How do I develop a good solar project in my community?

This installment of the One Region Forward 2020 Learning Series was organized by the University at Buffalo Regional Institute and Erie County.

8:55 a.m. Participants are encouraged to log in to the event a few minutes early.

9:00 a.m. Welcome and Opening Remarks
Bart Roberts, Associate Director, UB Regional Institute

SESSION 1. Preparing for Solar
Learn about the NY-Sun toolkit, solar code development, and other resources available to municipalities to prepare for solar.

9:05 a.m.
Peter Jeffery, Town of Porter
Jennifer Manierre, NYSERDA
Mary Underhill, Livingston County Planning Department
Moderated by: Jason Kulaszewski, UB Regional Institute

SESSION 2. Engaging the Process
Learn about the accelerated siting process, SEQR, PILOTS, and community benefit agreements for municipalities to use during a solar project.

10:05 a.m.
Michael Saviola, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
Daniel Spitzer, Hodgson Russ
Moderated by: Daniel Castle, AICP, Erie County Department of Environment and Planning

11:05 a.m. Closing Remarks
Bart Roberts, Associate Director, UB Regional Institute

AICP members can earn Certification Maintenance (CM) Credits for this activity [or many activities at this event]. When CM credits are available, they are noted at the end of an activity description. More information about AICP’s CM program can be found at www.planning.org/cm.

AICP members must be in attendance for the duration of the event in order to receive CM credit.

Please remember to log your credits online using the following event ID: 9200056
The 2020 Learning Series is part of One Region Forward’s ongoing efforts to provide technical assistance to municipalities and promote sustainable development in the Buffalo Niagara region. The Learning Series will explore topics in clean energy, water resilience, Complete Streets, land banking, and smart growth. These topics correspond with strategies and actions put forward in the One Region Forward Plan.

To learn more about the One Region Forward Plan, please visit: oneregionforward.org

UPCOMING EVENTS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The next installment of the 2020 Learning Series will be in late summer 2020 and will focus on Complete Streets. To be the first to know about this and future events in the 2020 Learning Series, please subscribe to the One Region Forward mailing list by visiting oneregionforward.org and clicking on “Subscribe to eNews” in the upper right-hand corner. Please also follow us on Twitter (@OneRegionFWD) and Facebook.

The annual local government trainings offered by the Erie County Department of Environment & Planning and the NYS Department of State will be held online in mid- to late June; the exact dates of the webinars are yet to be determined. For more information about the training, please contact Mariely Ortiz at (716) 858-1916 or mariely.ortiz@erie.gov.

On May 12, 2020, the Energy Conservation Construction Code for New York State (2020 ECCNYS) was released, and with it comes the opportunity for communities to get free hands-on technical support for model legislation adoption of the New York Stretch Energy Code. The Stretch Energy Code amends the 2020 ECCNYS to increase building efficiency by 10-12% and will significantly reduce building’s energy consumption, operating costs, utility bills, and greenhouse gas emissions. If you would like to learn more about how adopting the New York Stretch Energy Code could benefit your community, please contact our Regional Clean Energy Communities Coordinator, Jason Kulaszewski, at jasonkul@buffalo.edu.

TODAY’S SPEAKERS

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

BART ROBERTS
Associate Director of Research and Faculty Engagement, University at Buffalo Regional Institute

Bart Roberts is an urban planner and researcher who specializes in bringing together research and practice to advance projects related to sustainability, community development, and public participation. In 2011, he led the effort to secure a $2 million grant from the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities to launch One Region Forward, a regional planning effort to build tools and strategies for advancing sustainable development across Erie and Niagara counties. He continues to support that program, with planning advisement, research, community engagement, and local capacity building.

Mr. Roberts holds a bachelor’s degree in urban studies from Vassar College, and a master’s degree in urban planning from the University at Buffalo.
SESSION 1. PREPARING FOR SOLAR

PETER JEFFERY
Code Enforcement Officer, Town of Porter

Peter Jeffery has a combined 22 years of experience as a public servant in the Town of Porter, in addition to over 25 years of experience as a building contractor. Mr. Jeffery served on the Town of Porter Zoning Board of Appeals for sixteen years and on the Planning board for three years; two of those years serving as the Chair. He has also been in advisory roles, including as a committee member of the Zoning Law Advisory Board for a complete Zoning Law re-write, a member of the Advisory Committee for the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), and the chairperson for the Advisory Committee on Solar Energy System Zoning Laws for the Town of Porter. Mr. Jeffery serves currently as the Town’s Code Enforcement Officer and is trained in the enforcement of the NYS energy code.

Mr. Jeffery earned his A.S. in Architectural Technology from Alfred State College and completed coursework in architecture at the University of Notre Dame.

JENNIFER MANIERRE
Senior Project Manager, NYSERDA

Jennifer Manierre is a Senior Project Manager on the Clean Energy Siting team at the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), where she helps guide local government officials through best practices and appropriate local laws and permitting procedures for solar and battery energy storage. Ms. Manierre previously worked on NYSERDA’s Clean Energy Communities program, NYSERDA’s Climate Smart Communities Regional Coordinator Pilot Program, Cleaner, Greener Communities program, and commercial New Construction Program.

Ms. Manierre received her B.A. from Hamilton College with a concentration in geology and a minor in economics. She also holds a master’s degree in education from Elmira College and a master’s degree in Ecological Economics, Values, and Policy from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She is a Certified Energy Manager and a LEED Accredited Professional with a specialization in Neighborhood Development.

MARY UNDERHILL
Planner, Livingston County Planning Department

Mary Underhill has over 14 years of planning experience in the public sector. She is currently a Planner with the Livingston County Planning Department, focusing on environmental and land use planning, alternative energy development, and watershed management. She provides professional planning assistance to the Livingston County Environmental Management Council, the Livingston County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Board, and the Conesus Lake Watershed Council. Areas of focus include Town and Village technical assistance with law/code development, agricultural & farmland protection planning, the Clean Energy Communities Program, and GIS mapping. Previously, Ms. Underhill worked for the Town of East Bloomfield Code Enforcement Office and with Ontario County on GIS mapping projects.

Ms. Underhill earned her A.S. in Natural Resource Conservation from Finger Lakes Community College and a B.A. in Psychology from the State University of New York at Geneseo.

Moderator
JASON KULASZEWSKI
Clean Energy Coordinator, University at Buffalo Regional Institute

Jason Kulaszewski leads UBRI’s Clean Energy Communities initiative, which supports local municipalities to implement clean energy actions, save energy costs, and improve environmental stewardship in Western New York. Mr. Kulaszewski is an at-large member of the Erie County Environmental Management Committee (EMC) and the City of Buffalo’s Climate Change Task Force.

Prior to joining the Regional Institute, Mr. Kulaszewski worked at PUSH Buffalo, where he directed their energy efficiency and clean energy program, PUSH Green. Mr. Kulaszewski holds a bachelor’s degree in urban planning with a minor in geography from Buffalo State College, where he received the WNY American Planning Association Award.
MICHAEL SAVIOLA

Associate Environmental Analyst,
New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

Michael Saviola works for the Division of Land and Water Resources in the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets where he is responsible for the review of agricultural impacts as a statutory party pursuant to Article 7 and Article 10 of the NYS Public Service Law. Mike also conducts coordinated reviews for major natural gas and electric transmission projects, major interstate natural gas pipeline transmission projects permitted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), commercial wind energy facilities, and solar projects greater than 25 MW, and conducts reviews under the Agriculture and Markets Law.

In the past, Mr. Saviola has worked in the private sector in the environmental engineering field in Central New York and in the public sector with the Westchester County Department of Planning and as professional staff assigned to the County’s Soil & Water Conservation District. Mr. Saviola is a native of Orchard Park and received his B.S. and M.S. in Natural Resources Management from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science & Forestry.

DANIEL SPITZER

Partner, Hodgson Russ

Dan Spitzer is an award-winning attorney who practices environmental law, clean technology law, and renewable energy law. He was recently listed in Buffalo Business First’s Who’s Who in Law as well as the Best Lawyers in America.

Mr. Spitzer counsels agencies and private clients on compliance with historic preservation laws, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and other federal environmental statutes and regulations. He is well versed in the requirements of the State Environmental Quality Review Act and has guided many communities through the environmental review process. His work, from project inception through successful litigation, includes some of the largest wind farms in the eastern United States; multiple utility and small-scale solar projects; and landfill, gas-to-energy, biomass, storage, transmission, and energy efficiency projects.

Mr. Spitzer has been a partner at Hodgson Russ since 1993. He earned his B.S. from the State University of New York at Oswego, his MSC in Sustainable Development from the University of London, and his J.D. from the University at Buffalo Law School.

Moderator

DANIEL CASTLE

Deputy Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, Erie County Department of Environment and Planning

Dan Castle, AICP, brings 35 years of planning experience in the public and private sector, as well as a local municipal planning official. Mr. Castle is currently the Deputy Commissioner for Planning and Economic Development within the Erie County Department of Environment & Planning, but he began his career working for the Oneida County Planning Department and the Herkimer-Oneida Counties Comprehensive Planning Program. He then joined the environmental consulting firm of Ecology & Environment, Inc., where he worked for nearly thirty years. Mr. Castle has been a member of the Village of East Aurora Planning Commission since 1998 and served as chair of the Commission from 2002 to 2019.

Mr. Castle received a master’s degree in land use planning from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry.