

Meeting Minutes August 14th, 2024

At a regular scheduled meeting of the Planning Board of the Town of Mentz held in the municipal building, located at 14 Sponable Drive, Mentz, NY 13140 at 7:00PM, the following were present:

Chairman: Fred Whiting

Member: Richard Burke

Member: Laura Torres

Member: Doug Wilson

Clerk: Caitlin Bacon

Code Enforcement Officer (CEO): Jay Moose

Public Present: Nate Kopp, Becky Siracusa, Steve Siracusa, David Lipiska, Laurie Powers, Donna Trumble, Walt Trumble, Polly Lynn Davies, Barbara Clancy, Bill Applebee, Heather Mahunik, Sandra Loveless, Martha Robinson, Michele Lakota, Roman Lakota, Brandon MaGill, Michael Gray, two illegible signatures, Robert Hadden, Mark Gantheir, Taylor Stebbins, Rose Fase Mark Becker, Samantha Silensky, Justin Nelson, Damon Ritter, Rebecca Thomas

Chairman Whiting called the meeting to order at 7:02PM, the Pledge of Allegiance was said by all present followed by a moment of silence.

Chairman Whiting proposed a motion to accept the meeting minutes from prior Planning Board meeting, July 10th 2024, to be approved.

After reviewing the minutes, a motion to approve meeting minutes dated July 10th, 2024, was made by Member Wilson.

Motion was seconded by Member Burke.

All in favor 4-0.

Chairman Whiting announced that there have been two individuals interested in filling the vacant Planning Board position, Michael Grey and Tom Green. The Town of Mentz Board to make a decision regarding the position.

Chairman Whiting read a letter aloud from the Town of Brutus regarding concerns over the transfer station plans located on Route 31. The Town of Mentz acknowledged a need for such a business but has concerns regarding the location.

Chairman Whiting stated that he has also received five letters from concerned citizens regarding the project. Public Present, Becky Siracusa presented 28 more letters of opposition and concern from citizens.

Public present Nate Kopp stood and requested a minor subdivision on the property of 1911 Navoo Road on behalf of Fred Stowell. Mr. Kopp presented maps, setback measurements, and vocalized the arrangement of the property. Mr. Kopp explained that he believed that the Grandson wanted to build a home on the property but could not speak for him.

Motion to allow the minor subdivision on 1911 Navoo Road, owned by Fred Stowell, was made by Member Wilson.

Motion was seconded by Member Torres.

All in favor: 4-0

Public present Becky Siracusa presented more letters of opposition, totaling 35 letters given to Chairman Whiting.

Chairman Whiting questioned if there was anyone from Morgan Transfer Station project present. No one answered. Chairman Whiting stated that Mr. Morgan cancelled his plan to attend, but wanted to ensure there was no one present to discuss the project.

Chairman Whiting stated that the Planning Board was to work on the Solar Farm Project, on North Main Street. Chairman Whiting questioned who was requesting to present. Public present Polly Lynn Davies stated she was and had a poster board and notes to present.

Ms. Davies questioned the decision in comparison to the comprehensive plan and stated that there is no benefit to anyone other than the property owner. Ms. Davies stated that the homeowner will receive \$1,200/month in income for the solar farmland lease and that if even only two people are against the project, the majority should win. Ms. Davies requested the Planning Board to reconsider the vote and object to it. Public present, Mr. Applebee stated that the access road in the R2 zone is not commercial and should not be allowed.

Vocalized concerns that were also presented:

- It's our fire department and volunteers at risk, also needing specialized equipment
- We live in a community because we want to be rural
- No positions of employment will be filled by local residents
- Condemned to see the ugliness

Ms. Davies presented pictures of the solar farm from "route 318", stating that there were three fire hydrants, it was overgrown, and there are no homes around the array.

Chairman Whiting requested Ms. Davies to present the petition.

Chairman Whiting and Member Wilson reviewed the newly presented petition quickly.

Ms. Davies stated that petition numbers should not matter but the comprehensive plan should be considered.

Member Wilson stated that he realizes that 100 percent of the people in the area of the solar array most likely signed the petition but stated that if it was in the other part of town, 100 percent of people near it would have signed the petition.

Mr. Applebee stated that the buffer and ag land should not have allowed this project to pass.

Chairman Whiting proposed entering into executive session regarding the Solar Farm Project vote.

Public present Mr. MaGill stated that he was concerned over the term "spread like wildfire" because if the array catches fire, that's exactly what will happen. Chairman Whiting stated that there was no battery storage on site. Member of the public stated, "for now".

After review of legal reasons to enter executive session, the Planning Board decided to move into executive session regarding a pending legal issue regarding the vote of the Solar Farm Project located on North Main Street. Motion was made by Chairman Whiting.

Motion was seconded by Member Wilson.

All in favor: 4-0

Public present, Mr. Lipiska, stated that there is a site plan review on September 18th, from 7-9pm for a Brutus Town plan.

Two unknown members of the public exited at 7:45pm.

The planning Board moved to the room in the back of the building for executive session at 7:46pm.

During executive session, one resolution took vote. Motion to review the legal issues of the Solar Farm vote was made by Member Torres.

Motion was seconded by Member Burke.

All in favor: 4-0

At 8:20pm a motion was made by Chairman Whiting to exit executive session.

Motion was seconded by Member Wilson.

All in favor: 4-0

When the Planning Board reentered the board room, 21 members of the public remained.

Chairman Whiting explained that the Planning Board was not going to take a vote on the revisitation of the Solar Farm resolution tonight but is going to review legal repercussions with the Mentz Town Attorney, Kevin Cox.

Chairman Whiting questioned the Planning Board if there was anything else to discuss. Nothing else to discuss.

Next scheduled Planning Board meeting is September 11th, 2024.

Motion to adjourn the regularly scheduled Planning Board Meeting on August 14th, 2024, was made by Chairman Whiting.

Motion was seconded by Member Wilson.

All in favor 4-0.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:25PM

Planning Board Clerk Bacon