

PUBLIC HEARING
Minutes of October 14th, 2025
SOLAR PROJECT AT 13748 BIG TREE ROAD

Supervisor Howard called the public hearing to order at 7:02 pm at the Wales Community Center, 12345 Big Tree Road, Wales Center, NY

PRESENT: ROLL CALL TAKEN AT PRIOR HEARING

Supervisor Howard
Councilman Newman
Councilman Gawronski
Councilwoman O'Connor
Councilman Butcher

present: Wendel Engineering and (18) Residents whose names are on file.

PURPOSE OF HEARING:

This Public Hearing is for the Town of Wales residents to provide their input to the Town Board on the Special Use Permit for 13748 Big Tree Road for a Solar Project.

Town Clerk then read published Notice of Public Hearing.

OVERVIEW OF SOLAR PROJECT AT 13748 BIG TREE ROAD

Hi I'm Matt Dubois - This project that is proposed is proposed at 13748, Big Tree Road, 204-acre parcel, with a three-megawatt community solar project. The site will be on the back 40 acres. In terms of visual impact, it's down a lower elevation, so it's not visible from the road, and largely not visible also from any neighboring parcel. It was designed intentionally, with some back and forth the town board, as you all recall, about trying to make sure it coexists with agricultural users. We're not trying to convert it from this whole parcel, from agricultural to solar. It's about 95 acres of existing farm fields on this parcel, and the project's total is around 23 acres, including access road. So that will leave about 75% of the existing farm fields available. It was also shifted over to the east and shrunk a bit to make sure that the farm fields were accessible for equipment just to the south of the fence line, and all the prime, prime soils will be fully accessible by farm equipment. It will be undisturbed and be 75% or more of the farm fields not used. We believe that this project was designed with some pretty great care to try to coexist with the agricultural uses of the town, while also giving the landowners some the benefit and maximum benefits of their property. We are hoping for approval tonight or closing the hearing and followed by a conditional approval. We had a start in this, and the town had passed the moratorium and the commencement of any new solar projects.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mary Blum - Big Tree Rd

I feel it disrupts the natural flow of nature for the animals, especially deer, and its farmland. What happens to the panels in 20 years.

Dori Carlone - Hunters Creek Rd

I just have a comment as far as the Brownfield that's going to be created by this solar field. And yes, you said that there's money set aside to decommission these panels in 20 or 25, years. But what happens with the "Brown field", and has there been a study on the watershed in that area and where that water goes, because we know that our town is 100% dependent on wells, and most of our town, you know, could probably even be classified as a critical environmental area because of our agricultural stand on being a farming community, but we've never done that, and in 25 years, it's going to cost a lot more with inflation and the cost if there's a way to get rid of these panels, because right now, they have to be shipped to another state. You can't even dispose of them. As far as I know in New York State, I haven't been able to learn as much about this as I want to learn, but David DiPietro seems to be an expert on it, and I think we should talk to him.

MOTION# ____ by Supervisor Howard and seconded by Councilman Butcher to adjourn the Public Hearing at 7:08pm. 5 Ayes 0 noes Carried

Mindy Eaton, Wales Town Clerk