

REGULAR MEETING

FEBRUARY 6, 2020

Minutes of a Regular Meeting held by the Town of Shawangunk Town Board, County of Ulster, State of New York, at the Town Office Building, 14 Central Avenue, Wallkill, NY on the **6th day of February, 2020** at 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT were Supervisor John Valk, Councilman Brian Amthor, Councilman Robert Miller, Councilman Adrian DeWitt, Councilman Matthew Watkins and Town Clerk Jane Rascoe. Also present were Highway Superintendent Joe LoCicero, Police Chief Gerry Marlatt and Planning Board Chairman Mark Watkins.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Emergency exits were announced by Supervisor Valk, followed by a brief moment of silence and the pledge to the flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilman DeWitt to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on January 16, 2020.

VOTE: Councilman Watkins, aye, Councilman DeWitt, aye, Councilman Miller, aye, Councilman Amthor, abstain. Supervisor Valk, aye.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

New York Solar 1000, LLC.

Attorney Daniel Leary, representing NY Solar 1000, introduced himself and Andrew Varrow to the Town Board. Mr. Leary explained that E & L Farms received a special use permit and site plan approval from the Planning Board in December. The project received conditional approval for a 2.5 megawatt solar project located on Route 52 and received public support for a community solar project. He further explained that the project is something that the community can take advantage of, as preference will be given to town residents in the form of credits, as stated in the town code. Mr. Leary explained that he was present to request the Town Board to reconsider its decision against PILOTS for solar energy projects. He explained that many municipalities are in the process of reversing their decisions against PILOTS. Mr. Varrow explained that it is helpful to have a PILOT agreement at the beginning of a project to make it attractive to investors. The goal is to get a fixed amount of taxes to add to their financial model. Chairman Mark Watkins stated that in his opinion the company was trying to make the project look profitable to an investor at the expense of taxpayers. Councilman Matthew Watkins questioned the risk to investors. He is concerned if the Town Board granted a PILOT to a solar company, and not be able to give the same benefit to an individual trying to open a small business in the town. Following a lengthy discussion Supervisor Valk stated that when the Town Board opted out, they were protecting themselves. He stated the Town Board needs to weigh the benefits of PILOTS versus taxes and what will best benefit the Town. Mr. Valk suggested that a meeting between NY Solar, Councilman Miller, the Assessor and himself, be scheduled to discuss the possibility of reconsideration of PILOTS.

He stated that he has a couple of sample agreements that can be reviewed and requested Mr. Leary to supply copies of any completed agreements with other communities prior to the meeting. Mr. Leary explained they have come to the Town first and would be going to the School District and County next.

Pallet Barn

Mr. Joe DeGrootd approached the Town Board and explained he wanted to clear the air about recent issues with his barn at the Christmas Tree Farm that were raised in the recent Wallkill Valley Times article. Mr. DeGrootd stated that recent concerns raised by his neighbors was a lot of slander. He clarified that he did get married in his barn in September and the event ended at 9:30 p.m. That was the only event that was held at the barn. There were no drunken revelers with neighbors complaining. Mr. DeGrootd explained to the Town Board that article has been really bothering him and he wanted to explain his position. He provided letters from charity groups with a copy of a petition with 500 signatures, in support of the Pallet Barn. He explained that Mr. Rodriguez told the Town Board that he picked a quiet spot to live. The fact is that he owned all of the land, with the business on the property. Since they were related, he agreed to build the home and hold the mortgage for Mr. Rodriguez. Mr. DeGrootd thanked the Town Board for the opportunity to speak up for himself.

Ulster County Town Hall Hours

Legislator Ken Ronk spoke to the Town Board about the County having hours at Town Hall. Mr. Ronk explained that he had spoken to the County Executive about his concern for Shawangunk residents having to travel to Kingston for services. Supervisor Valk explained that he understood that there will be eight departments that will be offering services at the Town Hall starting March 13, 2020. Mr. Valk voiced his concern that if they are scheduled to be here, that they in fact will be here. He shared that representatives from the County Executive's office were scheduled to visit last week and did not show up. Mr. Ronk stated he will follow up with County Executive Ryan tomorrow.

Wallkill Avenue

Supervisor Valk inquired with Legislator Ronk if the County will be paving Wallkill Avenue this year. Mr. Ronk stated that it is not set in stone, but he has requested it to be. Mr. Ronk further explained that it is such a small job to mill and re-pave, that the County may have to coordinate the work with the local highway superintendent. Highway Superintendent LoCicero advised that he hopes to be paving the remainder of the hamlet streets early this spring. Crosswalk locations were discussed, Mr. Ronk explained that the challenge is to not eliminate too many parking spots when putting in the curb cuts.

Planning Board

Chairman Mark Watkins advised the Town Board that the Planning Board is working on a subdivision known as Tanego Farms/Parker on Old Fort Road. Mr. Watkins explained that the Planning Board has been able to gain a conservation easement on the property. He further explained that there is a 350 year old historic site on the property that will be protected. The total area is twenty acres and will be privately owned. By creating this conservation easement it will protect the land from future development. Supervisor Valk stated that the Town's EMC can monitor the property. Mr. Watkins also identified a turnaround shown on the map that the landowners are willing to provide to the Town for