

Planning Board Meeting Minutes of August 6, 2025

The meeting of the Planning Board of the Town of Wales was held on the 6th day of August 2025 at the Wales Community Center, 12345 Big Tree Road, Wales Center, New York.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Richard Munn at 7:00 pm EST.

ROLL CALL:

Chairman Richard Munn - present
Planning Board Member Mark Gaston - present
Planning Board Member Britt Donnelly - present
Planning Board Member Daniel Driver – present
Planning Board Member Anthony Roncone - present

present: Wendel Engineering (11) Residents whose names are on file.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: led by Chairman Munn

OLD BUSINESS:

1.) **Principal Use Solar Energy System permit application submission at 13748 Big Tree Road.**
A revised site plan for a proposed solar project was presented. The developer presented updated drawings dated July 1, 2025, specifically redesigned to address concerns raised at a May meeting and by the Town Board. The Town Board wanted a Planning Board Decision on the new plans for this project. The project plans addressed agricultural soils. The original plan would have placed solar panels on prime agricultural soils. The revised plan shifts the panels to the east, off prime farmland. An access corridor, 15 feet wide was included along the south field edge so the farm equipment can still reach the back part of the property. The utility and gas issues have been resolved. There was confusion about a gas easement location but it was resolved, the survey showed the line is not in the project area, so no conflicts. The access for Emergency Services was addressed. The board members wanted to make sure there was access and egress for fire trucks in case of an emergency. There should be a new gravel access road that will be constructed. There were many questions about Fire Company year-round access and egress, snow removal, and a turnaround for trucks. The developer stated that would be part of the operations and maintenance plan that is on file. Corinne Brath mention that they can make it a requirement in the Special Use Permit to make sure it's locked in. The Board wanted to make sure there was enough room for two fire trucks to bypass each other in case of an emergency. The developer agreed these requirements can be formalized as conditions in the Special Use Permit. They also mentioned willingness to provide firefighter training for solar-specific emergencies. Construction traffic was addressed. The expectation of heavy trucks and semi deliveries during construction (panels, racking, transformer, etc.) There will not be offloading on the main road so that should mitigate any traffic issues. The road and driveway entrances will be widened to accommodate. There were many questions on the decommissioning plan and financial security. The board members raised the issue of long-term salvage value (steel, copper, resale of solar modules.) The concern was what would happen in 30 years, values could fluctuate. The developer confirmed a bond/financial security agreement would be in place. Sometimes towns do have periodic revisions in the decommissioning plans. Corinne Brath from Wendel mentioned they would work with the Town Board on an estimate. She also stated an escalator clause (2% annual adjustment) could be included to ensure costs are covered. The questions were answered about who ultimately bears the obligation for decommissioning would fall to the solar project owner, not the landowner. If the company goes defunct, it would be the landowner. Clarification that most landowners lease land for solar projects rather than selling, since leasing provides more income over time. There was mention that if you were in advanced age you may think differently. Corinne Brath stated that tonight we need a definitive decision from the Planning Board. There was a request from the board not to have landscaping greenery for screening but rather more natural greenery for the area. The board doesn't want a manicure look rather they want more natural greenery that doesn't grow too tall. Corinne asked the Planning Board if they liked this new site plan compared to the one that was on the actuals. There was a consensus that the Planning Board likes the new one. They approved the site plan review with the conditions that screen shrubs are to be more natural rather than landscaped. There should be enough room on the access road for two fire trucks for access and egress purposes in case of an emergency. Also, the Solar company will have a training for the local Fire Company.

MOTION#__By PB Chairman Munn, second by PB Member Driver, approved with conditions the application for site plan review approval made by New Energy Equity for property located at 13748 Big Tree Road, Wales, NY 14169. Carried ayes-5 nays-0

ADJOURNMENT MOTION#__ by Chairman Munn and seconded by PB Member Gaston to adjourn the meeting at 7:23pm Carried ayes-5 nays-0

Respectfully submitted, Michelle Homac, Planning Board Clerk

Planning Board
DECISION

OFFICE USE ONLY

Application No.: 2-2025
Date Received by [Signature]
Municipal Clerk: [Signature]

At a meeting of the Planning Board on August 6, 2025, the following motion was made R. Munn, M. Gaston, D. Driver, B. Donnelly and A. Roncone (name of planning board member):

I move that the Planning Board ☐ deny ☐ approve ☒ approve with conditions (see below)

the application for ☒ Site Plan Review Approval ☐ Preliminary Subdivision Approval ☐ Final Subdivision Approval ☐ Special Use Permit Approval ☐ Other _____

made by New Energy Equity (applicant name)
for property located at 13748 Big Tree Road, Wales, NY 14169 (address / tax map number)

Approval of this application is subject to the following conditions:

Screen shrubs are to be more natural rather than landscaped. There should be enough room on the access road for two fire trucks for access and egress purposes in case of an emergency. Also, the Solar Company will have a training for the local fire company after completion of the project.
☐ Additional conditions are attached.

**RECORD
OF VOTE**

	MEMBER NAME	AYE	NAY
Chair	Richard Munn <u>[Signature]</u>	<u>X</u>	_____
Member	Mark Gaston <u>[Signature]</u>	<u>X</u>	_____
Member	Britt Donnelly <u>[Signature]</u>	<u>X</u>	_____
Member	Daniel Driver <u>[Signature]</u>	<u>X</u>	_____
Member	Anthony Roncone <u>[Signature]</u>	<u>X</u>	_____

Michelle Homac [Signature]
(Recorded by Planning Board Secretary/Clerk)

August 6, 2025
(Date)