

## Supervisor's Report

### Copake Town Board Meeting

February 13, 2020

The biggest news since our last Town Board meeting is that Hecate Energy has announced that it is applying for a permit to install a solar project in Craryville. The proposal of Hecate is to build a 60-megawatt Solar Array adjacent to State Route 23 and County Route 7. The array would be comprised of three non-contiguous areas totaling over 900+ acres. The project will go by the name "Shepherd's Run".

Since the project would be greater than 25 megawatts, Hecate is proceeding under the New York State Department of Public Service Article 10 approval process. I want to explain the significance of this.

The Town of Copake adopted a Solar Energy Law in 2017. In that law, the maximum acreage allowed for any utility-scale solar energy system was 10 acres. In adopting that law, the Town Board tried to balance two goals of the Town's Comprehensive Plan which seemed to be in conflict: One goal in the Plan was to **"encourage the use of green energy" including solar energy**. On the other hand another goal was to **"preserve our rural character"**. To quote that Plan;" Copake contains some of the most beautiful countryside in Columbia County... Gently rolling hills provide scenic vistas of productive agricultural fields. Without open space, the Town would have few distant views, little visual range.... We cherish these attributes; they make us want to stay here....

Since Hecate is proceeding under the State law, they are not coming to the Town for permission. The project will not be submitted to the Town of Copake Planning Board for approval pursuant to our Town Law. Instead it will be reviewed by a seven member "Siting Board" which would include various New York State commissioners as well as two representatives of the local community. The company has filed its "Public Involvement Program Plan" with the State. Information about Hecate and its plans for this project can be viewed at <http://www.shepherdsrunsolar.com/>

The Hecate application poses a huge and complicated challenge to the Town of Copake. Likely this will go on for several years. The Town Board will be looking at all aspects of this proposal. In the short term however, what we want you to know if that we are committed to keeping the residents of Copake informed throughout this process and we need to hear what you think. We look forward to many opportunities for residents to express their views and we will no doubt organize special meetings to allow Copake residents to acquire information and make their views known. To organize these efforts, I have appointed my Deputy Supervisor Richard Wolf to coordinate the Town's

response to the Hecate application. You can contact him at [CopakeDepSupervisor@fairpoint.net](mailto:CopakeDepSupervisor@fairpoint.net).

This is just the beginning of this process, we have a lot to learn about how it will all work but the best we can say is that this Board is committed to protecting the interests of Copake as we go forward.

Jeanne E. Mettler

February 13, 2020