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Ashford continues work on proposed solar farm

July 19, 2018

ASHFORD—The Town of Ashford continued to make progress in the development of a solar farm within the town at its board meeting July 11.

Paul Curran of BQ Energy made a presentation to board members about the company and what they will be doing with the proposed 50-acre solar facility at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center in West Valley.

Within the agreement, Ashford will be leasing the land for the solar farm from the WNY Nuclear Service Center, where the town will in turn lease the land to BQ Energy to do the work. While the term of the lease is not set yet, Curran said it is expected to be 25 years. Once the solar panels are operational, BQ Energy would then sell the power to residents and the town would receive \$50,000 a year through a host agreement.

Councilman Richard Bernstein asked about the options for the town once the 25 year lease expires. Once the lease ends, the town would then have three options, extend the lease, purchase the solar farm for a negotiated price or end the lease and have the solar panels removed from the property.

After the presentation and discussion, the board approved a notice of intent to act as the lead agency for the SEQR for the solar energy project at the WNY Nuclear Service Center.

“We are trying to make it more enticing for people to want to come to a progressive area,” Bernstein said. “Those types of things that we are doing whether it’s water, whether it’s power ... we are moving forward as a community.”

For the agreement between the town and WNY Nuclear Service Center, New York State Energy Research and Development Agency Program Director Paul Bembia said the attorneys between the two sides continue to negotiate terms. NYSERDA also completed the submission of its detailed information package to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for their evaluation of the solar farm project.

In other board news:

- The Ashford Planning Board is working on starting a community market at the West Valley fire hall from 6-8 p.m. to go along with Music at the Pond. Councilmember Jean Bond said they are tentatively working on getting it started by August.
- Code Enforcement Officer Larry Feldman will be researching a new rate schedule for the town to reflect rates in surrounding municipalities.
- The board approved a contract with Eagle Radio Technologies to update the constable radios in order for them to have better communication with the Cattaraugus County Sheriff’s Office.

The next Ashford Town Board meeting will be Wednesday, Aug. 8 at 7:30 p.m. at the Ashford Community Center, located at 9377 Route 240, in West Valley.