

Town of Canandaigua

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Established 1789

DATE: September 14, 2017

TO: Chairman Tom Schwartz & members of the Planning Board

FROM: Chairman Mark Stryker & members of the Agricultural Advisory

RE: Referral CPN – 027 – 17 (5966 Monks Road, Cypress Creek Renewables for Wooley)

In accordance with Town of Canandaigua Town Code §17-5 the Town of Canandaigua Agricultural Advisory Committee met on September 14, 2017 to review and provide comment relative to a special use permit and site plan approval application for a 2MW, approximately 18 acre, large scale solar system to be located at 5966 Monks Road in the Town of Canandaigua.

It is the understanding of the Agriculture Advisory Committee, the Planning Board is considering a special use permit in accordance with Town Code §220-62.2. Specifically the Agriculture Advisory Committee concerned itself with §220-62.2 (C) (1) “The Planning Board shall make a determination that the use of the land required by the proposed project shall not cause a loss of valuable agricultural lands to the Town of Canandaigua”. In accordance with §220-62.2 (C) (1) the Agriculture Advisory Committee offers the following findings dated September 14, 2017:

1. Findings are based on information presented at the September 14, 2017 Agriculture Advisory Committee meeting by Mr. Travis Wooley, residents in attendance, Town Staff, the application submitted to the Planning Board, the use of On-Cor, On-Cor Soil Analysis Report, and the Town of Canandaigua Agricultural Enhancement Plan adopted by the Town Board December 2016.
2. The parcel is located in Ontario County Agriculture District #1, and currently receives an agriculture exemption.
3. The proposed project includes a twenty year lease agreement, with two five year renewable extensions.
4. The soils in the impacted section of the project area are mainly Lansing Loam with a slope of less than 15%, and Danley Silt Loam with a slope of less than 15% resulting in a classification of “Farmland of statewide importance”. The USDA defines Farmland of Statewide Importance as, “Land that does not meet the criteria for prime or unique farmland is considered to be ‘farmland of statewide importance’ for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops.”
5. Part of the project area is currently leased to the same farmer who is farming the rest of the farm parcel. Given current commodity markets, the yield of the project area soils alone would likely be substandard based on soil conditions, drainage, and soil consistency resulting in less than typical averages of 100-200 bushels of corn, 50-60

- bushels of soybeans, or an acceptable hay crop. The project area parcel would likely not stand alone outside of the rest of the farm parcel as valuable agricultural land.
6. Much of the project area is currently experiencing drainage problems preventing the viable farming of the project area causing poor productivity.
 7. No long term negative consequence is likely to the soils by allowing the solar structures to be installed. The future removal of the solar panels, if needed, would still provide for farming operations of the soil.
 8. The Agriculture Advisory Committee believes the project area parcel would not afford a farmer the ability to produce a yield to effectively earn a living.
 9. The proposed project is outside of the Town of Canandaigua's strategic farmland projection area as identified in the Agriculture Enhancement Plan.
 10. Utilization of the Agriculture Enhancement Plan's rating maps for soils, natural resources, development pressure, and PDR ratings this parcel scored a maximum of 1,650 points. A rating of 1,650 points is on the lower end of the range for protection rating points. Points range from 0 – 5,400 depending on the parcel.

MOTION: *“The Agriculture Advisory Committee recommends the Town of Canandaigua Planning Board find the proposed project does not cause a loss of valuable agricultural lands to the Town of Canandaigua.”*

Motion made by: Chairman Mark Stryker

Second by: Vice Chairman Bob DiCarlo

ROLL CALL VOTE: Mark Stryker – Aye
Bob DiCarlo – Aye
Ray Henry – Aye
Gary Davis – Aye
Tim Riley – Aye
Fernando Soberon – Aye

COMMENTS:

1. The poor drainage conditions result in poor productivity. Drainage improvements associated with this project would likely support better natural resource protection by preventing the loss of agriculture soils from the site.
2. The Planning Board should consider requiring the decommissioning plan to include restoration of the site to active farming operations, so that the parcel could be immediately tilled.
3. The Planning Board should consider requiring soil erosion control measures, perhaps including retention pond and rip-rap to help prevent runoff of soils from the site.
4. The Agriculture Advisory Committee did not consider other factors in their recommendation, other than the soils and the question relative to if the project would pose a loss of valuable farmland. The Agriculture Committee believes any loss of farmland provides concern; however, this project area does not rise to the level the Agriculture Advisory Committee would consider “valuable”. Conversely, this proposed project would continue to support existing agriculture operations on site.
5. The Agriculture Advisory Committee believes given all of the findings and comments provided, the installation of the solar panels might be a suitable best use.