

**DRAFT**  
**TOWN OF BENTON PLANNING MEETING**  
**January 27, 2025**

**PRESENT:** Crystal Tomion; Rich Meyer; Steve Hullings; Matthew Perry; Jeremiah Tomion - Alt.

**ABSENT:** Jeff Eckert- Excused

Also Present: Glen Quackenbush, Town Councilman; Tom Davie, Town Councilman; Alan Tomion, Town Councilman; Kelly Sullivan; Mindy Johnson; Elvin Martin; Marie Martin; Todd Christensen; Bruce Kerrick, Town Councilman; Tom Fulkrod, Code Enforcement Officer; and Michael Peacock, Recording Secretary.

Crystal Tomion called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:**

Meyer made a motion to approve the November minutes as written, Jeremiah Tomion seconded the motion. All in Favor.

**APPEAL #4SUP-26:**

Happy Hearts Workshop Ltd is looking to build a 56 x 100 ft building behind its current building to be used as a school. Plans were brought in front of the board to preview. Both applicants were present. This would be used a permanent building for the school, as it has been made to move a few times in the past. Some of the school will be built on a slope, a diversion will be necessary to build.

Fulkrod spoke on what the building will be used for, and what the school does. He also encouraged the board to visit the school for themselves to see firsthand how the operate.

The one driveway will be used for both buildings. The board talked about the amount of times this property has been subdivided and mentioned that the next time they apply for one it may be reaching the maximum limit of subdivisions. A new septic will be built, to be used by both buildings on the property.

Perry made a motion to accept the proposal as written, Meyer seconded the motion. All in favor.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Kelly Sullivan from Labella engineering was present and spoke with the board regarding two proposed solar projects from the Stewart family. Crystal Tomion talked about a sub meeting regarding commissioning and decommissioning and gave the board her notes. Katie Stewart says the land is near and dear to her heart and that her and her brother are very concerned regarding the decommissioning process. Crystal Tomion says that she and the land owners share the same belief about the land. Crystal Tomion read a letter from Tom Rood, the previous chairman of this board.

Fulkrod shared a printout from New York State that had information regarding if a township was to deny a solar project and did not have a law on the books already to cite for reasoning.

Benton is going to try and negotiate for more per mega watt than previous projects, to help off set taxes.

Steve Hullings shared that there were no updates as of this meeting from the county.

The town has received tax dollars for the Horning and Martin projects. And another payment is expected in August of this year.

This project did agree to decommissioning and says that they will ensure it will carryover to the next owner of the project.

Sullivan spoke about adjustments to the driveway to make it more jagged as to not use so much of the land. She also stated that Cornell cooperative gave her a list of preferred species of plants to use. Sullivan provided a copy of the plant species plans to the board. Sullivan has not heard anything back from the SEQR.

Labella will submit a decommissioning plan to the board along with a host agreement. Crystal Tomion also asked if the board could get a write up about bee farming on the land.

The board agreed to a February public hearing if Labella can provide all the agreed documents by 2/16/26.

**CLOSING:**

Meyer made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Hullings seconded the motion. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Peacock  
Recording Secretary