

**TOWN OF COLUMBIA
TOWN BOARD MEETING
July 11, 2024**

The Town of Columbia Town Board held an meeting July 11, 2024, 6:30 P.M. at the town building

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Nathan Seamon	— Supervisor
	Bruce Learned	— Councilperson
	H. Ed Reed	— Councilperson
	Jim Cotton	— Councilperson
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Ryan Fagan	— Councilperson

OTHERS PRESENT: Therese Winchester — Town Clerk
 R. Mark Buddle — Superintendent of Highways
 10 Community Members

Supervisor Seamon called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M., which was followed with the Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer

Approval of June 6, 2024, Meeting Minutes

A motion was made to approve the Minutes by Councilperson Reed, seconded by Councilperson Cotton:

ADOPTED VOTE: Ayes 4 Seamon, Learned, Reed, Cotton
 Nays 0
 Absent 1 Fagan

Supervisor Monthly Reports – Financial statements were presented.

Town Clerk Monthly Reports – There were six (6) dog permits, getting positive feedback about having office hours in the town building.

Other Reports (as necessary)

Highway Department – No Report

Town Clerk – BAS System is being set up for the Town Clerk.

Codes Enforcement – One demo, two (2) agricultural buildings, and a garage.

Tax Collector – No report

Planning Board - No report but planning board minutes are posted on the website

Zoning Board of Appeals - Public hearing on June 27,2024. No attendees from the public. That variance is with the County.

Dog Control – No report

Correspondence: MVP Change of premium, and an order to confine animal for ten(10) days.

Privilege of the Floor – The concern is with the turnaround time on Building Permits.

Information about solar farms in Delaware County, 350-acre solar farms in Sharron has been put up for sale. Otsego land trust can work with the town of Columbia.

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Consideration of Unfinished Business and New Business

Board Discussion

Date of the new truck. The town was assigned a vin number for it to be delivered in December.

The Board meeting was suspended for the Public Hearing for Local Law #2024-01 at 7:00 P.M.

Debara Kidder, Town of Columbia Resident formal statement. “This solar law is very comprehensive and addresses the needs of the Town of Columbia. It allows for personal, farm and community solar arrays. It also defines safeguards for the people and lands in the township when working with large scale solar projects. The Law has considered such area as protecting our water and historic places, looking at what happens in the building process to our roads and woods covering concerns in what happens when the solar panels no longer function, and training for our local fire departments.

Although the State of New York may override any decisions made at the local level, passing this law communicates that we as a town are not against solar as renewable energy sources. It does however provide the guidance for its use in our town.

I would like to also note that it was developed by a seven-member volunteer community team and not by outsiders who do not know our town and would have cost the town considerable dollars.

I would ask the town board to vote in favor of Local Law No 1 of 2024, Columbia Solar Energy Facilities Local Law.”

Lynne Burns, Town of Columbia Resident formal statement: “I am grateful that this proposed Solar Law recognizes and seeks to protect the rural nature of the Town of Columbia and the traits that make it rural...the farmland, woods, wetlands, water courses, plants and animals, fresh air, and plentiful water. This proposed Solar Law seeks to support the use of solar energy without endangering the quality of life here in the Town of Columbia. This proposed Solar Law is an excellent response to the concerns that have been expressed by the residents of the Town of Columbia.

I support the passage of Local Law #1 of 2024: Columbia Solar Energy Facilities Local Law’

Supervisor Seamon stated that Public Hearing for Local Law #2024-01 is closed at 7:17 P.M. .

The Board meeting was reconvened at 7:18 pm

**Town of Columbia Resolution #2024–15 presented by Council Member _____ Learned _____,
seconded by Council Member _____ Reed _____.**

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**RESOLUTION ADOPTING A NEGATIVE DECLARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE
PURSUANT TO SEQRA FOR THE REINTRODUCED LOCAL LAW NO. 1 OF 2024, THE COLUMBIA
SOLAR ENERGY FACILITIES LAW**

WHEREAS, the Town of Columbia (the “Town”) on April 11, 2024, introduced Local Law 1 of 2024, titled “Columbia Solar Energy Facilities Local Law”, commenced SEQRA review, designated the action as a Type 1 Action pursuant to SEQRA, and referred the draft law to the Town Planning Board for review and recommendation; and

WHEREAS, on May 2, 2024, the Town having received and reviewed the recommendations of the Town Planning Board, reintroduced Local Law 1 of 2024, titled “Columbia Solar Energy Facilities Local Law” (the “Draft Solar Law”), including minor substantive and formatting changes recommended by the Town Planning Board and special legal counsel, completed a draft of Parts 1, 2, and 3 of a Full Environmental Assessment Form; and referred the Draft Solar Law to the relevant county planning agency pursuant to § 239-m of the New York State General Municipal Law;

WHEREAS, the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program Chairman issued recommended changes to the Draft Solar Law via Notice of County Recommendation dated May 20, 2024;

WHEREAS, on June 6, 2024, the Town made non-substantive changes to the Draft Solar Law in accordance with the recommended changes, and reintroduced the Draft Solar Law, set a public hearing, and provide notice of the public hearing to neighboring municipalities in accordance with the Municipal Home Rule Law;

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on the Columbia Solar Energy Facilities Local Law on July 11, 2024;

WHEREAS, The Town Board has considered the content of the proposed Columbia Solar Energy Facilities Local Law, communications from the Town and County Planning Boards, and public comments, and determined that no further changes are required to Parts 1, 2, and 3 of the FEAF;

WHEREAS, The Town Board has identified the relevant areas of environmental concern discussed in the attached negative declaration of environmental significance;

WHEREAS, the Town Board has thoroughly analyzed the relevant concerns discussed in the attached negative declaration of environmental significance, and has determined that no significant adverse environmental impacts will result from the proposed Solar Law, and

WHEREAS, the Town Board has provided a reasoned elaboration for why the environmental concerns that were identified and analyzed will not be significant;

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NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Columbia, New York, hereby finds that enactment of the proposed Columbia Solar Energy Facilities Local Law will not have any significant adverse impacts on the environment;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Town Board further resolves to adopt a negative declaration of environmental significance with respect to the adoption of the proposed Solar Law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Town Board hereby adopts the attached negative declaration of environmental significance and incorporates it herein.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Town Clerk is hereby directed to enter this resolution and the attached negative declaration of environmental significance in the minutes of this meeting.

The question of the foregoing resolution was duly put to a vote as follows:

Town of Columbia Resolution #2024–15 Roll Call Vote:

ADOPTED VOTE: Ayes 4 Seamon, Learned, Reed, Cotton
 Nays 0
 Absent 1 Fagan

By the order of the Town Board of the Town of Columbia, New York.

Nathan Seamon, Town Supervisor, Town of Columbia Signature

Date

The Presiding Meeting Officer will declare Resolution adopted/approved.

Town of Columbia Resolution #2024–16 presented by Council Member Reed,
seconded by Council Member Cotton.

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING LOCAL LAW NO. 1 OF 2024, THE COLUMBIA SOLAR ENERGY
FACILITIES LAW**

WHEREAS, the Town of Columbia (the “Town”) on April 11, 2024, introduced Local Law 1 of 2024, titled “Columbia Solar Energy Facilities Local Law”, commenced SEQRA review, designated the action as a Type 1 Action pursuant to SEQRA, and referred the draft law to the Town Planning Board for review and recommendation; and

WHEREAS, on May 2, 2024, the Town having received and reviewed the recommendations of the Town Planning Board, reintroduced Local Law 1 of 2024, titled “Columbia Solar Energy Facilities Local Law” (the “Draft Solar Law”), including minor substantive and formatting changes recommended by the Town Planning Board and special legal counsel, completed a draft of Parts 1, 2, and 3 of a Full Environmental Assessment Form; and referred the Draft Solar

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Law to the relevant county planning agency pursuant to § 239-m of the New York State General Municipal Law;

WHEREAS, the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program Chairman issued recommended changes to and comments on the Draft Solar Law via Notice of County Recommendation dated May 20, 2024;

WHEREAS, on June 6, 2024, the Town made non-substantive changes to the Draft Solar Law in accordance with all of the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program Chairman's recommendations, noted the Chairman's comments, and reintroduced the Draft Solar Law, set a public hearing, and subsequently provided notice of the public hearing to neighboring municipalities in accordance with the Municipal Home Rule Law;

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on the Columbia Solar Energy Facilities Local Law on June 11, 2024;

WHEREAS, on July 11, 2024, the Town Board adopted Resolution # 2024-15 issuing a negative declaration of environmental significance with respect to the adoption of the proposed Solar Law;

WHEREAS, The Town Board has satisfied its obligation under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA");

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Columbia hereby approves and adopts the attached Local Law No. 1 of 2024, "Columbia Solar Energy Facilities Local Law", and repeals and replaces Local Law No. 1 of 2020, an amendment to the Town of Columbia's Zoning Law #2015-01.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Town Board hereby directs the Town Clerk to file the Solar Law with the New York State Secretary of State in Albany within twenty (20) days. This must be done on the appropriate forms provided by the Secretary of State and in accordance with Municipal Home Rule Law §27. The forms must be completed in accordance with the Department of State's instructions (rules for filing local laws). One (1) original copy must be mailed to the Secretary of State, Records and Law Bureau, Department of State, which is in Albany, New York. After filing is complete, the Town will receive a postcard from the Secretary of State verifying that the law was filed, which the Town Clerk is directed to file in the Town Clerk's office as proof of filing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Supervisor or Special Legal Counsel are directed to submit a final action report to the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program in accordance with Section 239-m of the General Municipal Law.

AND THEREFORE, the Town Clerk is hereby directed to enter this resolution in the minutes of this meeting.

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The question of the foregoing resolution was duly put to a vote as follows:

ADOPTED VOTE: Ayes 4 Seamon, Learned, Reed, Cotton
Nays 0
Absent 1 Fagan

By the order of the Town Board of the Town of Columbia, New York.

Nathan Seamon, Town Supervisor, Town of Columbia	Signature
	Date

The Presiding Meeting Officer will declare Resolution adopted/approved.

STATE OF NEW YORK

HERKIMER COUNTY This is to certify that I, Therese Winchester, Town Clerk of the Town of Columbia, in the said County of Herkimer, has compared the foregoing copy of Resolution No. 16 of 2024, "**RESOLUTION ADOPTING LOCAL LAW NO. 1 OF 2024, THE COLUMBIA SOLAR ENERGY FACILITIES LAW**", with the original now on file in this office, and that the same is a correct and true transcript of said originals and the whole thereof.

TOWN OF COLUMBIA In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said Town this 11 day of July 2024.

Therese Winchester, Columbia Town Clerk – Herkimer County

The Presiding Meeting Officer will declare Resolution **adopted/approved**.

Audit, Approval of Bills and Transfers

A motion was made to pay the warrant by Councilperson Reed seconded by Councilperson Cotton:

ADOPTED VOTE: Ayes 4 Seamon, Reed, Learned, Cotton
Nays 0
Absent 1, Fagan

The next Town Board meeting will occur August 8, 2024 at 6:30 P.M.

A motion was made by Council Member Cotton, seconded by Council Member Reed, to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 P.M.

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Respectfully submitted,

Supervisor

Town Clerk

Council Member

Council Member

Council Member

Council Member