

**TOWN OF BENTON
ZONING BOARD
PUBLIC HEARING FOR STUART'S SOLAR FARM
FEBRUARY 24, 2026**

PRESENT: Crystal Tomion; Matt Perry; Steve Hullings; Jeremiah Tomion.

ABSENT: Rich Meyer and Jeff Eckert – Both excused

Also present Glen Quackenbush, Town Councilman; Tom Davie, Town Supervisor; Tom Fulkrod, Code Enforcement Officer; Kelly Sullivan, Labella; Mike Lewis, CTEC; Mindy Johnson, Recording Secretary; Tim and Amie Delooza; Skip Jensen; Kevin Roy Martin; Wendell Martin. Kurt Gilbert; Eugene Martin; Brandon Palmisano; Tammy Hullings; Charles Frank; Jim Stuart; John Stuart; Alan Tomion and Bruce Kerrick; both are board members.

Steve Hullings made the motion to start the Public Hearing at 7:00pm; Matt Perry seconded the motion. All in favor.

PROPOSAL OF THE SOLAR FARM:

Solar Farm is proposed to be erected on the main corridor of Benton. Project to the North will use approximately 27.75 of the 51 acres. Project to the South will use approximately 18.9 acres of the 80.9 that is there.

PUBLIC CONCERNS:

- **LOSING FARM LAND**

Mike Lewis from CTEC, stated that the rich soil will not be removed from the site. After 25 years the land will be converted back to agricultural production for human consumption. In which the solar company has agreed to that stipulation. Also, the land inside of the fenced in area at each solar farm will be an apiary with approximately 10-15 bee hives, that will have local honey production. There will be a local person who will be attending to the hives and produce the honey.

- **BENEFITS FOR TOWN RESIDENTS**

By entering the Community Host Benefit with the Town of Benton, town will receive approximately \$40,000. Town of Benton residents, that are on the circuit will get the opportunity, once the panels are in production, they can sign up through NYSERDA residents can get power from the solar farm and get 10% off their electric bill. Sign up will also be available on the NYSEG website or call and ask, you should get a mailer.

- **APPEARANCE OF THE PANELS**

CTEC has a landscape plan and have been working with Cornell Cooperative Extension on what type of species to plant to help hide the panels from view along side of the main road. Panels that will be installed are bi-facial, both sides will be the light that is refracted, and more efficient. Also, they are non glare.

Steve Hullings made motion to adjourn the meeting. Matt Perry seconded. The public meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

FINAL ACTIONS:

Jeremiah Tomion made the motion for the Town of Benton planning board be the lead agency for the seeker regarding the solar projects. Matt Perry second the motion. Motion carried. Section B was chosen in part BN80 with the stipulation of screening. For BN50, section B was also chosen with no stipulation. Crystal Tomion stated that the board has put a lot of things in place and Labella has exceeded their exceptions of the site plan. There are two site plans to vote on. Crystal asked the board if they were at a point to vote. All stated yes.

216SP-25 BN50:

Jeremiah Tomion made the motion to vote. Matt Perry seconded the motion.

The board was polled:

Steve Hullings: Yes

Crystal Tomion: Yes

Matt Perry: Yes

Jeremiah Tomion: Yes

Motion carried

217SP-25 BN80:

Jeremiah Tomion made the motion to vote. Matt Perry seconded the motion.

The board was polled:

Steve Hullings: Yes

Crystal Tomion; Yes

Matt Perry: Yes

Jeremiah Tomion: Yes

Motion carried

Site plans were approved.

Steve Hullings made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Matt Perry seconded the motion. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Mindy J Johnson
Recording Secretary

