

PLANNING BOARD

**Town of Kirkwood
70 Crescent Drive
Kirkwood, NY 13795**

PUBLIC HEARING

September 9, 2024

SITE PLAN REVIEW TO CONSTRUCT A 2.80 MW-AC DUAL-USE AGRIVOLTAICS DISTRIBUTED GENERATION, GROUND-MOUNTED SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEM FACILITY AT PROPERTY LOCATED AT 388 COLESVILLE ROAD IN THE TOWN OF KIRKWOOD, KNOWN AS TAX MAP NO. 146.04-1-48 AND LOCATED IN AN AGRICULTURAL/RURAL RESIDENCE/RESIDENCE R1 DISTRICT ON THE APPLICATION OF STANLEY HOLLOW CREEK, LLC

Chairman Woolbaugh read the notice of public hearing and commented we have the affidavits of posting by the Town Clerk and notice to property owners within 500 feet of the project, affidavit of publication in the Press & Sun Bulletin. We have the Broome County Planning Department 239-m recommendations and a Full EAF has been filed.

Chairman Woolbaugh opened the public hearing to public participation at 7:03 p.m.

Ken Crocker, 528 Colesville Road, commented he has been a resident for 39 years, paying taxes and he believes people that have land in this town should be able to do what they want with the land. Solar panels are going to be put in whether we want them or not. The government has stated they are going to put 17 million acres worth of solar panels in the United States. Why not let the farm get some money back? They work hard and they deserve it. They are good people, served the community and helped a lot of people out in the area. He is for them to be able to do that.

Jeffrey Moyer commented that he is a firm believer from what he has learned and studied this planet is screwed. We need to move away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy. One person's eyesore is another person's beautiful thing. He sees a solar installation such as this as being a beautiful thing, encourages these landowners, taxpayers to exercise their legal right to serve the capitalist system to advance themselves and their families financially to help the energy systems of the country get away from fossil fuels and move towards renewable energy. He would be very proud of this Planning Board and this town if they would approve this project and would be sadly embarrassed if they refuse based on people's idea of an eyesore.

Carolyn Everit, Colesville Road, read a statement to the Board. She lives directly across the road from the cow field, the main view from her house, for 24 years. She was a public servant for the City of Binghamton, 21 years, retiring last August. In the last month of her service she became ill with cancer, having received chemo treatments last winter and currently on maintenance infusions. She is supposed to limit her stress levels due to the cancer, so you can imagine her disbelief to find that they want to put a solar farm across from her home. Some impacts of this are solar panels are not agricultural. She brought the home because it is in a rural setting. Homes within sight and sound will lose value, the inverters create a loud hum. Who will compensate them for their financial loss? Another concern, the wells being contaminated from toxic chemicals and herbicides. Is the Town willing to run water lines to these houses? The stream could be contaminated, which runs into the Susquehanna River, which runs into the Chesapeake Bay Water Shed. Another concern is the electric magnetic field, which can

have an adverse effect on people. She has heard that people who visit solar farms have to wear safety shoes, safety goggles, and masks with only certified personnel handling the equipment. This will also disrupt wild life. It will never be the same. Broome County only has 52 full sun days per year with snow in the winter, solar panels don't work when snow covered. Where do the panels reflect on to? Will the size of the farm increase? If panels are broken in a hail storm how quickly will they be replaced? Why use this prime land while bringing down our home values that only benefits one family? Another solar farm was shot down before, why is it allowed here? Why is one person allowed to make money at the loss of their neighbors? There needs to be an access road around the solar farm in case the panels catch fire so they can put out the brush fires.

Patty Bartleson, 422 Colesville Road, which is part of the 388 Colesville Road project, has been home to members of the Bartleson family for over 70 years. Her grandparents owned the farm then her parents owned the farm, now owned by the children. Her parents farmed the land for many years with many hardships including fire, poor crop production, etc. Those hardships were made barrable due to the love of farming and the community of local farmers in the immediate area. These farms count on each other in time of need. Seven children were raised on the farm and were given farm duties when age appropriate. Eventually the farm became unable to cover costs of the farm and her parents turned to outside employment to make ends meet, working around a milking schedule. Eventually it was necessary to sell out. Some feel they have the ability to dictate the future of 388 Colesville Road, the property is more than a pleasing view. It is owned by the Bartleson family, have paid taxes for over 70 years and have asked nothing of the neighbors over the years. The proposed development and wanting a solar farm will serve as a means to keep the property in the Bartleson family. The decision to do or not to do the leasing of this property should be their decision as long as the project complies with all rules, regulations and laws, not the decision of the Board or Kirkwood taxpayers.

Muritte Chase, Colesville Road, explained she is against this project. Just because you are a farm doesn't mean that you have the right to override other people's feelings. Davern's Dairy had to give up the dairy business long ago. Just like the Bartlesons, they have to face the fact that someday you have to give up things for the public. This will be down in the valley and we had 3 days of darkness last week, what does that say for a field of panels. She is afraid that the Susquehanna River could be contaminated and other things that could happen. She is not for this project, concerned about the value of properties and concerned about the public. If the panels crack chemicals are released. They live at the corner of Fox Hollow Road and Colesville Road, which is there forever home and now it is being threatened with contamination.

Renee Swan-Demarco, 278 Colesville Road, commented she is close enough to hear the Bartleson farm cows. She has been a resident there since 1994. She is looking for information, she heard about the project from a letter she received. To her left there is a junk yard of cars, just extended last year. Trees are being cut down behind her. To the right they will have a solar farm, with long term effects not known. She would like some scientific facts before a decision is made. She understands fossil fuels but doesn't know if this is the solution. She asked is there is a tax break for her? Does she get any of this electricity benefit from this? She is concerned about her well, less water every year. She hopes Kirkwood has a contingency plan to get water to the residents if their wells go dry. What do they use for weeding? She doesn't know if the solar farm will give her the same comfort she gets from the farm, cows, and the animals. This is a big benefit for just one farm, unless she gets a tax break or cheaper electricity. The beaver pond in back was already bulldozed over, it is like they were prepping this land

to be developed. She doesn't have enough information now.

Nathan Hayes, 267 Fox Hollow Road, explained he has been doing solar for the past 10 years. As far as the animals, they can graze underneath the solar panels, no need for pesticides. They can rest in the shade under the panels and eat the grass. As far as panels catching fire, there are rapid shut down devices, micro inverters, etc., if the system is installed correctly there is zero chance of having a fire. The panels won't break, not from hail. Even with a hammer it is very hard to break them. There is toxic material inside them, if they do break the company will swap them out for new ones. As far as the inverters, you would have to have your ear right next to it to hear them. He is for the farmer.

Patrick Knight, 433 Colesville Road, explained he moved to NY 2 years ago and he is the Senior Operations Manager for the wind farm that is in Windsor. He respects the Bartlesons, you don't want anybody telling you what you can do with your property. He believes the ball has been dropped, there has not been any information that has gone out to the residents. The residents have the right to have information, factual information, in order to make educated decisions. Will it affect the value of my home? Will it have environmental impacts? The company proposing this should have reached out to the residents.

Deb Deyo explained she understands the predicament here, trying to maintain the farm and the property. She can't support this project. She isn't totally against solar but she has watched what is going on and is not in agreement with it, not a better form of energy. She knows they don't want to sell the farm but there have been offers to buy the farm, parts of the farm. That offer continues to be there. You have to make tough choices. You made a choice that affects everyone, it is not just your farm, everyone is affected. She is absolutely against the countryside being littered with solar panels, with no confidence they are a better energy source.

John O'Neill, 1291 US Route 11, explained he is just here to support the people that are trying to stop the solar farm. For many months he went through the same thing, they tried to put a solar farm behind his house. The solar farm will be down in the valley with no way to screen it from the public, everyone will be looking down on this. By approving this, putting it in a rural area, farm land, you are changing the character of the land. Regarding the noise, he went to three different solar farms with a db meter, the inverters do make noise from 40 yards away. They don't belong in that area. Solar farms are fulltime ugly and only working part time. This area isn't the sunny part of the country. He is against these solar projects being put on rural property. He suggested to the Board to put a moratorium on solar projects until more information is gathered. They don't belong on residential or rural properties.

Chairman Woolbaugh explained that this public hearing will be paused until the next meeting, to give the public a chance to hear the project plan and maybe answer some of the questions. There are several concerns.

A petition against the project was submitted to the Planning Board and is included in the file.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Kay Sullivan
Secretary, Kirkwood Planning Board