt distributed copies of the Town of Dryden's recently developed Local Law setting out provisions for permitting solar energy systems of various types and sizes. Walt says the Dryden law is one of the most comprehensive he's seen. Walt enumerated some of the regulatory measures needed for large solar installations, including provisions for security fences, glare, screening and decommissioning.

Dan shared some of his experience in evaluating solar energy installations. He said there is a tool that can be used to determine when glare will occur, thereby determining in advance where screening will be needed. Solar panels should not produce much glare as their design should maximize the absorption of the sun's energy and minimize reflection.

Rebecca explained the NYS Unified Permitting Process which was set into place to avoid differences in local laws and expedite the approval of solar projects. This process applies to solar installations of less than 15Kw. Larger systems require a Building Permit and an engineering report. Rebecca said the process and requirements can be a little different depending on the Code Enforcement Officer and Electrical Inspector involved.

Dan said that Enfield currently has no regulations regarding lot coverage, whether by buildings or solar panels. Some towns have set limits on the percentage of a project site's area that can be covered by panels. The criteria for determining size and coverage limits can vary. The size of a system can be defined by the perimeter enclosed, the square footage of the panels or the capacity of the system. Enfield might want to set an overall limit on the amount of land it allows to be used for solar energy production.

Art distributed the draft of a solar law developed by Dan Walker some time ago. The committee resolved to read both this draft and the Dryden law before our next meeting.

Dan distributed outlines of Enfield's Site Plan Review Process and Enfield's Wind Energy Law Review Process, for comparison. There was discussion of the level of detail required to meet the requirements of each step of the processes.

Our next meetings will be held at the Community Building on Wed 9/27 and Thurs 10/12/17, both at 7-9 PM.

-Minutes submitted by Art Godin.