

**TOWN OF SARATOGA TOWN BOARD**  
**DRAFT SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**  
**12 SPRING ST., SCHUYLERVILLE, NY**  
**June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025**  
**7:00 P.M.**

Supervisor Ian Murray opened the meeting with the pledge of allegiance at 7:01 p.m.

**Roll call:** Town Clerk Michelle Conover, called the roll: Supervisor Ian Murray - present, Councilman Michael McLoughlin – present, Councilwoman Ruth Drumm – present, Councilman Gary Squires – present, Councilwoman Maxine Lautenberg – present.

**Also present:** Building Inspector/Zoning Officer Gil Albert, Andy Ellis, Deb Peck Kelleher, John Still, J. Lautenberg, Lauren Kirkwood, Bridget Cridding and other interested parties.

Supervisor Ian Murray stated he wants to go over an item that wasn't listed on the agenda tonight. This Local Law was sent to the Saratoga County Planning Board on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and received the following response via email: Re: SCPB #25-93 Zoning Text Amendment – Town of Saratoga. Zoning text revision to the Town's Solar Energy Facilities Law was reviewed by the Saratoga County Planning Board on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and their decision: approved.

Supervisor Murray advised that the Town of Saratoga embarked on this task of updating the solar regulations over a year ago. The Town approved resolution #24-46 Temporary Moratorium on major Solar Collection Systems in April of 2024. This effected all major solar collection systems that did not have Town of Saratoga Planning Board preliminary approval or negative declaration on SEQR. Subsequently two more moratoriums were approved – one for 6 months and one for 3 months while the law was going through legal review. The Town Board is here tonight for completion of this undertaking.

Supervisor Ian Murray went on to say part of what the Board has to do tonight is go through SEQR for this legislation action. Supervisor Murray asked the Town Board members if they have been through Part II before and all agreed they had. Supervisor Murray advised when they go through the questions, they have to think of this as a Local Law for the Solar Collection Systems. It's not project specific, but for legislation only. The Town Board does not have to get into detail with some of the questions with SEQR. These questions will come back up when and if an application comes before the Planning Board, they will go through a complete SEQR review and answer every question that is pertinent to the application.

**New Business:**

Supervisor Ian Murray then went through SEQR line by line with the Board for proposed Local Law #1, of 2025 - **Repealing and Replacing Town of Saratoga Town Code Section 400-16.4 To Establish Regulations for Solar Energy Facilities.** A motion was made by Supervisor Ian Murray, seconded by Councilmember Michael McLoughlin to declare SEQR review complete and to make a Negative Declaration, for proposed Local Law #1 of 2025. Supervisor Ian Murray - aye, Councilmember Michael McLoughlin – aye, Councilmember Ruth Drumm – aye, Councilmember Gary Squires - aye, Councilmember Maxine Lautenberg - aye.

**Carried 5 – 0**

On a motion by Supervisor Ian Murray and seconded by Councilmember Michael McLoughlin, the following Resolution **#25-45 Adopting Local Law #1 of 2025 – Repealing and Replacing Town of Saratoga Town Code Section 400-16.4 To Establish Regulations for Solar Energy Facilities** was adopted by roll call vote: Supervisor Ian Murray- yes, Councilman Michael McLoughlin – yes, Councilwoman Ruth Drumm – yes, Councilman Gary Squires - yes, Councilwoman Maxine Lautenberg – no .

**Carried 4– 1**

**WHEREAS**, the Saratoga Town Board wishes to consider adoption of Local Law No.: 1 of 2025 to amend the Town Land Use Code for regulation of solar energy facilities pursuant New York State Municipal Home Rule Law and New York State Town Law § 261 through § 263; and

**WHEREAS**, The Town Board has determined that this Law would encourage the appropriate development of solar energy facilities and would enhance and protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of the Town of Saratoga; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed Local Law is a Type I Action under 22 New York Code of Rules and Regulations §§617.5, and this Board undertook review pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act and adopted a SEQRA Negative Declaration; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed Local Law was forwarded to the Saratoga County Planning Board for its recommendations pursuant to General Municipal Law Section 239-m, and the County Planning Board indicated there were no community wide impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, surrounding municipalities were duly provided notice of the proposed Local Law and the Public Hearing thereon; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Board duly held a Public Hearing on the proposed Local Law on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and heard all interested persons;

***NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:***

1. The Town Board hereby adopts Local Law No. 1 of 2025 in the form attached hereto.
2. The Board hereby authorizes and directs the Town Clerk to file the Local Law with the New York Secretary of State in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Home Rule Law and acknowledges that the Local Law will take effect immediately upon filing by the Secretary of State.
3. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

On the roll call vote, Councilmember Maxine Lautenberg voted no for Local Law #1 of 2025 and wants to comment and explain her vote:

“The heat index in Schuylerville today was 105\*. Yesterday it was 111\*, tying for the third highest rating in the state. Tonight, we are voting on a Law that says it is “promoting the effective and efficient use of solar energy resources.” It further states that “well planned and suitably located solar energy systems can be beneficial.” This is lip service for a Law that makes it almost virtually impossible for any meaningful solar projects in the Town.

Acknowledging the importance of such a law, more time for response and participation would have been beneficial. I distributed the Law to 25 households. I had 4 responses. 2 were in favor of the law and wanted greater restrictions, and 2 were opposed due to the level of restrictions. Others on the fence sighted the growth in solar affordability and the need for a sustainable energy source that curbs GHGs.

Contrary to one comment at the council meeting, I do not know for a fact that 100 people read or saw the email I sent or the law and were in total agreement.

I was unprepared to give any rebuttal to the “facts” emphatically shared in relation to solar as a pollinator threat, as I had no idea that this was a popular debunker of solar. I was curious.

As I researched the pollinator question, I found numerous resources from Cornell Univ. and other municipalities sighting the use of solar fields to promote, not inhibit, pollinator propagation. The information shared by Cornell and the programs they offer are quite contrary to the statements shared at the public hearing. The Remelt family farm in western NY is now growing flowers between their solar arrays, adding another layer of potential income to their farm production.  
<https://www.roccitymag.com/news-opinion/remelt-familys-project-combines-solar-panels-and-perennials-15013311> In other Towns they see this as an opportunity to help bee and bat colonies. Even the Farm Bureaus sites benefits to farmers.

I also found resources that confirm there is no leaching of any toxic chemicals or heavy metals. The nominal amounts of metals used are securely encapsulated. “95% of a solar panel is silicon; silicon makes up 27.7% of the earth’s crust.” “One chemical often maligned is Cadmium Telluride, (CdTe). The cadmium telluride (CdTe) layer of the solar panel is 3% of the thickness of a human hair and is sealed between two sheets of heat strengthened glass that are bonded together by an industrial laminate at greater than 700 pounds of pressure per square inch. The encapsulated panel design and the fact that CdTe does not dissolve in water prevents leaching in the event of panel breakage or natural disasters.” [EPA and other sources.]

As there was one night allowed for public comment, and I wanted to research the above, I was unable to speak to these statements at the public hearing.

One area not discussed at all was the financial benefits a PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) program or community solar could afford residents. Some towns have made agreements to establish educational funds and grants to green STEAM programs. Community solar can reduce electric bills which in high heat days like now would be valuable. Individuals in our Town, such as Mr. Yanchunis, will not have an option to make solar an additional source of income.

This Law goes beyond view shed protection, beyond farm protection, or protecting the rural nature of the Town of Saratoga, it is a statement of non-support of NYS environmental goals and that we, the Town, do not need to support the collective good in doing whatever we can to help curb further global warming ...something that goes beyond the boundaries of the Town.

For these reasons, I cannot, in good conscience vote to approve this, Law.  
Maxine Lindig Lautenberg, 06.24.2025”

**Upcoming meetings:**

Regular Town Board meeting – Monday, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

A motion was made by Councilmember Ruth Drumm and seconded by Councilmember Michael McLoughlin to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m. Supervisor Ian Murray - aye, Councilmember Michael McLoughlin – aye, Councilmember Ruth Drumm – aye, Councilmember Gary Squires - aye, Councilmember Maxine Lautenberg - aye.

**Carried 5– 0**

**Meeting Adjourned**

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Conover  
Town Clerk