

Niagara's second solar array finances finalized

BY TIMOTHY CHIPP

Contributing Writer

Town of Niagara officials now know what to expect, financially, once AC Power 15 LLC completes its solar power array in the Republic Services Allied Waste Niagara Falls Landfill at 5600 Niagara Falls Blvd.

Board members on Tuesday approved a negotiated, 15-year pay scale, agreed to in the form of a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement, revealing the first year of operation will pay the town roughly \$7,300 to use the land.

Payments increase every year, jumping to about \$9,700 in the final year of the agreement.

Niagara Town Attorney Michael Risman said the project allows the town to collect money on a property that, assuming a normal amount of use, would fill up

and be non-operational in about four years.

"They're a company that's looking to use landfills in an interesting way," he said.

AC Power 15 LLC received its conditional approval to move forward with the project, which will take up six parcels of the landfill, in April. Risman said the facility could begin operation in August, which would trigger the first payment.

The agreement is the second finalized in as many months for the town, following a much more lucrative – but for a more expansive project – one completed in June with Niagara Depot Solar.

Following the decision last month, the town is collecting quarterly payments of rent from the company, since it owns the dump facility the company is leasing to house its arrays.

Those payments are more than \$13,000 four times per year, increasing by 2% through 2047.

However, short-term prospects for other solar arrays like these have been shut down in the town, as they've implemented a six-month moratorium, meaning no applications can be submitted until the end of the year.

A new board, with a new supervisor, will tackle the future of solar – and wind – power generators in the town following November's election once they assume office on Jan. 1.

Quarry Road Waste Transfer Facility

Also at Tuesday's meeting, the board set a date for a long-awaited public hearing regarding the future of a waste transfer facility on Quarry Road.

But there have been some significant modifications from what was

originally proposed to the town this past fall.

Covanta Environmental Solutions first approached the town to expand its facility, increasing its load to about 150 tons of solid waste per day. But those plans have been scrapped, according to the town's building inspector, Charles Haseley.

Instead, town officials will consider rezoning the facility from its current "light industrial" classification to "heavy industrial." Town officials will also consider granting a special use permit, as well as renew the existing siting and operating permit, allowing the New Jersey-based company to run its facility.

At the town's July work session earlier this month, Risman and Haseley said the facility needed to be brought into compliance with the town's current solid waste code, to which it had been grand-

fathered into, including the special use permit.

It's a step, they said, aimed at bringing more oversight from the town on a yearly basis, unlike the current setup.

It's an arrangement that seems to have perked the ears of the project's loudest detractor on the board, Councilman Richard Sirianni.

In the fall when the project was first considered, Sirianni balked at the zoning change, since he said a change could mean a number of future uses that would be disadvantageous for the town.

"I get a little concerned going heavy industrial," Sirianni said. "But, if them coming back to us yearly is enough of a hammer (I will be able to agree)."

Covanta's public hearing is set for 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 15, at Town Hall, 7105 Lockport Road.

'Thunder on the Niagara': Event set for Aug. 5-6

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top honors, points and awards as part of the HRL racing series. Attended by thousands of local and distant fans, spectators will have the opportunity to listen to the thunderous roar as they watch these high-performance hydroplanes reach speeds of up to 170 mph in the Grand Prix class. These craft can be viewed in action on the Niagara River both

days beginning at 10 a.m. and continuing through to 4:30 p.m.

A number of race boats and teams have WNY connections. The Cents Less Team will be well-represented with Ken Brodie Jr. at the wheel of the GP-50 entry, and his son, Ken Brodie III, representing the family in the 2.5 class as driver of the S-50 hydroplane Cents Less 15. A long-time member of the Grand Prix team,

young Ken is looking forward to experiencing this year's "Thunder on the Niagara" as a team racer.

The Don Less family racing members have been skillfully assisted for many years by their hard-working, top-ranked crew, including members Hank Armstrong, John Nebelecky and Sal Wakefield.

A variety of food vendors will

again accompany this year's event, with a vast array of hot and cold, savory and sweet food selections that will be sure to satisfy your cravings. Along with them will be a number of craft vendors showcasing their clothing, souvenirs, and other fine products and memorabilia. Lyle Dinsmore's Miss Gangway, an H-6 vintage Lauterbach hydroplane, will also run flyby laps for the fans' enter-

tainment both days.

The weekend will be highlighted by 10 Grand Prix boats, coming from the U.S., Canada and New Zealand. So, bring the sunscreen or rain gear for whatever the weather dictates, perhaps an extra chair or two, and get ready to hear the roar with another exciting "Thunder on the Niagara" event!

Empower expands board of directors

Empower, a nonprofit human services agency, has added two new board members: Kory Schuler and Liz Zulawski.

"Empower is excited to announce that our board of directors is growing with the addition of two prominent professionals from our region," Empower Executive Director Diane Baehre said. "Kory and Liz have done incredible work throughout their careers in our community, they both understand the importance of the work Empower does to ensure individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities live the highest quality lives, and we could not be

more thrilled to add their insights and expertise to our organization."

Schuler, executive director of the Niagara USA Chamber, said, "I am honored to be serving on the board of such an important organization. The work Empower WNY does strengthens the community and, as their name suggests, empowers the people they serve."

Zulawski, Leadership Niagara's

president and CEO, said, "I am honored to join the Empower board of directors. Creating opportunities that are equitable, diverse and inclusive has been at the forefront of their work for decades, and I am excited and proud to be a part of such an important mission."

Empower was founded in 1954 and has served Western New York, specifically Niagara County,

for over 65 years, "ensuring that individuals living with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and their loved ones, have access to the highest-quality support and services. Empower employs over

300 individuals and provides community programming, job and workforce development, and educational services."

For more information, visit www.empower-wny.org.

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