

Town of Caroline
Planning Board Meeting
February 11th, 2021

Minutes

- 1) The Town Board will establish a Zoning Commission to be made up of 3 Planning Board members, 4 members drawn from the general public, a liaison from the Town Board (Tim Murray), and a planner (to be hired). Applicants will be interviewed starting at the March 2nd Town Board Agenda meeting.
- 2) Katherine Goldberg Forrest will be the new Town Board liaison to the Planning Board.
- 3) It was decided to include Farmlands of Statewide Importance in the agricultural areas to be specially protected in the solar energy and battery energy storage siting law.
- 4) Changed the name “Agriculturally Sensitive Areas” to “Agriculturally Important Areas.”
- 5) Reviewed Solar Energy System and Battery Energy Storage System Siting Law
 - a) Section 1: Authority. Approve the addition of:
“Further, this local law does not affect the provisions or requirements of any other federal, state, or local law or regulations. Where this local law is in conflict with any other such law or regulation, the more restrictive shall apply.”
 - b) Section 3: Applicability. Approved the addition of:
“This law does not apply to such systems that are lawfully in existence as of the date this local law becomes effective, except for modifications of existing uses or structures as specified in §5 and §? [section number will refer to battery section equivalent to §5]. Any use which would otherwise be subject to this law, which has been discontinued for a period of one (1) year or more, shall be subject to review pursuant to the terms of this law before such use is resumed. Any use or structure shall be considered to be in existence provided the same has been substantially commenced as of the effective date of this local law and fully constructed and completed within one (1) year from the effective date of this local law.”
 - c) Section 4: Definitions. Added or amended the following definitions:

Agriculturally Important Areas—Agricultural Land, Prime Farmlands, Prime Farmlands if Drained, or Farmlands of Statewide Importance.

Agricultural Land—land area under perennial crops, under permanent pastures, under annual crops, meadows for mowing or for pasture, and land temporarily fallow.)

Farmlands of Statewide Importance—Land designated as such by the State of New York; such lands may be included in NRCS maps and databases.

Prime Farmlands—Land designated as such by USDA/NRCS in Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) maps and databases.

Prime Farmlands if Drained—Land designated as such by USDA/NRCS in Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) maps and databases.

Solar Energy System—An energy system (such as a photovoltaic system, solar thermal power system, or based on any other technology) that converts solar energy into electrical energy. The system includes the solar energy collection devices, related balance of system equipment, and other associated infrastructure.

d) Section 5 Solar Energy Systems, In General:

Approved requirement for a Permit Fee and a Monitoring Fee.

Decided to have a “15% increase in size” trigger for a medium facility and a “1 acre increase in size trigger” for a large facility (increase over originally-approved site area) for changes that require a new Site Plan review.

Added “or required screening” to:

“No Solar Energy System or required screening shall be located in a manner that will unreasonably reduce or impede the amount of sunlight available to any adjacent lot.”

Tentatively added the following (pending info from the Code Officer) on systems being converted from stand-alone to grid-tied:

“A Stand-Alone Solar Energy System that is being converted to a Grid-Tied Solar Energy System must follow the procedures as laid out in this law for review of Grid-Tied Solar Energy Systems.”

- 6) Wil, with help from Bill or anyone else interested, will look at NYSERDA’s model battery energy storage law and edit the battery sections in Caroline’s law.
- 7) Those who can attend an additional Planning Board meeting on Thursday, February 25th will meet as a subcommittee to continue working through the law, specifically identifying areas that warrant discussion by the full Planning Board at the regularly-scheduled March 11th meeting.