

Future of renewable energy in Niagara up for debate

BY TIMOTHY CHIPP

Contributing Writer

The Town of Niagara Town Board called a public hearing to discuss the future of two specific renewable power-generating installations next month.

Councilmembers voted 5-0 Tuesday to schedule the public hearing regarding a proposed local law to establish a six-month moratorium on "applications, approvals and/or construction and/or installation of solar and wind energy systems and/or solar and/or wind farms and/or solar and wind energy storage systems in the Town of Niagara."

"Some people have been asking about solar farms," Councilman Richard Sirianni said follow-

ing the vote. "I felt, and the rest of the Town Board felt, we need to sit down and talk about where we want these things."

The public hearing is set for 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 20, at Town Hall, 7105 Lockport Road.

Sirianni last spoke publicly about solar farms last month, during a discussion about a solar power plant, later approved by the board, to occupy space at the Republic Services Allied Waste Niagara Falls Landfill at 5600 Niagara Falls Blvd.

At the time, he raised concerns about the potential prevalence of farms if the town didn't act to put limits on where the facilities could be located or how many the town wanted to approve.

This public hearing, Sirianni said, will give the current Town Board a chance to hear what residents and business owners have to say about location and quantity the town should have.

But, he added, the next regime of the Town Board, following the November election, will be the ones making any future decisions, as the moratorium will expire just before those officials take office.

"I don't think the residents want to see these in residential areas," Sirianni said. "But maybe the residents don't care."

Currently, the town only allows these facilities in zoned heavy industrial land, like landfills, Supervisor Lee Wallace said.

The town even has one itself, Wallace said, in a landfill, so it wouldn't be an easy task to deny any applicant their own should they approach the board before a moratorium is established.

That's why the board is going to do what it needs to ensure the proper decisions are made, Wallace said.

"We want to make sure that, when we tackle this issue, we'll cover all of the details to do what's best for the town," he said.

June's regular meeting is shaping up to be one offering a number of opportunities for the public to express their opinions.

Not only will the town solicit opinions about solar and wind farms, the board also approved a

hearing concerning the future of the property at 3032 Birch Ave., which town officials have cited numerous times as "unsafe."

The hearing will determine whether the property should be ordered repaired, demolished or vacated, according to the town's wording for the public hearing notice.

Town officials will also solicit opinions on a special use permit application for Caliber Collision, at 2749 Military Road.

In addition, the board is expected to review its finalized audit report from Elma-based auditors Drescher & Malecki.

Painters Plus announces 13th annual 'Project H.O.P.E.'

Painters Plus announced the start of its annual "Project H.O.P.E." ("Helping Others Paint Exteriors") application acceptance period for North Tonawanda residents.

The owner of Painters Plus, Niagara County Legislator Jesse Gooch, created "Project H.O.P.E." in 2011 as a citywide campaign to help beautify exterior homes for people and families in need.

Over the past 10 years, Gooch and his team have painted home exteriors for the elderly, cancer patients, terminally ill individuals, Vietnam and World War II veterans. To date, Painters Plus has donated over \$100,000 in value of

free home painting jobs for people in need.

In conjunction with the office of North Tonawanda Mayor Austin Tylec, Painters Plus will accept applicants until Sept. 1. Applications are available at the North Tonawanda City Hall or Painters Plus office at 800 Walck Road, North Tonawanda.

One can apply for themselves or nominate a neighbor in need.

Tylec said, "This is a great opportunity for any homeowner who cannot afford to paint their house, and a way for Mr. Gooch and his team to give back the community. I'm excited this program is back for North Tonawanda."

Pictured are Niagara County Legislator Jesse Gooch and City of North Tonawanda Mayor Austin Tylec. (Submitted)

Applicants or nominees must own their home. One winner will be chosen. For more information, call Painters Plus at 716-693-7587 or visit www.paintersplus.us.

The winner will be announced Sept. 8, and the job will take place at 9 a.m. Sept. 16, weather-permitting.

Paint is donated by Sherwin Williams. Lunch will be provided for volunteers by a local pizzeria.



Milestone: 50th anniversary of Twin Cities Meals on Wheels

The 50th anniversary of Twin Cities Meals on Wheels was observed, as the City of North Tonawanda and Tonawanda presented the organization's president a proclamation recognizing this important milestone.

Pictured, from left: Alderman Joe Marranca, Mayor Austin Tylec, Meals on Wheels President Jim Burke and Alderman Joe Loncar. Not pictured is Mayor John White and Niagara County Legislator Jesse Gooch. (Submitted)



Dancers needed for 'Summer Showcase'

The Greater Niagara Ballet Company is looking for dancers ages 13-plus with strong ballet skills to perform at its "Summer Showcase" the evening of Friday, July 14, at Academy Park in Lewiston. There will be three rehearsals (unless more are needed): one the week of July 3, and the other two the week of July 10. All will be in the evening, around 4:30 p.m.

If interested, please send Thursday and Friday evening availability for July 6-7, and Monday through Thursday availability for July 10-13. Dancers enrolled in summer camp will already be in the showcase, but those 13 and older are welcome to be in these additional numbers, if they can attend rehearsals.

For more information, or to send availability, email greaterniagaraballet@gmail.com.

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www.oldfortniagara.org

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