

**Town of Red Hook Zoning Review Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**July 14, 2016**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Susan Simon opened the meeting at 7:10 pm

**Members Present** - Susan Simon-Chairperson-Zoning Review Committee  
Steve Cole-Code Enforcement Officer  
Christopher Klose- Economic Development Committee  
Brent Kovalchik-Village of Red Hook Trustee  
Michael Zelig - Conservation Advisory Council  
  
Linda Stoddard - Recording Secretary

**Members Absent** -  
Jeff Kaiser - Community Representative  
Ken Migliorelli - Ag. & Open Space Committee  
Sam Phelan - Planning Board  
Michael Robertson - Community Representative  
Chuck Simmons – Community Representative  
Bill O’Neill - Town Board Liaison

**Old Business**

The Minutes of the May 12, 2016 meeting were reviewed. Steve Cole made a motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Brent Kovalchik.

**ALL IN FAVOR. OPPOSED - None.** Minutes approved as submitted.

**New Business**

**Solar Farms**

Susan opened the meeting by reporting that she had a conversation with Robert McKeon and Robert would like the Committee to discuss Solar Farms.

Steve noted that Robert would like Solar to take priority over the Food Truck topic because he would like to get moving on Solar Farms.

Chris noted that he read the e-mail regarding Solar Farms and the lengthy summary and generally he is all in favor of Solar Energy in Red Hook but he is not a fan of Solar Farming in Red Hook on our land because if we do that then we turn into something else. Chris suggests that, for example, when we have municipally funded or work projects such as rebuilding roads, redoing parking lots and all of the roofs, we should be promoting in fill Solar Energy wherever we can along rights of way, in the median strips, etc. It is done in Europe, Japan and everywhere and it works. If a few are put here and there, you can power this, that and the other thing.

Brent asked if the article pertained to issues of Zoning, height setbacks, lot coverage, that type of thing.

Chris said these items were not covered in the article. He feels that we (Red Hook) are on the right track with the most recent thrust toward Solarize Northern Dutchess. He wishes it were easier - he attended the Solarize Northern Dutchess Forum for his farm and stated that

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they could not give him a complete energy audit. They are not going to invest in Solar if he does not know how he can utilize it best. He would rather have battery technology that was sufficient and environmentally sensitive enough so that when the power goes off you have your own standby.

Brent asked about solar panels, solar arrays and windmills. Susan replied that this Committee has discussed windmills in the past and determined that there is not enough wind here. There is only one particular area that would generate enough wind to run a windmill.

Chris stated that he looked into a windmill 10 years ago and you have to have 10 miles an hour of average wind to have a windmill be beneficial.

Brent brought up the definition of a free standing solar panel and asked if that would be considered a structure? Would it be considered a part of lot coverage? On smaller properties the windmill had to be a certain height be effective, even the small residential ones that may have exceeded the height limitation. Those are the Zoning issues and that's why he raises the question of Solar Farms and their use. Would that take the land out of agricultural uses? That would be a zoning issue. Secondly, would they be considered structures - would they be considered "accessory structures" and would they be subject to the primary principal use being for farming and agriculture?

Steve replied that they would be considered accessory structures and the primary principal use would be for farming and agriculture but if we go into Solar Farming then those accessory structures now become a primary structure. Steve noted that a lot of people may argue point.

Brent suggests looking at a Zoning Map and look at those specific zones that may accommodate a Solar Farm. Some of the properties are protected by Conservation Easements. Part of Centers and Greenspaces incentive zoning provision is preserving agriculture and open space in the Ag. Business District so maybe the Ag. Business District would not be an appropriate space for them. However, farmers like Rich Biezynski power his buildings and operations with Solar so do you limit it? These are the questions that are arising.

Brent noted that one of the conflicts of uses that the Task Force tried to resolve with the Ag. Business District was you increase the number of accessory uses to the primary principal use of farming to accommodate when the times are tough for farmers as opposed to the traditional methods of subdividing parcels of their land and selling them for development, then you increase the conflict of uses, i.e., residential, agricultural, now there are other ways for the farmers to make money during the lean times other than subdividing their parcels and selling them, which you can no longer farm after that. Those are the things that need to be looked at.

Brent said when the solar panels were installed for the Fire Company, it had to go through Planning Board Approval and one of the things that was addressed was the way the panels were angled and facing South, they may reflect back into the homeowners on Glenn Ridge Road, the residential development off of Metzger Road, possibly creating some kind of potential issue of nuisance.

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Steve commented that another way to look at a Solar Farm on a farm is anything that is not able to be used by the farmer such as a flood plain, non-tillable soil, rock ledge; you could put the panels there.

Chris Klose raised the question of how do we get critical mass so that we get the most concentrated area and who are we serving? Does it just go into the grid or does it serve Red Hook? He is looking for the consumer population.

Susan asked what the Committee thinks they could present to Robert to let him know that they are discussing Solar but we certainly do not have any recommendations other than perhaps having a consultant look to see what the viable areas are in Red Hook.

Steve suggested that Dennis Collett be present because Robert and Dennis may have already covered the issues that the Committee is discussing.

Brent wonders if this is something that the Intermunicipal Task Force should be discussing.

Steve Cole commented that perhaps a Solar Committee should be formed consisting of possibly Dennis Collett, Laurie Husted, Brenda Cagle and bring them into one of our meetings and getting their input and then bring that information back to Robert.

Steve volunteered to sit and talk to Robert and let him know that the Committee discussed at the meeting. Brent also volunteered to meet with Steve & Brent. The highlights of the meeting will be:

- 1) Definition of a Solar Farm - is it an electricity production facility or is it an ag. product? Would it be legitimate to have it be considered a producer of electricity? Is it like raising a crop?
- 2) Zoning Districts
- 3) What is the Town's Interest in having a Solar Farm or permitting solar farming? Who is Benefitting and how? Who are we serving? How are we going to manage it so it has the least impact for the most production?
- 4) Existing Easements - what would this be for those properties that have Solar Farms? Could they then not be qualified to receive an Easement?
- 5) Recommend a Committee

**Old Business**

**Food Trucks**

Susan asked Steve if there have been any problems with Food Trucks. Steve commented that he had a person come in the previous day inquiring about putting a Food Truck in Red Hook. Steve informed them that the Town of Red Hook has nothing in their Code on Food Trucks, no definition for Food Trucks, therefore they are not allowed in the Town.

Steve said the biggest obstacle is to decide where Food Trucks should be allowed. He is going to check with the Department of Transportation on restrictions for food trucks.

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Steve is thinking they should be allowed in the ABD District, B1, TNDCC.

Insurance was discussed and it was decided that each vendor must show proof of insurance.

Limiting the number of Food Trucks allowed is something that needs to be discussed also.

Chris Klose will consolidate the 4 definitions provided into one that covers everything and send the “draft” definition to the members prior to the September 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. At the September meeting the Committee will decide on what areas a Food Truck can be allowed, create a definition and work on preparing a document to present to the Town Board at the October 11<sup>th</sup> or October 26<sup>th</sup> Town Board Meeting.

**NEXT MEETING - September 15, 2016 - 7:00 p.m.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chris Klose made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Michael Zelig.

**ALL IN FAVOR. OPPOSED-None.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Susan Simon*

Susan Simon, Chairman  
Zoning Review Committee