

**Town of Collins Planning Board Meeting
December 15, 2020**

Call meeting to order:

Chairman Brian Martin called meeting to order at 7:02 PM with the pledge to the flag and attendance taken.

Attendance:

Present: Tom Raymond, John Bentley and Chairman Brian Martin

Not Present: Tom Siegle and Richard Agle

Guests: Ken Martin, Town of Collins Supervisor, Ron Wittmeyer, Solar Projects, landowner, Cory McCandless, Omni Navitas Representative (by telephone)

Navitas Solar Projects:

- At the Town Board meeting held on December 14, 2020, the Town Board referred the Omni Navitas Solar Projects Special-Use Application to the Planning Board.
- Cory McCandless, Omni Navitas representative, due to COVID-19 restrictions, she gave a telephone presentation to the Planning Board members. She explained there are two parcels (North parcel and South parcel) and what will happen with the parcels, National Grid, and the gas wells on the property.
- After the telephone presentation, Ron Wittmeyer spoke to the Planning Board members and explained why he wants solar panels on his property, what he was told by Omni Navitas and use of his land for the two projects and he wondered why the projects were taking so long.
- Supervisor Martin explained what concerns the Town has with the projects and what the Town is required to do, what the laws are, what would be required when the panels are decommissioned, especially once Omni Navitas sells the project to another company and if that company should go bankrupt, decommissioning bonding, etc. The Town wants to make sure the landowner and the Town itself are protected throughout the entire project, from beginning to end. The Town has hired MDA Engineering Consultants to ensure that everything is done correctly. Discussion ensued about what is expected by the State and County including Ag & Markets if there will be a constant noise (hum) and/or glare from the panels. Omni just recently paid the \$5,000 Special-Use Application fee which delayed the Town in starting the SEQR process. Omni Navitas has changed the SEQR EAF Form Part 1 three times and they left approx. 20 questions blank and approx. 20-25 questions were answered incorrectly on the SEQR, the engineers had to answer the blank questions and correct the other questions. The solar arrays are a Commercial Enterprise, but per NYS Law the solar arrays are tax exempt for 15 years and then they become fully taxable. The Town wonders who is responsible for the taxes (landowner, Omni Navitas or the company who purchased the solar panels). The Town is seeking a PILOT for this project. This is the first application for a solar project Special-Use permit in the Town and the Town wants to take its time to make sure everything is done correctly.
- Further discussion was held by the Planning Board, but no decision was made at this time.

Next Meeting:

Next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 7:00 PM.

Adjournment:

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 PM.

Motion: Ch Brian Martin

2nd: Tom Raymond

Vote: Passed - Tom Raymond – aye; John Bentley - aye and Ch Brian Martin – aye

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Martin