**City of Mechanicville – Town of Stillwater**

**Industrial Development Agency**

**Chamber Office, XO Tower, Elizabeth Street**

**Mechanicville, NY, 12118**

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

August 26, 2019

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Sally Herrick at 5:15 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Sally Herrick, Vice Chair Jim Salmon, Treasurer Sam Carabis, Secretary Maria Morris, Barbara Corsale, John Fusco.

ABSENT: Jan Sylvester.

ALSO PRESENT: CEO John Bove, CFO Sal Iavarone, SEDC President Dennis Brobston, Board Attorney Jim Carminucci, Mayor Dennis Baker, Gina Kenyon, Secretary to Mayor Baker, Wendy DeWolf, Vice President East Light Partners, applicant, and Zach Seder, applicant’s attorney.

SECRETARY’S REPORT: The minutes from the previous meeting will be presented at the next regular meeting.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Sam reported that we currently have $65,526.35 as a balance in our account.

OTHER/NEW BUSINESS: Sally introduced SEDC President Dennis Brobston, who talked about a new project before us. He noted that many IDA’s across the State are doing solar projects, and this project he is bringing to us is also solar.

 The project is by Stillwater Solar, LLC, and would be located in the Town of Stillwater at the intersection of Graves and George Thompson Roads. The property is approximately 363 acres. The project is for a 20 megawatt solar farm on land will be leasing for 20 years from DA Collins. The solar panels will not cover the entire site, as parts of it are wetlands. The estimated cost of the project is $34m. There will be approximately $2.5m of infrastructure work done on the site, $16.5m in non-manufacturing equipment, $5m in soft costs and $10m in labor.

 The applicant is seeking three exemptions: sales and use taxes; mortgage recording tax; and real property tax. They are also looking for a 20-year PILOT because of the length of their land lease. The mortgage recording tax, .75% of the mortgage amount, is $140,250. The sales tax benefit, 3% of $16.5m, is $495,000. And the estimated property tax savings are $533,676, for a total savings of $1,168,926.

 There was general discussion regarding a fixed PILOT versus a fixed assessment, and Jim Carminucci noted that the applicant should request what they need. The applicant has indicated they will be seeking a fixed PILOT with an escalator. There was also discussion regarding the 20 year request versus our normal 10 year PILOT, and Dennis Brobston noted that the majority of these types of projects around the State are going with 20-25 year PILOTs because of the land lease terms as well as the life expectancy of the panels. Wendy DeWolf, VP of East Light Partners, the applicant, advised that the third driver of the 20 term is a 20-year contract they will have with NYSERDA to purchase renewable energy credits from the project. She also advised that this land cannot be used for development because of wetlands, and the topography, but noted that a solar facility can be put on wetlands because it is considered only a temporary disturbance. There will be only one job for the long term, and that position will be offsite. Dennis Brobston noted that traditionally IDA’s are meant to bring in jobs, but it is also important to a community to have a good electrical grid. Solar is reliable and clean, and having this will be better for our own home area grid. This is an opportunity to grow the grid in the County.

 The applicant will be appearing before the Town of Stillwater Planning Board next week. They submitted the application to the Town in May. The SEQR is not done yet, but it is in progress. They will also need a special use permit from the Town.

 There were a number of questions from the Board. Regarding possible vegetation disturbance on the site, Ms. DeWolf stated that there will be some clearing and trimming in the center of the site, and they will be planting hundreds of trees and shrubs along George Thompson Road and will be reseeding under the panels. The panels are grouped into arrays, and each array will be fenced in so there will continue to be access for wildlife. The site will operate on its own; the one employee will monitor remotely. The road within the site will be gravel, for minimal impact. It will be geotech membrane, with #2 stone on top, so it will be built up instead of digging down. There will be no lights on the sight. In response to a question about possible contamination of the nearby City reservoir by chemicals in the panels, Ms. DeWolf replied that if a panel breaks, the chemical inside is in a solid state, and is not water soluble, so it cannot pollute. Finally, the applicant has a decommissioning plan and money earmarked to take everything down.

 Jim Salmon raised a concern stating that IDA’s were created for job creation, and he would like to see the State’s input and hear from other communities where these projects have been approved. Jim Carminucci responded that this is a step in the evolution of IDA’s, in that the State is now requiring IDA’s to have a solar policy. Jim Salmon also asked if the project would be viable without a PILOT, and Ms. DeWolf replied no.

 Dennis Brobston will work with Ms. DeWolf on language for the escalator, and will then put it on our website. Motion to move the project to public hearing, with the inclusion of the escalator language made by Maria, seconded by John. Vote unanimous, motion carried.

 Motion to adjourn made by John, seconded by Barb. Vote unanimous, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria B. Morris, Secretary