

TOWN OF RIDGEWAY
410 West Ave
Medina, NY 14103
PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
FOR 2800 SWETT ROAD SOLAR PROJECT
SEPTEMBER 2, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Tom Fenton (Chairman)
Thomas Kline
Tim Elliott ABSENT
Richard Fisher
Kathy Blackburn ABSENT

OTHERS PRESENT

Janet Ward-Next Era
Dan Wolfe
Karen Kaiser

OTHERS PRESENT VIA Telecommunications

Anna Callard
Shawn Callard
Mike Kuhman
Shaun Logue- MRB Group
Darlene Janas
A Cornelius
Dan Spitzer-Hodson Russ
Edward Thering
Ben Wisniewski- Zoghlin Law
Joe Hamel- Next Era
Nancy Mingus
Karen Sawicz
Lori Ettinger
Mike Mingus

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Fenton began with the Pledge of Allegiance and called for a motion to open the public hearing for the 2800 Swett Road Solar project. Richard Fisher made the motion and a second was made by Tom Kline at 7:01pm. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Chairman Fenton asked if there was anyone who would like to speak about the Swett Road Solar Project. Karen Kaiser asked again as no one was talking.

Anna Callard -Ridgeway Resident, stated they (she and her husband Shawn) declined to talk until everyone else had.

Mike Kuhman-Ridgeway Resident, questioned why the meeting was being held this way as they were told it would be held at the Ridgeway Fire Hall. Mr. Kuhman was told that it was being held VIA

telecommunication meeting to allow the public to take part without having to worry about the COVID-19 restrictions.

Ben Wisniewski- Zoghlin Law, Ridgeway Residents Against Solar, asked that the planning board please take into consideration the letter Zoghlin Group filed on June 30th, 2020. In addition, they have added four more considerations that include the use of a stockade fence rather than chain-link- this would give it a nice aesthetic look; staggered rows of Arborvitae trees, tree line planted on a berm-help with visual impact and drainage as well as the maintenance of the grounds; and to move the access road from the north of the project to the south side away from the residents homes. Ben also mentioned that the visual screening (tree line) could be moved back further (closer to the fence) to preserve open spaces. He suggested that Next Era commit to the maintenance of the project for life. He reiterated that it is in Next Era's best interest to have happy neighbors.

Anna Callard- Ridgeway Resident-questioned next week's meeting on 9/9/20. The board stated that next weeks meeting was a continuation/adjournment of the public hearing tonight and afterwards the regular monthly planning board meeting. The meeting would be the same format as this meeting, using telecommunication meeting for the public, with board members and presenters being at the town hall to accommodate the COVID-19 guidelines.

Dan Spitzer- council from Hodson Russ- reiterated that the public hearing would remain open until next Wednesday and the planning board would accept questions until then.

Anna Callard- Ridgeway Resident stated her lawyer has stated their concerns, she hopes that we can work together, strongly hopes this will be take into consideration.

Shawn Callard- Ridgeway Resident has some concerns with the Beals Road Solar project, as far as maintenance. The trees are dying, the field wasn't mowed, now it is bailed and the bails just sit there, they haven't mowed around the trees. Is this how its going to be with this project.

Tom Fenton- Chairman- stated the grass has been cut and bailed.

Dan Wolfe- code enforcement- stated that the Beals Road project has posted a sizeable bond for maintenance of the property. The field was mowed and bailed; they are waiting until fall to replace the trees and he will contact about the mowing around the trees.

Shaun Logue- MRB Group-MRB has been working with Next Era on the operation and maintenance plan. They have very specific recommendations for outside/inside grounds that can be incorporated into the plan.

Mike Kuhman- Ridgeway Resident stated like a 20' 30' 40' berm.

Shaun Logue- MRB Group-stated that MRB, Dan Spitzer and Next Era have had several conference calls on the Operation and maintenance of the project. If its not lived up to, it becomes an enforcement issue.

Dan Spitzer- council from Hodson Russ-reminded everyone that these are recommendations only. The decision is made by the Planning Board. Operation/maintenance plans are enforced by code enforcement. He encouraged the residents to make their comments now.

Lori Ettinger- Ridgeway Resident-lives a couple of fields up from the Callard's, her concern is she raises livestock- is this going to affect them?

Dan Spitzer- council from Hodson Russ- stated that livestock grazing and solar are very compatible, they are very common, in fact they are used as part of the maintenance around solar projects.

Shaun Logue-MRB Group- agreed that livestock is very compatible and common. He doesn't feel it will impact the livestock as all in his opinion.

Lori Ettinger- Ridgeway Resident-stated like with the turbines- she has a friend who cannot tolerate the noise from the generators.

Dan Spitzer-council from Hodson Russ- suggested that Joe Hamel from Next Era describe the plan.

Joe Hamel-Next Era Solar- stated that this is solar. It has all stationary parts. No movement, there may be a slight hum inside the project area but residents won't hear anything.

Lori Ettinger- Ridgeway Resident- asked about the generators and if they would be added later on. Lori misspoke referring to the battery storage as generators.

Dan Spitzer-council from Hodson Russ- stated that there are no generators in the project or battery storage in the current plan but cannot promise there won't be in the future. There is a policy. As this project stands, unless they apply to the town to add/change anything, there would be a process to follow. Again, there would be a public hearing. The town currently has a moratorium on battery storage. There is no battery storage in this project.

Shawn Callard- Ridgeway Resident- had a question for Shaun Logue-MRB- as to who would maintain this project? He doesn't want it frumpy looking with grass.

Shaun Logue-MRB Group- stated that MRB is working very closely with Next Era on a comprehensive operation and maintenance plan. As of August 31, a letter asked for very specific things in that plan. The plan will be monitored by the town and enforced by the town. It is a Special Use Permit. Shaun also wanted to point out that they (MRB) had a lengthy meeting today with next era and lawyers on this. He will take into consideration their concerns. He told them to google MRB Group, his email is shaun.logue@mrbgroup.com.

Shawn Callard- Ridgeway Resident- so the town will be monitoring it. There is nothing in place for Beals Road? His main concern is that access driveway and would like to see that addressed.

Nancy Mingus- Ridgeway Resident- stated she would appreciate moving the driveway as well.

Mike Mingus- Ridgeway Resident- asked how big the project was. He referred to a project on 259. He lives 1/8 of a mile from where this project will go. He stated solar panels are an eye sore. This is no different than having a junk yard next to your house. He stated he would speak his mind when he wanted to speak it. The town needs to mail out information on how this will affect us as tax payers, benefits, etc. The board members are paid; aren't they? They work for us.

Tom Fenton- Chairman- interjected stating that the board has a book of rules and regulations they have to abide by.

Mike Mingus- Ridgeway Resident- doesn't like the Swett Road Project. He has family off 31 that has to deal with this too.

Dan Spitzer- Council for Hodson Russ- encouraged the Ridgeway Residents to state their concerns/opinions now, as this is the place for it. He stated that this gentleman has no problem stating his. He reminded everyone that the public hearing would remain open until the meeting next week and that the planning board would continue to accept questions/comments/concerns until the public hearing is closed.

Shaun Logue- MRB Group-reiterated that MRB has spoken to Next Era, engineers and lawyers regarding the August 31 letter and comments. Next Era has resubmitted revised plans. He will take into consideration the comments made here. He reminded that a positive or negative declaration on the SEQR needs to be made at the next meeting. He feels that the applicant has diligently moved forward in addressing any concerns.

At this time **Chairman Fenton** asked if there were any other concerns. As there were none, he asked for a motion to adjourn the public hearing until Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 2pm. Tom Kline made the motion to adjourn until September 9, 2020 at 2pm with a second by Richard Fisher. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for September 9, 2020 at 2:00 pm. Board Members and project representatives will attend live in person, with the public attending VIA Telecommunication Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted by
Joelle Brown
Planning Board Clerk