

Town of Niagara discusses solar projects, grants conditional approval to one on Niagara Falls Blvd.

ARTICLE AND PHOTO BY TIMOTHY CHIPP

Contributing Writer

A planned solar power facility in the Town of Niagara received a conditional approval to proceed Tuesday from the Niagara Town Board.

AC Power 15 LLC was given site plan approval, pending approval for a use variance from the town's Zoning Board of Appeals.

Attorney Corey A. Auerbach, of Buffalo-based law firm Barclay Damon, told Town Board members before plan approval the solar project doesn't need many more approvals to go forward since recently passed state laws reduce the burden on the business in State Environmental Quality Review proceedings.

"The laws in New York state recognize solar developers as public utilities," Auerbach said. "This means there's a reduced threshold for what's needed (for approval)."

The facility, which will take six parcels of the Republic Services Allied Waste Niagara Falls Landfill at 5600 Niagara Falls Blvd., isn't the first of its kind in the town.

Niagara officials built their own, a lengthy process that Supervisor Lee Wallace said could give an indication of when AC Power 15's project may be finished.

"We started before the pandemic, and just got ours finished not that long ago," Wallace said, adding acknowledgment the pandemic may have influenced the timeline, but not by much.

Councilman Richard Sirianni, while expressing support for the project, wondered what protections the town could provide itself from future solar developments from becoming the town's next "flavor of the month."

Currently, he said, car washes fit that description. He'd like to



On Tuesday, the Niagara Town Board approved the hiring of Riley MacKenzie as a part-time patrol officer in the town. Pictured, from left: Supervisor Lee Wallace; MacKenzie; Councilman Marc M. Carpenter; Councilman Samuel S. Gatto; Councilman Richard A. Sirianni; and Interim Police Chief Craig Guiliani.

make sure solar farms aren't the next big development trend in town.

"My concern is there's going to be a (residential-zoned) or vacant lot that wants to build one of these solar farms," Sirianni said. "The Town Board needs to have a discussion on it."

Auerbach, though, said the state's conditions make it a challenge in certain zoning types, but it would absolutely be possible to protect the town in the

future in places like residential zones.

For starters, he said, the town can create a need for special use permits to operate solar facilities in zones other than industrial and in brownfields, the two types of zoning New York state incentivized for utilities.

"There is precedent in towns in Niagara County," Auerbach said. "Lewiston is one of them (you could look at)."

Niagara's Zoning Board of Ap-

peals plans to consider the project at its meeting at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 9, at Town Hall, 7105 Lockport Road.

Meanwhile, the May Town Board meeting will be delayed one week from its normal third Tuesday. The council will convene at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 23, at Town Hall.

A work session will precede the monthly meet at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 10, also at Town Hall.

History Center to present program on history of Fisher Price toys

Submitted by the Niagara History Center

Although many products made in Western New York became world-famous, perhaps the most beloved are the toys of Fisher-Price. From the company's beginning during the Great Depression, their fundamental toy-making principles centered on intrinsic play value, ingenuity,

action, sturdy construction, and good value for the money.

On Thursday, April 27, the Niagara History Center will present a free public program on the history of Fisher-Price toys. Larry Lackner, who worked for Fisher-Price in Medina from 1971-96, will tell the story of the company's founding, and demonstrate

how the early wood-and-metal toys were built for generations of play. He will display a variety of old Fisher-Price toys and other objects that were used in the Medina plant.

The program will be free and open to the public. It will be held at 2 p.m. inside the History Center, 215 Niagara St., Lockport.

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Spring is here. Just as the dust begins to fly inside, pollen starts to fly outside. Seasonal stresses, such as pollen sensitivity, are one of the most common problems in the United States. Pollen, a fine, yellowish powder from flowering plants, budding trees and grasses, is very prevalent in the spring air. **The beauty of spring burdens many with itchy, watery eyes, headaches, runny or clogged nose, sneezing and coughing; making this time of year miserable.**

To help cope with pollen, many people choose to limit their exposure by closing their windows, using air conditioning and showering after outdoor activities to remove pollen from skin and hair.

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Frontier Fire Hall
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2:00 pm doors open
 6:00 pm drawings begin

PIZZA, SNACKS & DRINKS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE
 PLAY MUSIC BINGO while waiting for Drawings to Begin

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