Town of Homer Planning Board

Minutes for Wednesday, August 27, 2025, at 7:30pm

Board Members (absent *)	**Others Present**
Michael McMahon, Chairman	Lindsay Andersen, Recording Secretary
Jon Miller	Kevin McMahon, CEO
Erin Mahunik	Dan Ellis, Attorney
Bruce Crandall	
Zach Young	
Chad Butts *	
Michael May	
Lindsay Andersen, alternate	

Public Attendance: Christine Shanks, Diane Sudol, Steve Wilson (Boeller Engineering), Ryan Clark (Seaboard Solar), Stuart Young, Sarah Head, G. Head, Robert Perry, Jim Foster, Shawn Brazem (President of Seaboard)

Public Hearing

Chairman McMahon opened the public hearing for **an application by Christine Shanks for a subdivision of tax map parcel #67.00-04-13.000. The applicant seeks to subdivide 4+/- acres from a 10.5+/- acre parcel. The 4+/- acre parcel would then be consolidated with tax map parcel #67.00-04-03.000 to form a parcel that is 6.8+/- acres in size.**

Diane Sudol stated the Shanks property is currently listed for sale and they would like to subdivide and purchase the approximately 4 acre wooded parcel directly behind their property prior to the sale.

With no questions or comments from the public, the public hearing was closed.

Chairman McMahon opened the public hearing for **the application by Seaboard Solar Operations to construct a +/- 5 MW solar farm on approximately 28 acres of a 216-acre parcel at 331 Houghton Hill Road, approximately 2,000 feet west of W. Scott Rd. directly located on Houghton Hill Road.**

Ryan from Seaboard presented the proposed map and location of the roadways and panels.

Jim Foster questioned the runoff as he stated he is assuming the existing trees and vegetation will be removed. Ryan stated they will be creating an access path approximately 20 feet wide from W. Scott Road to the solar field, but natural vegetation will remain. Mr. Foster did not believe the trees would be able to be removed without disrupting all vegetation and expressed his concern regarding the current run-off issues that are already occurring on W. Scott Road. Mr. Foster asked what the life expectancy of the solar panels is. Ryan stated the panels are guaranteed for a minimum of 25 years.

Sarah Head asked if there would be a battery system to store power. Seaboard stated there would not be a battery system at this proposed location. She would like to know how they will regulate the amount of power without a battery system. Seaboard stated the system is remotely monitored and controlled. She questioned if anyone has discussed the stray voltage that is occurring from these unregulated systems. She explained the problems New Hope View is dealing with at this time and what they have done to handle this on their own. They installed a stray voltage system at their own expense called agrivolt which tracks spikes in power. Isolation on demand has been denied by National Grid, and they have now hired an attorney to represent them with National Grid which they are currently in the process of. She is questioning why unregulated power is allowed to be pushed through the grid. This is becoming a struggle for several dairy farmers. She believes the power should be stored and distribution should be regulated to prevent these surges of stray voltage.
He stated they will be upgrading safety equipment which is represented in the material he presented.

With no further questions or comments from the public, the public hearing was closed.

Regular Meeting

Chairman McMahon opened discussion for **the application by Christine Shanks for a subdivision of tax map parcel #67.00-04-13.000. The applicant seeks to subdivide 4+/- acres from a 10.5+/- acre parcel. The 4+/- acre parcel would then be consolidated with tax map parcel #67.00-04-03.000 to form a parcel that is 6.8+/- acres in size.**

Attorney Ellis read the letter received from the Cortland County Planning Department which stated the request is technically adequate and has no state or county wide impact and is being returned for local determination.

Chairman McMahon reviewed Part 2 of the SEQR application with board members. All questions were answered in the negative.

Member Young made the motion to declare a negative declaration under SEQR, and approve the subdivision as presented. Member May seconded the motion. With all members in favor saying "aye", none opposed, and none abstained. The motion was carried unanimous 7,0,0.

Chairman McMahon opened discussion for **the application by Seaboard Solar Operations to construct a +/- 5 MW solar farm on approximately 28 acres of a 216-acre parcel at 331 Houghton Hill Road, approximately 2,000 feet west of W. Scott Rd. directly located on Houghton Hill Road.**

Chairman McMahon stated the decommission plan states the rate of inflation for the plan is 2.5%.
He would like to know where the 2.5% inflation rate came from as he is aware the 3.8% has been consistent over the past 25 years. Ryan stated they use the NYSERDA calculation. Ryan stated if a different rate is desired, he would like the board to submit the prosed percentage as it can be changed.

The Town is seeking to hire at the expense of Seaboard an engineer, Cortland County Soil and Water, and a consultant to conduct baseline soil samples for submission to Cornell Cooperative extension and re-tested every 5 years.

CEO Kevin McMahon presented a handout for board to review outlining his recommendations for changes to the current zoning regulations.

Attorney Ellis asked if there have been road use agreements in place with other municipalities that CEO Kevin McMahon has been involved with. Kevin stated that there have not been these agreements used previously.

Chairman McMahon asked if they have been in touch with the Cortland County IDA for a potential PILOT agreement. Ryan stated they have reached out to explore the possibility and are currently exploring the opportunity.

Attorney Ellis recommended that the board declare the planning board lead agency and also consider the road use agreement.

Member Young made the motion to declare the Town of Homer Planning Board the lead agency for SEQR review. Member Miller seconded the motion. With all members in favor saying "aye", none opposed, and none abstained. The motion was carried unanimous 7,0,0.

Attorney Ellis will send out coordinated review letters.

Chairman McMahon read the letter received from the Cortland County Planning Department which is attached.

Stuart Young was present and stated his farm currently has four 1,000-gallon propane tanks which they use for their grain dryers. The propane distribution company that fills the tanks would like to replace the four tanks with one 18,000-gallon tank to assist them with refilling for local route distribution. Stuart stated the farm is also zoned industrial. He will prepare the application for site plan review for the next meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Lindsay M. Andersen, Recording Secretary