

Public hearing gets lively on Lewiston solar law revision

BY TERRY DUFFY
Editor-in-Chief

As the moratorium on its solar energy law continues, the Town of Lewiston held a lively public hearing Monday.

At issue were modifications to Article 27 of the town's zoning code, covering setbacks and screening for future solar energy systems.

In a nutshell, not too much has changed on public opinion toward solar installations in the town, particularly so for those under consideration in rural residential areas. Monday's public hearing, presented in a limited fashion at Town Hall to adhere to COVID-19 social distancing protocols, and held via Zoom and Facebook, featured roughly a dozen who spoke.

Nearly all who addressed the board over the roughly half-hour period are opposed to solar projects. Included were a number of Moore Road residents who expressed disfavor to the board for its allowing construction of the 29-acre utility-scale solar energy facility on nearly 73 acres of land owned by Donald and Janice Laurie at 2643 Moore Road. Complaints focused primarily on the nature of construction for that project, the impact of truck traffic and the location of a solar plant in relation to neighboring properties and aesthetics.

Resident Janet Fras told the board she and neighboring residents, "are still trying to stop the building of a second solar project on our road."

Discussing the problems associated with the first project, she told the board, "many massive dump trucks, flatbed trucks unloading heavy construction equipment, tractor trailers were constantly down our road. There was continuous air and noise pollution."

Duane Colter and Larry Fera, likewise, raised issue with the truck traffic, mentioning the road's size and traffic safety.

A number of Swann Road residents who spoke questioned screening and setback issues, noting the current solar facility on Swann Road owned by town Building Inspector Tim Masters.

Also raised was the board's reasoning of even allowing solar installations in rural residential areas, arguing the town should limit them to industrial zoned areas.

Commenting in favor of solar installations and energy storage in the town was Chris Georgiadis, a project developer with NextEra Energy Resources of Juno Beach, Florida. He said NextEra is the company that is currently operating the Moore Road Solar facility owned by the Lauries, and is working with Moore Road property owner Kevin Thompson to develop a proposed/energy storage facility called Niagara Solar at that location.

The town's revised local law proposal does not allow for the energy storage (battery storage) feature in rural residential areas, but rather only for industrial zoned areas. NextEra is considering both the existing Moore Road Solar facility and the proposed Niagara Solar facility for such an operation. In his remarks, Georgiadis spoke in support for the town's permitting of both.

Also speaking in favor was Thompson, who told the board, "I'm here to lend my support to it, and I do sympathize with people who are expressing their concerns."

"I want to make it clear that the first solar farm that they're talking about, we had nothing to do with. This is a totally new project; we purposely tried to specify (its location). ... Our property is over a mile long, between Moore Road and Ridge Road."

Thompson said he tried to specify that, "no solar panel be located within a thousand feet of either road" and shielded by old growth trees.

"If a previous solar farm failed to camouflage their project properly; I don't think it's necessarily the board's fault. Possibly the board can hold them responsible," he said. "I think there's some misinformation being passed around here, and I also wish that this project not be lumped into another project (that was) improperly planned and executed."

Later, Supervisor Steve Broderick said the Town Board was still in the process of reviewing comments and working with the town attorney and other town officials on the proposed solar law revisions.

No board action was taken on the measure.

'In the Loop' with the Lewiston-Porter Board of Education

Lew-Port not included in 'yellow zone'

Winter recess begins Thursday, Dec. 24

BY JODEE RIORDAN
Board of Education President

The Board of Education met on Monday for our last meeting of 2020.

As is a beloved holiday tradition, the board welcomed the amazing music department to our meeting. Each December, a talented ensemble joins us to perform a series of holiday favorites. This year, we were treated to a little (virtual) holiday cheer from the entire Lew-Port music department, K-12. Thank you to our talented students and dedicated music teachers, especially Jamie Burritt, for joining us and introducing the performances; and Mark Marinaccio for putting it all together. We greatly appreciate the gift of their time and talents to brighten our evening.

You can enjoy the joy of the holiday season by visiting the Lewiston-Porter music department page on the Lew-Port website, www.lew-port.com, or check out its Twitter @LewPortMusic. Virtual holiday concerts and performances are posted on our building webpages, too, and shared on SeeSaw. #stillmakingmusic

In addition to holiday concerts, the campus is merry and bright with artwork and decorations celebrating the season. The halls are decked, the classrooms warm and joyful. At the high school, Cindy Sanchez and her art students helped to make the season bright by stenciling holiday themes and words of hope and cheer on the main lobby windows for all to enjoy. Across the district, students and staff celebrated all this past week with Holiday Spirit Week, donning ugly Christmas sweaters and showing school spirit with Green and White Day.

This week ahead, Monday, is a normal virtual day for all hybrid students. On Tuesday, students on the green team will be on campus, while the white team is remote. On Wednesday, students on the green team will be on campus with the white team remote.

Holiday Spirit Week continues both days on campus: Pajama Day (elementary: PEC/

IEC); Pajama/Hat Day (middle school); and Festive Flair Day at the high school (wear your favorite ugly sweater or holiday shirt, socks, scarves, etc.). Winter recess begins on Thursday, and extends through the new year. Classes will resume Monday, Jan. 4, 2021. This will be a virtual day for all hybrid students.

Although most of the Town of Lewiston and many other areas of Niagara County moved into a "yellow zone" this past week, as of press time, Lewiston-Porter remains open for in-person learning and not impacted by the current designation.

Niagara County Health Commissioner Dan Stapleton notified us the Lewiston Porter Central School District does not fall in the "yellow zone" areas for Niagara County. In the event, that the "yellow zone" is expanded to include our district, we are prepared to meet the testing and other requirements.

We are here for our community and will remain open. Please stay tuned for notifications and updates from Superintendent Paul Casseri for any and all breaking news.

This has been a very difficult

year. As it closes, we are grateful for the courage and dedication of our teachers and staff; the leadership of our administration; and the support of our families. We look forward to the new year, and we wish you a joyous holiday and the hope of better days: That "from now on, our troubles will be miles away."

On behalf of the Board of Education, from our families to yours: Though, it's been said many times, many ways - merry Christmas to you!



OLD FORT NIAGARA

Have you visited a Fort lately?

Daily hours of operation
Wednesday - Sunday 10am-4pm
Closed Monday & Tuesday
The Fort is open year round with the exception of New Years Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.
Docents are posted at each of our historic buildings and we continue to offer living history programs.

Open: Wed-Sun 10am-4pm • Closed Mon & Tue
www.oldfortniagara.org

PLEASE HELP
Winter Challenges Are Upon Us

These would help greatly:

1. Clearing the accumulative snow in front of your paper box will provide carriers a closer proximity to your receptacle.
2. Removing accumulated snow and ice from your paper receptacle, allowing space for the paper to stay in.
3. Cleaning walkways of snow & ice to allow safe door delivery.

Please remember additional papers are available at stores in your neighborhood. See our website for locations.

Your newspaper carriers ask for your assistance in enabling them to deliver the most requested paper in Niagara County.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN RECEIVING NFP PAPERS. WE TRULY APPRECIATE YOUR POSITIVE COMMENTS.

COMMENT PERIOD EXTENDED NOW ENDS JANUARY 5, 2021
Balance of Plant and Groundwater Operable Units Niagara Falls Storage Site

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Buffalo District is extending the comment period for the proposed plan for the Balance of Plant and Groundwater Operable Units of the Niagara Falls Storage Site, located in Lewiston, New York.

Due to a public request received December 4, 2020, the comment period has been extended 30 days. The public comment period began October 5, 2020, and now ends January 5, 2021. The public is encouraged to review and provide their comments on the proposed plan.

The proposed plan was prepared under the authority of the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP) for which the Corps of Engineers is the lead federal agency. The Corps of Engineers conducts FUSRAP projects in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, as amended, and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan.

The proposed plan documents the Corps of Engineers' preferred alternative for the Balance of Plant and Groundwater Operable Units, Alternative 3 Removal with Building Decontamination. Under Alternative 3, impacted soil, road bedding, and groundwater are removed; the foundation and utilities of former Building 401 are removed; and Building 433 and the foundations of former Buildings 430 and 431/432 are decontaminated by scarifying (mechanically grinding the surface) and left in place. FUSRAP-related material that is removed is transported off-site for disposal at an appropriately permitted disposal facility. Five-year reviews are conducted to ensure protectiveness of the remedy.

You are encouraged to email your comments to fusrap@usace.army.mil. Written comments can be mailed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Buffalo District, Attention: Environmental Project Management Section, 1776 Niagara Street, Buffalo, New York 14207. Receipt of mailed comments could be delayed due to COVID-19 practices that are in place.

The proposed plan and major documents are available on the project website at: <https://www.lrb.usace.army.mil/Missions/HTRW/FUSRAP/Niagara-Falls-Storage-Site/> in the Reports section. A link to the entire administrative record file for the site, is on the project website as well. For further information please e-mail fusrap@usace.army.mil, or call (800) 833-6390 (Option 4).

NOW is the time to Shop Local

nfp NIAGARA RIVER REGION CHAMBER-COMMERCE Since 1944

Shopping small adds up... 67¢ of every dollar spent at a small business stays in the local economy. To find gifts in our area, watch NFP's papers.

WALKING DELIVERY ROUTES AVAILABLE IN LEWISTON / YOUNGSTOWN

Niagara County Tribune/Sentinel

Papers delivered to your home. Delivery is every Friday. No Collecting - No Inserting Independent Contractor

nfp NIAGARA FRONTIER PUBLICATIONS Since 1944

AGE 11 AND UP TEENS & SENIORS ENCOURAGED

Please Call Circulation at 773-7676 ext 105