



Ashford board updated on proposed solar farm

July 20, 2017

ASHFORD—The Ashford Town Board received updates about the proposed community solar farm project during their meeting July 12.

New York State Energy Research and Development Agency West Valley Program Director Paul Bembia spoke about recent changes in the regulatory framework for new distributed generation facilities within the state, which applies to the proposed Ashford solar farm at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center property.

The New York State Department of Public Service introduced a new approach to assigned value to the energy produced from these distributed generation facilities. Previously, an operator of the facility received a simple credit for the number of kilowatts generated by the facility and delivers to the grid.

The new policy identifies a dollar amount for the energy generated by the facility and delivered to the grid, which now also takes into account factors like when the power is delivered to the grid, where power is delivered and how much carbon emissions are lowered by the power derived to the grid.

Bembia said NYSERDA is evaluating the new approach to see if it will have an impact on the economics of the project and will update the town as they complete their evaluation.

In regard to the West Valley Demonstration Project, Bembia said demolition of the vitrification facility is still on track to start in August. The demolition is set to take around six to nine months and there will be over 400 truckloads of demolition material leaving the site.

Resident Beverly Hess of Hess Farms spoke to the board about some recent issues with sheriffs coming to their farm after turning out the cattle into the barnyard and saying they were going to call the SPCA. Hess told the board she wants to inform the public that her farm and the others in the Ashford area are doing everything correctly, so they don't have to constantly deal with this hassle.

"How do you combat this ignorance of these people going by?" Hess asked. "We have done something and I'm not pleased with what we have been doing. We haven't turned the cows out, we've let the brush and the trees grow up to hide our barnyard and fences, our cattle run behind the barn, we have let the weeds grow up in the fields where we keep the excess feed ... I don't know what more we can do and it's just something we have to combat, but how you tell these people who know nothing about cattle. That is the question we have."

The next Ashford Town Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, Aug. 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the Ashford Community Center, located at 9377 Route 240, in West Valley.