

Supervisor Romaine Announces Proposed Changes to Brookhaven Town's Solar Energy Production Code

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Farmingville, NY – Brookhaven Supervisor Ed Romaine and members of the Town Council today announced proposed amendments to the Town's Solar Energy Production Code, which prohibits the clearing of trees for solar farms and offers incentives for large rooftop solar installations. The announcement was made at Clare Rose Beverages in Shirley, where the company has installed the largest rooftop solar array on Long Island, with 5,000 solar panels that cover more than 230,000 square feet. The Supervisor was joined at the press conference by (left to right) Clare Rose, Employee Development executive, Nikki Dougherty; Sierra Club L.I. Chair, Jane Fasullo; Wading River Civic Association president, Sid Bail; Supervisor Ed Romaine; Clare Rose Beverages Chief Executive Officer Sean Rose; Brookhaven Town Planning Commissioner Tulio Bertoli; Councilwoman Jane Bonner; Councilman Dan Panico; Long Island Pine Barrens Executive Director Dick Amper and Clare Rose Vice President, Lisa Rose.

The primary goal of the amended solar code is to encourage the appropriate siting for solar energy production facilities. It also provides standards for solar energy production facilities on those lands that have been previously cleared and/or disturbed. Supervisor Romaine cited recent proposals to clear hundreds of acres of wooded areas for the installation of solar arrays as an impetus to amend the code. The public hearing to discuss the proposed code change is scheduled for the September 29 Town Board Meeting. Public hearings begin at 6:00 pm.

The proposed Amended Solar Energy Production Code includes the following:

- The amended Town Code allows for ground mounted large scale solar collection systems on lands previously cleared that are commercial and industrial zoned which have also been cleared and/or disturbed prior to January 2016.
- No additional clearing of any natural vegetation shall be permitted.
- Large scale solar collection systems shall be permitted on lands zoned J-2, J-4, J-5 and J-6 Business and L-1 and L-2 Industrial.
- The minimum lot area will be reduced to five acres.
- Glare shall be prevented toward any inhabitable buildings.
- Incentivizes for roof top solar collection systems on commercial and industrial buildings by authorizing the Planning Board to increase building square footage, FAR (Floor Area Ratio).
- A maximum 20% increase in FAR (Floor Area Ratio) will be permitted above the current code limitation by each zoning district for roof top solar on commercial and industrial buildings.
- The Planning Board will also be authorized to allow a reduction in the number of code required parking stalls for the installation of parking lot solar collection systems.

Supervisor Romaine said, "Developing alternative energy sources is vital to the future of our planet, but we cannot sacrifice 'green' for 'green' in the name of progress. These new code amendments are designed to protect our natural resources and make sure that large solar farms do not encroach on residential neighborhoods. Here in Brookhaven Town we have an abundance of businesses with large, flat rooftops and parking lots that are more suitable for solar and I hope that they will follow Clare Rose's environmentally friendly lead."

Councilman Loguercio said, "There is a tremendous amount of wooded, open space in my district and I do not want to see it destroyed for any reason. We certainly need to go green and promote solar power, however, we have to make sure that it's the done right way. I look forward to working with the Supervisor and private companies to develop solar and other clean energy projects throughout the Town."

Councilwoman Jane Bonner said, "I fully support the Supervisor's amendments to the solar code. Clear cutting trees should never be an option and this will prevent it from happening in the future. The amended code will present a guide for developers to follow so we can assure that our woodlands will be preserved for generations to come."

Councilman Dan Panico said, "We should prioritize solar on appropriate sites, and on rooftops, when possible. From a land use perspective, we should prioritize solar on rooftops and previously cleared land."

Long Island Pine Barrens Executive Director Dick Amper said, "This is an enlightened approach that protects water and woodlands habitat by directing solar to rooftops, parking lots and previously cleared land. Every Long Island town should follow Brookhaven's lead."

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor

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