

PUBLIC HEARING

Local Law 3 of 2015: Solar Regulations

Town of Ulysses

November 10, 2015

Audio of the minutes are available on the website at ulysses.ny.us.

The hearing was held at the Ulysses Town Hall at 10 Elm Street, Trumansburg.

PRESENT:

Supervisor- Liz Thomas
1st Deputy Supervisor- Nancy Zahler
Board members- Dave Kerness, Rich Goldman, John Hertzler
Clerk- Carissa Parlato
Deputy Clerk- Sarah Koski
Environmental Planner- Darby Kiley
2nd Deputy Supervisor- Michelle Wright

OTHERS PRESENT:

Melissa Kemp, Michael Boggs, John G. Wertis

CALL TO ORDER:

Ms. Thomas called the hearing to order at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Hertzler made a motion to open the meeting at 6:30pm, seconded by Ms. Zahler and passed unanimously.

SUBJECT OF THE HEARING:

Ms. Thomas announced the subject of the hearing:

The proposed Local Law to Amend the Code of the Town of Ulysses, Chapter 212, To Add Solar Energy Systems Definitions, Allowances in Zoning Districts and Standards and allow major and minor systems. The law includes the following:

- Defines Major and Minor Solar Collection Systems
- Allows Minor systems in all of the zoning districts.
- Allows Major systems after site plan approval in all districts except Lakeshore, Marina, and Park/Recreation
- Includes standards for minor systems
- Includes standards for major systems

MEETING NOTICE:

Ms. Thomas noted that the date of this public hearing was set by resolution of the Town Board on October 13, 2015 and a notice of this hearing was published in the Ithaca Journal on October 29, 2015. Notice of the Public Hearing was mailed on October 27, 2015 to the Counties of Tompkins, Seneca, and Schuyler; the Village of Trumansburg; the Towns of Enfield, Ithaca, Lansing, Covert, and Hector; and the NYS Parks Finger Lakes Region.

She went on to note the purpose and rules of the hearing and presented the affidavit of publication before opening the floor to the public.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. Wertis stated that he felt that the law is a little constraining and does not make it easier to put in solar collection systems. He addressed the following:

- The minor system definition doesn't include a minimum, or to clarify what is included
- That permits shouldn't need to be required for many solar aspects
- The 2000 square footage limit
- The 120 day limit for non-functioning panels seems too short, exceptions should be made

Mr. Goldman asked Ms. Kiley if this was true. Ms. Kiley responded that this clause applied more to abandoned homes and major installations, and that communication with the zoning officer could alleviate issues.

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Mr. Wertis continued on to say that he believes that safety is a valid consideration for solar installations but not aesthetics. Furthermore, he believes that there are already enough regulations in place between the building code and the inspection that NYSEG does for solar panels.

Ms. Kemp, speaking for herself as well as on behalf of Renovus Energy, said that she strongly supports the proposed law as it will help the county and state reach its goals of renewable energy. It will also create positive economic development. Currently there is no ability to allow for major solar collection and this law will allow that. This law is a model that other towns can use.

Ms. Kemp responded to some of Mr. Wertis' comments.

- No objection to minimum collection
- Other towns often require permits
- 2000 sf doesn't apply to roof
- Trees only for major systems

Mr. Wertis spoke again. He noted that he now understands the minimum collection for minor systems. He pointed out a typo in the proposed law and clarified that he does think the law is a good idea for all the reasons that Ms. Kemp stated.

Board members discussed the comments.

Ms. Zahler made a motion to close the hearing at 7pm, seconded by Mr. Goldman and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Carissa Parlato on 11/20/15.