

Town of Caroline
Planning Board Meeting
February 25th, 2021

Minutes

- 1) Reviewed answers from Cory Williams, the Town Code Officer. Given that by code all systems, even those not grid-tied, require building permits and electrical inspections, specific requirements for those were struck from the draft solar energy and battery storage energy siting law. Similarly struck the clause referring to anything happening if a stand-alone system is changed to grid-tied since the inspections would already have happened and the facility would already have been reviewed by the Review Board if it disturbed enough acreage to trigger any additional provisions.
- 2) Reinstated the (inadvertently dropped) requirement that species used to reseed be non-toxic to grazing animals, with the specific example of not using fescue species with endosymbionts. Clarified that “grazing animals” means those intentionally provided for vegetation management, e.g. typically sheep. (See Sections 7.5(g) and 8.5(m))
- 3) Added reference to NYSDAM post-construction site restoration guidelines (see Section 8.6(n)). With that addition, all phases of the NYSDAM guidelines are incorporated by reference so explicit language from the NYSDAM guidelines was not added to the law.
- 4) Added and amended various other clauses based on suggestions gleaned by Barbara Knuth from the resources mentioned in the February 12 Extension webinar on “Implications of Large Solar Installations and Leasing on Farmland”:
 - a) Added the requirement that copies of legal agreements with landowners be submitted as part of the application. (See Sections 7.2(b)(ii) and 8.2(b)(ii))
 - b) Expanded signage discussion and made it a separate clause (see Sections 7.5(b) and 8.5(i))
 - c) Changed “Vegetation Maintenance” to “Revegetation and Vegetation Maintenance” and added language from Tug Hill report requiring vegetative cover in agricultural areas and encouraging the use of non-invasive, native ground covers that are low-maintenance, drought-resistant, and pollinator friendly. (See sections 7.5(g) and 8.5(m))
 - d) Added stormwater management clause that requires a pervious ground cover. (see Sections 7.5(h) and 8.5(n).)
- 5) Added a requirement that a signed (e.g. by an engineer) commissioning report be submitted to the Town. (See Sections 7.7(a) and 8.7(a))
- 6) Decided to not add a section giving reduced review criteria to areas with land uses or land covers where we might prefer to locate solar energy facilities as unworkable for Caroline (not many incentives could actually be offered and the most preferred areas would already have an easy time complying with even the more stringent requirements and most would not be relevant).
- 7) Added language as suggested by Wil to the purpose section (inclusion of “electrochemical processes of batteries and fuel cells” and explicit reference to “Battery Energy Storage Systems”).
- 8) Set the threshold between small and large battery energy storage systems at 600 kWh (the threshold recommended by NYSERDA).

- 9) Katherine asked Planning Board members for their opinion on the request for a moratorium waiver by SUNX. Barbara commented that she was impressed by the application and SUNX's plan. Bill also spoke favorably about the plan. We clarified that if someone from Planning Board spoke at the public hearing (specific question was from Bill, but this will apply in general) that individuals clarify that they are speaking for themselves, not the Planning Board, unless we convene as a group and approve a set of comments.