

The Town of Otsego Town Board held a Solar Energy Informational Meeting on the 7th day of February 2024 at 7:00 PM at the Town Building in Fly Creek, NY.

Town Board Members Present:

Benjamin Bauer	Supervisor
Deborah Dalton	Councilperson
Chris Kjolhede	Councilperson
Patricia Kennedy	Councilperson

Also Present:

Wylie Phillips	ZEO
Pamela Deane	Town Clerk

Supervisor Bauer called the meeting to order. The 50 residents in attendance were given a copy of the agenda, a copy of questions submitted to Councilperson Deb Dalton prior to the meeting, and a copy of the Solar Law *Draft* written by Supervisor Ben Bauer and ZEO Wylie Phillips.

Supervisor Bauer explained that the goal of the Solar Law is to regulate and make sure that if Solar is allowed in the Town of Otsego it is deemed appropriate, fits the character of the neighborhood and is well regulated. He said copies of the *Draft* Solar Law can also be found on the Town's website and input would be much appreciated.

Supervisor Bauer introduced guest speaker Steve Helmin, a former Town Council Member of Glen, NY, who talked about Local Policy and Local Land Use.

Steve Helmin stated that Solar Farms are not Farms but Electric Generating Plants. He said, it's all about "Greed not Green" and Developers making false promises. Residents usually get very little say. The State Capital makes it hard. There is little economic benefit. Tourists don't want to see rows and rows of solar panels. The NYS Climate Legislation targets rural communities.

To fight this, residents need to push back and engage with their neighbors, Town Board, Town Planning Board, County Representatives, State Assembly Member and State Senator.

Supervisor Bauer introduced Keith Schue a Technical Advisor and Electrical Engineer who spoke to the Broad Energy Landscape of the State. Schue stated that the grid for upstate NY is close to being at capacity and carbon free. Upstate NY is shouldering the burden of downstate which is not close to capacity and carbon free. Schue stated that by using Nuclear and Hydro Power a tremendous amount of farmland would be saved. Schue also showed how the carbon admission in NY has been increasing since the Nuclear Plant in Westchester was closed. Schue felt Nuclear Power Plants should be renewed. France has figured out how to recycle the nuclear waste from their Nuclear Power Plants and almost all of France is carbon free.

The life expectancy of a Solar Panel is 20/25 years. Broken panels are a major problem if not replaced right away. If the storage lithium batteries catch fire hazardous gases are released that are extremely toxic. There is no way to extinguish the fire. The fire will have to burn itself out which takes one to two days or in some cases longer.

Supervisor Bauer read aloud the questions submitted prior to the meeting, which were answered by Helmin, Schue, and Town Board members.

Supervisor Bauer allowed questions from the audience.

Supervisor Bauer thanked everyone for coming. The audience gave a huge round of applause to Helmin and Schue.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Pamela Deane
Town Clerk