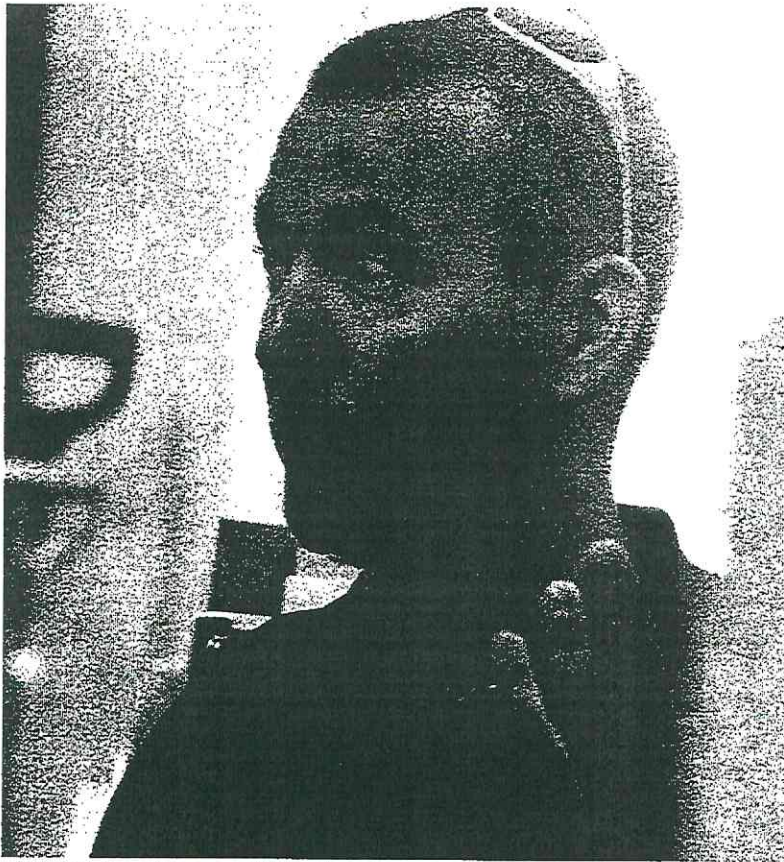


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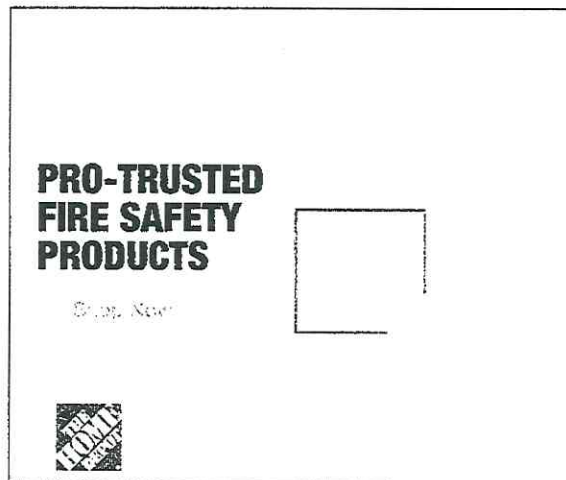
Sheridan tables proposed solar project



OBSERVER Photo by Braden Carmen Nicholas Anson, a property owner in the Town of Sheridan, raised concerns about the proposed solar project impacting his property. Erie Coast Solar and the town's planning board addressed Anson's concerns.

SHERIDAN — After a second public hearing in three months, the Erie Coast Solar project on New Road in Sheridan appeared set for approval — until it wasn't. The Sheridan Town Board decided to table

the project for the time being to allow for more time to discuss and review the plans of the project.



“Upon the advice of our lawyer, we’re going to table it until the next meeting so we can have a few more discussions with you on a few of the points,” Deputy Town Supervisor Richard Feinen said to Eamon Riley, Business Development Manager from Erie Coast Solar. *“We’ll be in touch with you.”*

Prior to the May meeting of the Town Board, a public hearing was held regarding the Environmental Assessment Review document required for the project’s approval. The Town Board had no objections and accepted the document at the regular meeting later that night. Feinen abstained from the vote, while every other member voted in favor of accepting the document.

A public hearing was then scheduled for the June meeting of the Town Board regarding the special use permit for the project. Once approved, the project would proceed. However, after the death of Sheridan Town Supervisor John Walker II, the public hearing and meeting were both rescheduled.

Town Attorney Jeff Passafaro attended the latest public hearing, and after he posed multiple questions to Riley, the public hearing closed. Passafaro and the Town Board, as well as Town Clerk Becky Schafer and Code Enforcement Officer James Crowell, all met privately in the

Board revealed the decision to table the matter until the next meeting, set for Aug. 9.

The project in question features a 2.2-Megawatt AC facility, located on roughly 30 acres of land on New Road. The project covers 14.85 acres of the land, surrounded by a fence, with wetlands preserved on the property and no major disruption of trees or wildlife in the area. Riley described the agreement reached with the company and the neighboring property owners as “*amicable*.”

Riley also stated, “*We worked hard to preserve the wetlands on the site as it is, to really not mess with it.*”

Throughout the process, Erie Coast Solar — led by Nexamp, based in Boston, Mass. — has reevaluated its plans based on the response it has heard from the Town Board and the public. Its original plan requires a variance on one end of the project near one property owner, however, to satisfy the Town Board’s desire to avoid a variance request, the plans were reconfigured. When the plans were re-drawn, a landowner on the other side, Nicholas Anson, raised concerns about the project being too close to where he plans to build on his property.

“*Erie Coast was very cooperative, flopping back and forth to try to satisfy all those concerns,*” Crowell said.

The original plan, "*Plan A*", is the plan Erie Coast Solar brought forward for the special use permit. The property owner impacted by the variance required for Plan A was "*not concerned with the property line being moved his way*," according to Crowell.

Anson spoke at the May public hearing, and attended the latest public hearing again to discuss the matter.

"*I thank everybody for their consideration and their choices — the planning board, the solar company*," Anson said. He then asked for who to contact in case of an emergency or if something of importance is observed.

Town Board Member Craig Sutton asked Anson, "*So this Plan A, that's a happy medium for you?*"

Anson replied, "*Yes, absolutely. Thank you.*"

Among the conditions Passafaro suggested be included in a potential approval of the project includes a decommissioning plan, a bond posted to the Town of Sheridan in the amount specified by the town based on the engineering report, approval from the Code Enforcement Officer, and a signed Environmental Assessment Review form, which was already approved by the town.

Passafaro also questioned about the possibility of a pilot program, which is currently not available in Chautauqua County. Riley responded, "*We're evaluating right now whether to wait for the pilot, but I think what we're going to do is move forward with the assessment system from the state.*" If a pilot program is approved, a host community agreement will be explored with the Town of Sheridan.

The project is likely to appear on the agenda at the next meeting of the Town Board for further discussion.