

To all concerned,

I am relating the events that led up to the MOU between Chelsea Solar and the Apple Hill Homeowner's Association. Some of the dates are going to be approximate.

In the Spring of 2013 I had heard there may be a solar project somewhere on the Willow Road in Bennington. In either April or May of 2013 I received a call from 2 neighbors on Russet Drive in Apple Hill advising me that there was heavy earth moving equipment and trucks at the end of Russet Drive. I went to the location and identified myself as the president of Apple Hill Homeowner's Assn. and wanted to know what they were doing. A man who seemed to be in charge told me they were going to make a road through the woods down to a new solar project. I told him he was obviously at the wrong location and told him I had heard about a solar project at Willow Road. He made a couple of calls and left without saying anything to me. I assumed they had just made a mistake in their location. On our development map there is a access road shown at the end of Russet Drive between two houses.

In July of 2013 I was on vacation and received a call from Maple Leaf Reality. The real estate agent told me I must sign a **Certificate of Public Good** by the following Saturday. This was a Thursday. I asked why I needed to sign a Certificate of Public good. She replied because we have sold land in your development and the certificate must be signed. I said I never signed one before. She said this was because this land was going to be used for commercial use. I informed her that all lots in Apple Hill are zoned as residential and cannot be used for commercial use. I further asked what the property was intended to be used for. She said she did not know. I do not think she was telling me everything she knew. I told her I would not sign the certificate and I would not be back in Bennington until Sunday. She said, " I have to warn you if you do not sign the certificate we may have to take legal action". I said, "Do what you think you have to do but I am not signing anything to allow the sale to be for commercial use". I also got a phone call from Mike Melone who is an attorney for the solar project telling me I had to sign the certificate. I told him that I was not going to sign it.

When I got back to Vermont I had 2 voice mails from neighbors who joined the land bought by the solar people. The neighbors had received letters from the solar company telling of their intentions. I went to Peter Lawrence and discussed the events that had taken place. Peter is also a member of the Apple Hill Homeowner's Assn. We decided to have an Association meeting to discuss the project. From the letter I got the name of the Project Director of Chelsea Solar and gave him a call. He said he would come and inform all the neighbors of all the plans to build the solar project.

Brad Wilson was the Project Director for the Chelsea Solar farm. He came to our first meeting to inform us of the project. It was a volatile meeting with

neighbors quite upset about the project. Brad almost stopped the meeting because the neighbors were so angry over the project. We believed the project was violating our residential deeds by using the road in Apple Hill as a commercial purposes. After the meeting we contacted as many town officials that we could to try and stop the project. Peter Lawrence also investigated to legality of the projects. We talked with Dan Monks, the Planning Director for Bennington, Jim Sullivan, the Bennington County regional Commission, and Town Manager Stuart Hurd.

The Association developed a list of concerns and demands that we wanted Chelsea Solar to answer. At our next meeting with Brad Wilson we presented our concerns and demands to him. Brian Campion and Mary Morrissey attended several of our meetings. Brad took the list of demands back to his supervisors. We had a series of meetings with Brad to negotiate the list with him. The two most important concerns we had were that we did not want the solar people to come through on Apple Hill Road for site clearing and construction of the project and not to connect Apple Hill Road with Willow Road. They agreed early on not to use Apple Hill Road for maintenance only about 3 times a month and not to use it for site clearing or construction. They also agreed not to connect Apple Hill Road and Willow Road. We continued to try and get other concerns to our satisfaction.

Peter Lawrence, myself, and several neighbors went up to Montpelier to speak with the Public Service Board about our problem with allowing the solar project to go forward. We also tried to get "Intervener status". We did not get much sympathy from the PSB.

In October of 2014 we had a site visit with the Public Service Board. There were also members from the Dept. of Natural Resources and members from the Environmental Agency. That same night we had a meeting with the Public Service Board and the Select Board to make our concerns known about the solar project.

We also had a meeting with Annette Smith who is the director of Vermonters for a Clean Environment.

We sent a Testimony to the Vermont Senate and House Natural Resources and Energy Committee Hearing on Renewable Siting.

Many of our neighbors attended the Select Board Meeting when they discussed the Barney Road Solar Project to support them and to further discuss our upcoming solar project.

After several meetings with Brad Wilson we had narrowed our concerns down to only the wind and noise issue that would be caused by removing 27 acres of trees. Chelsea produced noise studies saying the noise would not be an issue. They also had a former wind study that showed out of 8 districts in

Vermont, the Bennington area was next to lowest in wind velocity. As an Association we did not think we were going to get any help from the Town of Bennington or the Public Service Board in stopping the solar project. We decided to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Chelsea Solar stating they would not use Apple Hill Road for site clearing of construction, only for maintenance after the project was complete. They also said they would not connect Apple Hill Road and Willow Road. We believed if we could not stop the project we could at least stop heavy traffic, noise, and harm to our neighborhood by signing the MOU.

This is just a summary of many of the things we did to try, as a Association, to stop the building of the solar farm near our neighborhood. I had dozens of emails and phone calls to Brad Wilson, the Project Director for Chelsea. Our Association had several meetings to discuss the solar project. I think we were very lucky to have Peter Lawrence to guide us through the process. Without his help we may not have gotten as many concessions as we did.

Bill Knight  
President  
Apple Hill Homeowner's Association