

TOWN OF HOLLAND

Sheboygan County - Wisconsin



Town of Holland, Sheboygan County Reach Joint Development Agreement with Onion River Solar, LLC

Agreement details binding requirements related to process, design, and financial commitments

Town of Holland, Wis., November 10, 2020 – The Town of Holland and Sheboygan County have finalized a Joint Development Agreement regarding the proposed development of Onion River Solar, LLC, a 150-megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic generation facility in the Town of Holland. The agreement was approved with no dissenting votes by both the Town of Holland Town Board and the County Board of Sheboygan County.

The Onion River Solar project will provide clean, locally generated electric power while providing significant economic and environmental benefits in the local community. Once complete, the project is expected to generate enough clean, low-cost energy to power tens of thousands of homes.

Earlier this year, Alliant Energy announced an [agreement](#) to purchase and operate the facility, once the project is fully constructed. The commitments and obligations within the Joint Development Agreement are for the life of the project and will transfer to Alliant Energy with the sale. A copy of the Joint Development Agreement can be viewed at townofholland.com.

The project is subject to review and approval by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW). Onion River Solar submitted its formal proposal to the PSCW at the end of May, thus beginning an extensive review period that is expected to continue well into 2021. If the proposal is approved by the PSCW, the Joint Development Agreement will oversee certain aspects of the project that are not necessarily mandated by state regulations. This includes considerations such as: commitments to fund decommissioning; considerations for non-participating neighboring landowners; maintaining and repairing roads, if damaged; compensation for the Cedar Grove and Oostburg School Districts and Lakeshore Technical College for any lost tax revenue; processes for communications between the developer and the Town and County; construction guidelines, expectations, and responsibilities; as well as various design considerations. A more complete list can be found at the end of this press release.

“We appreciate Onion River Solar working with local governments in good faith to address matters that are important to our residents and are not mandated by the state review process” said Don Becker, chairman, Town of Holland Town Board. “We are pleased to have reached an agreement with Onion River Solar to ensure the best interests of the Town of Holland are protected if this project proceeds,” said Dave Huenink, supervisor, Town of Holland Town Board.

“This agreement is good for the Town of Holland and Sheboygan County,” said Vernon Koch, chairperson, County Board of Sheboygan County. “It provides strong assurances, while also committing to significant and long-term economic benefits for both the Town and County estimated to be \$250,000 and \$350,000 per year, respectively.”

Located on approximately 900 acres leased from participating landowners in the Town of Holland, the project is designed to be light on the land and compatible with the Town’s rural characteristic. During operation, planted prairie grasses and pollinators will create habitat for pollinating insects and birds, and a deer fence with wooden posts and woven wires will be utilized. Solar generating facilities have a low profile, are quiet, do not produce any emissions, and do not create odors or harmful byproducts.

“We are pleased to enter into the Joint Development Agreement with The Town of Holland and Sheboygan County and to solidify the significant financial, procedural, and design commitments the Project is making to the community,” said Emily Straka, project manager, Onion River Solar, LLC. “We are committed to being a good neighbor and to doing our part to ensure more of Wisconsin’s energy jobs and dollars are kept local through economical and clean energy generation.”

Key commitments in the Joint Development Agreement include, but are not limited to, the following:

Process Commitments:

- Open communications with local governments, including sharing of plans and construction schedules, having a designated point of contact during construction and during operation
- Process to address construction and operation concerns
- Road inspection, maintenance, and repair, if damaged
- Inspection, monitoring, and repair of drainage systems
- Commitments run with the project and bind future owners

Design Commitments:

- Minimum setbacks of panels from roads, waterways, and from non-participating neighbors, including:
 - Minimum 150’ panel setback from houses
 - Minimum 20’ panel setback from property lines
 - Where panels are on two or more sides of neighboring property, setbacks increase:
 - Minimum 200’ from houses
 - Minimum 50’ from property lines
- Prairie-style aesthetic made up of grasses and flowering plants in and around the facility, with grasses under and between rows
- Deer fencing around solar equipment areas
- Design with wildlife in mind, including openings in fences for smaller animals, and areas where larger animals such as deer have crossings or passage

Financial Commitments:

- Assurances to secure Joint Development Agreement commitments:
 - \$50,000 initial assurance within 30 days
 - \$150,000 total performance assurance when operation begins
- Commitment to fund decommissioning and restore leased land, including initial assurance of \$1,000,000 at construction, reviewed/increased as necessary to ensure decommissioning funding available
- Commitment to maintain commercial insurance with local units of government as additional insured
- Annual payments to Cedar Grove and Oostburg School Districts and Lakeshore Technical College to compensate for tax revenues that would have come to each from property in the project
- Anticipated Shared Revenues of \$250,000 and \$350,000 per year for the Town of Holland and for Sheboygan County, respectively

More information about the project can be found at OnionRiverSolar.com.

Contacts:

Don Becker, Town of Holland Town Board Chairman

townchair@townofholland.com

David Huenink, Town of Holland Town Board Supervisor

david@townofholland.com

Aaron Brault, Director Planning & Conservation, Sheboygan County

aaron.brault@sheboygancounty.com

Megan Hakes, Onion River Solar

megan.hakes@hprstrategies.com