

Baum, 5-5-17

**From:** Karen Baum [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 05, 2017 9:03 AM  
**To:** Bambi Avery  
**Subject:** Supporting Planning Bd. Moratorium on Large Solar Installations

Please forward the following e-mail to the members of the Dryden Town Board.

Dear Members of the Dryden Town Board,

I am writing in support of the Planning Board's resolution of May 3<sup>rd</sup> that recommends that the Town Board place a six month moratorium on solar projects over 2 megawatts in order to better establish some clear guidelines for such large projects. I am in strong support of renewable energy, with solar panels on the roof of my house. I am intensely aware and careful of my carbon footprint and do everything I can to minimize my own use and disposal of resources. Still, it was with great surprise and distress that I learned of Cornell's decision to have Sun8 build an industrial solar installation on Dodge Rd. without adequate study or neighborhood consideration. Apparently years in planning, notification and involvement of the surrounding community was not taken into consideration until several weeks ago.

While it is imperative that we be forward thinking with measures necessary to mitigate the effects of climate change, we must do it with foresight and advisement. Since "the neighbors" did not make Cornell's list of "things to take into account" during the lengthy planning of this project, the Town Board must give itself time to fairly and competently represent the community. You must take the time to decide the siting and parameters of current and future installations in the Town of Dryden. It is rightfully your job to protect us from the unintended consequences of moving too quickly through a major project, and others like it, from which there will be no reversal for decades.

Sincerely,

Karen Baum

1252 Ellis Hollow Rd.

Ithaca, NY 14850

Beck, R 5-4-17

**From:** Roger Beck [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 04, 2017 5:38 PM  
**To:** Supervisor  
**Subject:** Solar Projects

To the Dryden Town Board,

I wish to convey my support for the solar projects under consideration in the Town of Dryden. I was born in Dryden and lived there from 1943 until 1984.

I'm a veteran, having served in Viet Nam in the Navy Sea Bees (Construction Battalions) in 1967 and 68. Some may disagree, but to me that war was a horrible mistake as have been other recent wars my country has caused or gotten into.

Our leaders tell us that wars are necessary to keep Americans safe and for the betterment of humanity. But, they are often fought over oil and other resources.

What's this have to do with utilizing solar energy? I believe the scientific community and many Defense Department researchers have it right when they predict that climate change is likely to cause worldwide disruptions such as starvation, mass migration and war. Switching to solar energy reduces CO2 and methane emissions and slows climate change. Its widespread use will reduce these disruptions.

We need bold leadership in order to make this happen. Dryden has the opportunity be such a leader. If that means I'm buried nearby a solar farm that helps toward this effort, that's fine by me. I'll be proud of it.

Roger Beck

823 Elmira Road

Ithaca, NY 14850

--  
Roger Beck

Fitzgibbons 5-1-17

**From:** pat fitzgibbons [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 01, 2017 10:35 PM  
**To:** Bambi Avery  
**Subject:** Proposed Solar Projects

To: The Members of the Dryden Town and Planning Boards

Subject: Proposed Solar Projects

Although there are many aspects of these two solar projects (Turkey Hill & Willow Glen) of which I take issue, what I want to discuss here is the involvement of the Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency.

Directly from the Tompkins County IDA web site....."The primary mission of the TCIDA is to offer economic incentives to Tompkins County businesses selling product outside of the region, in order to create and retain quality employment opportunities and strengthen the local tax base." ..... "The IDA targets the industrial sector and will only consider other sectors if certain criteria are met."

Once our elected Dryden School Board opted out of allowing the tax exemptions for solar installations (an action for which they should be commended) the appointed board of the IDA got involved and set up a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) program under which Sun8 will only pay a very small percentage of what they would pay in regular property taxes.

1. It is very disturbing that an appointed board essentially overrides an elected board when it comes to taxes. It could easily be argued that the elected board better represents the will of the general population of the majority of the town as they were elected, not appointed.
2. Sun8 and the town Board have been emphatic that these installations are not industrial solar. Why then is the IDA getting involved, as they target the industrial sector?
3. Mission of the IDA to offer economic incentives to Tompkins County businesses ..... Distributed Energy/Sun8 is not a Tompkins County business.
4. Mission of the IDA to create and retain quality employment opportunities ..... no long term jobs are being created for town residents.
5. Mission of the IDA to strengthen the local tax base .... Roughly \$8 million in PILOT funds over 30 years is a joke vs the taxes that would be collected on assessed value of such installations. Some might argue that the PILOT funds are better than nothing; I would ask is that the price of prostituting our lands and community character?

What appears to many to be the unnatural actions (such as creating landlocked parcels) that have been taken in an attempt to get these solar projects in our town, in locations to which a very significant number of residents and taxpayers have taken exception, is very disturbing in light of the fact that these actions have been taken by those elected to represent us. Representation is

honoring the will of the people, not the elected officials exerting their arrogance that their chosen path is better for the people than what the people themselves want. I understand why people are questioning as to whether or not the members of the Town Board are living up to their fiduciary responsibilities. Unfortunately, it is easy to envision the law suits that people are talking about that may result against the Town Board and the IDA if these projects are approved in any semblance of their current form.

Sincerely,

Pat Fitzgibbons

Habecker 5-5-17

**From:** Terry Habecker [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 04, 2017 9:40 PM  
**To:** Bambi Avery  
**Subject:** Please Support Solar Moratorium

Dryden Town Board

My wife and I, along with a majority of our Dodge Road community members, have serious concerns about the solar project being proposed for areas of the Town of Dryden including extensive solar arrays along Dodge Road. Most of us are alarmed by the massive footprint of this project. The developers are calling this venture, "Community Solar", but that moniker is misleading. Many small concessions have been made at the behest of nearby residents, but the sheer size of the project has not been open to compromise because corporate profits are the driving force.

This project would completely alter the character of our neighborhood. We support actual, small scale, community solar and are more than willing to integrate solar into our geography. However, when thirty-seven acres of trees need to be cut down and there is no regard for valuable viewscapes, it's hard to imagine community interests as being paramount.

We support the Planning Board's proposal to put a moratorium on further large scale, solar development in Dryden until a comprehensive plan can be formulated as to the optimal placement of any new solar arrays. It seems reasonable that a scattering of solar sites would lessen the adverse impacts that this huge project causes. It would also be preferable if community members could be the major stakeholders in the production of local, green energy.

Unfortunately, clean energy infrastructure extracts resources from the earth, it causes emissions of greenhouse gasses, produces toxic waste and uses up water and electricity. If green energy is to reduce the world's greenhouse gasses it must be coupled with a major contraction of fossil fuel production and vast reductions in consumption in general. Many experts believe that capitalism as a way of life is incompatible with mitigating climate change. It seems futile to let large corporations lead the way into our green energy future when corporations have caused most of our environmental woes.

Unfortunately, many who are on the green energy bandwagon, want to put up solar arrays in Dryden so they can feel good about their grandkid's futures. Converting intelligently to green energy is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the sacrifices that world citizens will need to make in order to save our environment. The future is uncertain, so the decisions we make now should be wise ones. The recommended moratorium would perhaps allow for more earth friendly solutions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry Habecker

15 Dodge Road

Heller 5-1-17

**From:** Larry Heller [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 01, 2017 10:20 PM  
**To:** Bambi Avery  
**Subject:** Letter to Town Planning Board

Bambi Avery, Town of Dryden Clerk

Please submit the letter below to the Town Planning Board for their Wednesday, May 3rd session concerning solar farms.

Thank you,

Laurence Heller

---

Laurence Heller

1167 Ellis Hollow Rd

Town of Dryden, NY

May 1, 2017

Re: SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION SUBMITTED TO TOWN BOARD Town of Dryden,  
Tompkins County ELLIS TRACT Dryden, New York 13053

Gentle Members of the Town of Dryden Planning Board:

I live near Dodge Rd.

- A multitude of my neighbors and I walk, jog and bike ride on Dodge Rd on a daily basis throughout all four seasons. An escape from fast moving vehicles on Ellis Hollow Rd is an important reason.
- But just as important is the viewscape from the various sections of the road. The seasonal color changes of various forested areas; the pleasing views of the green fields; the shade on hot summer days from a large grove of Norway spruce trees which also offer a sheltering wind break from cold northwest winter winds.

- The large variety of wildlife, i.e. deer, rabbits, turkeys, red tail hawks, blue birds, warblers, and common songbirds.
- The serenity of this natural habit works as a promoter of mental health for all who use this area.

All of the above positive attributes of the viewscape of Dodge Rd are at risk if Sun8 is not willing to eliminate or at least scale back the proposed tree cutting on both east and west sides of Dodge Rd.

Why should we allow a company to destroy our viewscape so they can put down just a few more solar panels?

Further, when I scour the Sun8 proposal, I find so many discrepancies. Updated maps of tree cut areas consistently do not agree with written descriptions.

**HOW CAN THE PLANNING BOARD RECOMMEND THIS PROJECT TO THE TOWN WITH SO MANY DISCREPANCIES IN THE SUN8 PROPOSAL???**

Further, when the Sun8 project leader, Bharath Srinivasan, is asked why it is necessary to cut down the trees on both side of Doge Rd, his response is always the same: the few hours of shade cast by these trees would make the whole project financially unfeasible.

I find this reasoning very untenable. How can such a large project be worth pursuing if just a few hours of shade on a very, very small portion of the intended solar array would cause it to financially fail? Particularly in an area that is among the cloudiest locations in the continental United States.

**HOW CAN THE PLANNING BOARD RECOMMEND THIS PROJECT TO THE TOWN BOARD WHEN THE FINANCIAL MARGINS ARE SO TENUOUS AND RISK FAILURE???**

Respectively submitted,

Laurence Heller

Kruser, 5-4-17

**From:** Kasey & Jeramy Kruser [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 04, 2017 1:37 PM  
**To:** Bambi Avery  
**Cc:** Bharath Srinivasan  
**Subject:**

To: Town Board and Planning Board, Town of Dryden, NY  
Cc: Bharath Srinivasan, Distributed Sun, LLC, Washington, DC  
From: Kasey and Jeramy Kruser, 7 Dodge Road, Town of Dryden, NY

Honored Members of the Dryden Town Board and Planning Board,

Thank you for your time and energy surrounding our many (often contentious) community discussions about the proposed solar projects from Distributed Sun.

We have some wishes about modifying the way in which our community deals with such discussions, which may help make future conversations a little less contentious, a little more constructive, and encourage more people to be heard. Thank you in advance for considering any way in which you might help achieve those goals.

We've had several open-comment periods from the public, which is tremendously appreciated, but which have also added to our frustrations. Opinions, facts, questions, concerns, and points of order tend to all get mingled together, with little opportunity for acknowledging, answering, or guiding the conversation.

Here's what we would like to see:

1) Allow for different kinds of conversations. Open comment periods are an excellent way for people to express their opinions and emotions, or to make a case for what they want to see happen. They also, however, open the way for people to spread misinformation or ask questions that, when unanswered, may unnecessarily increase people's anxieties. We'd love to have time after (or during) open comment periods for answers, clarifications, or corrections. If there isn't someone in the room who can do so, or whose answer does not satisfy, then an acknowledgment from the board that the concern has been noted may let us feel more comfortable setting the question aside in order to discuss other items.

We also spend much of our time hearing about the general benefits of solar power, rather than addressing the specifics of the proposed plans. We wish we'd had the opportunity, as a community, to discuss the pros and cons of these projects with an eye to answering what kinds of mitigation could make them work better for more people. There have certainly been folks for whom no mitigation or compromise is possible (on all sides), and their voices seemed loudest at many of our meetings. While acknowledging that "It can't work," or "It must work as-is," are valid opinions, the volume of those opinions (neither of which has necessarily seemed like the majority opinion; just the loudest) has made it virtually impossible to ask and answer questions amongst ourselves about the relative value of setbacks, viewsapes, tree removal, green energy for X number of homes, etc.

2) Set expectations. When people know that they will have an opportunity to state an opinion, make a case, voice a concern, or ask a question (and get a response), we think their anxiety over being heard will be lessened. Hopefully a well-structured conversation will help people feel more patient about listening to opinions different than their own, and reduce the impulse to talk over others, allowing more people to actually be heard.

Express an expectation about how we will strive to speak and listen to each other at the beginning of each meeting, according to the structure of that meeting. Applause, hoots, scoffs, derisive remarks, etc. all contribute to a feeling of contention rather than collaboration, and may prevent people from feeling comfortable - or even safe - expressing themselves. If it is important to get "the feel of the room," make space for doing so in a way that allows the quiet or shy to have as much "voice" as the loud. Make it clear how to request an opportunity to speak so that shouting and interrupting can be channeled into the conversation in a more equitable fashion.

3) Moderate. Speaker lists are great (either taken in advance or acknowledged as people indicate a desire to speak); they help make sure no one who wants to be heard gets overlooked. Perhaps invite people to write questions or concerns on cards which can be sorted and consolidated for answering. Reminders about our expectations of respectful discourse when people forget themselves can help others feel less intimidated about sharing their opinions or concerns, and can help our conversations stay focused.

4) An "asked and answered or acknowledged" list would be great, especially if it can be carried over from meeting to meeting. Ideally, such a list would be visible to everyone in the room, but even just knowing that someone's keeping track - and that it will be available online for reference - might really help our conversations avoid retreading the same ground over and over. Even if the question isn't answered to everyone's satisfaction, an acknowledgement of that fact might help people make up their own minds about whether they are satisfied, without the bulk of us dwelling on it unduly.

Our community has had several other meetings on these projects outside the purview of the Town and Planning Boards, so we are copying Bharath Srinivasan of Distributed Sun on this letter. While Distributed Sun has not generally been the organizer for those meetings, they have often been present and involved, so we hope they may convey these comments for consideration at those meetings as well.

Again, thank you so much for your time and energy. We do appreciate the concern and commitment you have shown to Dryden residents in organizing so many opportunities for discussion. Good luck in all your deliberations.

Best,  
Kasey and Jeremy Kruser  
7 Dodge Road

**Prepared for Town of Dryden Planning Board Meeting 5 – 03 -17 by Craig Schutt**

**To: The Dryden Town Board and the Town of Dryden Planning Board**

**The following excerpts are taken from the latest version (version 7) of the *Natural Resources Plan* (NRCP), currently being developed by the Town of Dryden Conservation Board, as directed by the Town Board. The Plan is nearing completion and will then be passed on to the Town Board for consideration and ultimately adoption. These excerpts are intended to illustrate the high value placed on Dryden's remarkable viewsheds. I feel compelled to bring these issues forward after the discussion at last week's Planning Board meeting (4 -27 - 17) concerning viewsheds in the context of the proposed large industrial solar projects. It is my hope that the Planning Board and Town Board will use this information in their decision making, and carefully consider the collective expertise, knowledge and deliberative process used to develop this plan resulting in many specific recommendations.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

*"This **Natural Resources Conservation Plan** for the Town of Dryden is intended to guide and inform natural resource managers, decision-makers, and interested citizens. Planning for conservation of our natural resources, as outlined in this document, forms a basis for sustainable agriculture, outdoor recreation, planned development, and healthy lifestyles, all of which contribute to long-term economic viability. The economic future of the Town of Dryden depends upon wise and effective conservation of all our natural resources in the face of increasing pressures from a diverse and growing population"*

## **SCENIC RESOURCES, VIEWSHEDS AND NATURAL AREAS**

### **Dryden Views**

*" The term *viewshed* denotes a concept that allows us to make a visual assessment of the scenic value(s) of a particular area or region. We obviously recognize, with little effort, a delightful view versus an unsightly one. Terms such as remarkable, spectacular, terrific, or beautiful come to mind as we gaze, identify features, estimate distance and in general appreciate our ability to see and understand so much from a single location. Few people need be told the value of seeing the landscape from a distant vantage point. While landforms and valleys can be large, major and even minor changes can affect a viewshed in negative ways. Clearly, we need to recognize a need for caution as we build out, cut down, rearrange and develop our existing open lands. Dryden's visual landscape - the wooded hills, rocky hillside streams and meandering valley-streams; Dryden Lake and smaller ponds; hayfields, pastures, cropland and old fields - is central to the history, economy, and culture of the town. Scenic resources help connect people to the land, foster appreciation of our natural resources, and offer a strong sense of place for residents and visitors alike who are drawn to the area. The scenic beauty of the town is closely tied to the other natural resources addressed in this conservation plan - the physiographic patterns, water resources, biological communities, and farmland activities. While many scenic areas will be*

protected under their own natural or legal umbrella, other areas deserve conservation attention in their own right.”

### **Dryden's Natural Amenities**

“ The Town of Dryden is home to many prominent and valued natural areas that serve as important habitat to native species and support a rather rich biodiversity.”

#### **Threats to Viewsheds, Environment, and Mental Well Being:**

“Disregard or failure to consider impacts to the entire viewshed of any new structure or new land use.

Failure to protect unique geological features, natural areas and active farms, visible from public roadways.

Ignore or neglect to maintain: intact hilltop tree canopy lines, steep slope vegetation, and soil erosion issues on both fallow and active farmland.”

#### **Recommendations:**

“ Consider the impacts on the entire viewshed in the location and design of any new structure or land use within the town.

Maintain intact, both natural areas and active farmlands that are visible from public roads when possible.

Maintain intact, hilltops, steep slopes, and tree canopy lines, particularly in viewshed areas. Endorse Town policies that support working landscapes of farms and forests, but emphasize sustainability of soil and water resources for all practices.

Avoid clearcutting but favor select harvest techniques to help maintain forest coverts and avoid disruption of tree canopy lines.

Expand the appreciation and knowledge base about the viewshed resources of the town and County. This can help ensure sustainability and preserve the sense of place that now exists.”

### **Dryden Agriculture Recommendations**

“ The Town of Dryden recognizes that local agriculture brings innumerable benefits to the local economy, to local food security, to the scenic character of the landscape, and to the culture of the **human community**.

**Active and abandoned farmland can also contribute significantly to native biodiversity, and intact habitats** in the vicinity of farms can, in turn, provide critical and

irreplaceable services and resources (such as climate moderation, high quality water, flood attenuation, and habitat for pollinators and insect predators on agricultural pests) to farm enterprises.

Active, fallow, and abandoned farmland can also provide habitats important to native plants and animals of conservation concern, such as grassland birds and turtles that nest in meadows, raptors, mammals and snakes that hunt in meadows, and insect pollinators that rely on cropland, hayfields, old fields, and brushy edges to meet their needs for food, resting, pupation, and overwintering. Farmland that is adjacent to unmanaged habitats (e.g., forests, abandoned fields, wetlands) can be especially valuable for wildlife that needs a complex of different habitats to meet their life history needs. Intact adjacent habitats also support the diverse pollinators that are essential to certain agricultural crops.”

### **General Measures for Farmland Conservation**

“ Protect active farmland, prime farmland soils, and farmland soils of statewide importance from development

Design new subdivisions and development sites in ways that preserve the areas of best farmland soils intact and unfragmented as much as possible.

Maintain intact habitats in and near hayfields, cropland, orchards, and pastures to help support pollinators and wildlife.”

### **Summary (of the NRCP)**

“Let us move forward with care and reverence as we recognize, appreciate, value, celebrate and protect our town’s scenic resources. The natural beauty of the Town of Dryden town, as seen from many vantage points is truly remarkable, and should be preserved so as to provide a tranquil and dignified sense of place for current and future inhabitants.”

**There are many more pertinent sections and recommendations (Bio-diversity, Water Resources, and Biological Resources in the DRAFT Natural Resource Conservation Plan, but in the interest of time I will end with what I have highlighted at this time. Thank you for your attention and consideration.**

**Craig Schutt**

West 5-1-17

Hello Bambi,

Thank you for all the work you are doing trying to keep up with our questions and comments. Could you please forward this letter to all members of the Town Board, the Planning Board, and the Conservation Board? Everyone has a stake in bringing solar to Dryden in a way that protects our environment, in many different senses.

The question of *views* for the solar farms is a bit tickly. It is true that having solar panels themselves “ in our faces” is way too much, but another extremely important issue is the distant views. The modifications presented at the April 26 meeting attend only to the former, at considerable expense to the latter.

From the Dryden Road site, Bruno Schickel made a valuable experiment with a 16 foot tall 2x4, and showed that the cherished view from the cemetery of the rural valley and hills would be completely obliterated when the trees grew that tall. Please make sure to consider his picture, and try to reach a better compromise on “vegetative screening”.

On Dodge Road, we have similar concerns. When we (all of us in the extended community) walk along Dodge road, much of the restorative peaceful feeling we have always had is due to the feeling of open space, and the wonderful open view of the valley and hills beyond to the north. In the rendered photos shown at the meeting, the tall trees would not only screen the panels, but would completely eliminate the spacious feeling of fields open to the wooded area beyond to the east, or the northern valley and hills.





My amateur photos try to show something of what we see as we walk down Dodge Road,  
We desperately want to preserve these views, and the open space feeling. How can we do that?

We appreciate very much Mr. Srinivasan's first response to our concerns, by setting the solar site much further from the road, providing wildlife corridors and more natural farm fencing. However the long view issue needs also to be addressed. It seems bushes (deer resistant) would be far better than tall trees. I also tried to show how retaining the sparse hedgerows (two different ones) would definitely soften the paved glass feeling of the fields below them.- they are not large enough to diminish insolation on many of the solar panels. On our own roof, in a yard with enormous 50 year old trees across the driveway, a few panels are quite shaded for part of the day, losing no more than 50% output from those few panels.

Sincerely,

Beverly West  
1214 Ellis Hollow Road

