



Meeting Summary Report

Stirling-Rawdon Public Consultation	
Tuesday, June 16, 2015	6:00pm – 8:00pm
Meeting Location	Stirling-Rawdon Fire Hall Station # 2 2508 Springbrook Rd. Springbrook ON, K0K 3C0
Attendees	<p>53 community members (of which 44 signed in) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor of Stirling-Rawdon • One member of the media from the Hastings Community Press <p>Five Registered Proponent project team members</p> <p><i>All personal information removed in accordance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, 2000.</i></p>
Overview of the Meeting	
	The meeting was open format. Community members were welcome to come at any time, view the publicly displayed material and ask questions.
Comments and Concerns	
Natural habitats and animal migration patterns	<p>Community Member #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about wildlife. <p>Community Member #2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned that wild animals will be affected by road throughways as they will be cut off by fencing from their natural trails. <p>Community Member #3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about wildlife in nearby swamp. <p><u>Proponent’s Response:</u></p> <p>Solar development is non-invasive – which includes being respectful of all identified natural habitats and migration patterns. Through the Government of Ontario’s Renewable Energy Approvals (REA) process, species that may be at risk or displaced because of any solar development are identified. Action is taken to either support the thriving development of these animals, or plans are changed to ensure their survival.</p> <p>In one of our operating projects in Ontario, the eastern loggerhead shrike, a small migratory bird, was identified and immediately protected.</p>



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	<p>A population was located in proximity of the site to ensure the survival of the species. Safety fencing and special animal-friendly fencing were used to build a secure area for the birds and to allow animals to pass underneath, so as to not restrict their natural movement.</p> <p>We are committed to protecting the environment, as well as providing a clean energy powered future for all.</p> <p>For more information on the REA process, please visit: https://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/renewable-energy-approvals</p>
<p>Agricultural Land Use</p>	<p>Community Member #4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about use of agricultural land. <p><u>Proponent’s Response:</u></p> <p>One of the more frequent areas of interest from community members is regarding the apparent use of agricultural land for renewable energy development. The Ontario government has put in place regulations that forbid proponents from building on certain types of land, including prime agriculture land.</p> <p>For further information regarding Canada Land Inventory, please visit: http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/nsdb/cli/index.html</p> <p>For more information on the agricultural land use, please visit: http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/</p>
<p>Environmental Impact</p>	<p>Community Member #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about the environmental impact of the project. <p>Community Member #2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned about how the project would cut off a major swamp. <p><u>Proponent’s Response:</u></p> <p>Following the award of a contract, the project must obtain Renewable Energy Approval (REA) from the Ministry of Environment before it can be constructed. The REA process (Ontario Regulation 359/09) is under Part V.0.1 of the Environmental Protection Act. The project must go through an intensive approval process and meet certain requirements, including provincial set-back and noise standards, environmental impact studies, and consultation with the public, municipalities and Aboriginal communities. Without these approvals, the project cannot be built.</p>



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Cattle	<p>Community Member #3 and #7:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concerned about how the solar project will affect cattle (including chemical effects) <p><u>Proponent's Response:</u></p> <p>We are aware of the existing swamp in the area, and that it is a vital water source for the neighbouring landowners' fields and cattle. As such, we will take this into consideration during the planning and construction phase to minimize any disturbance to this geographic feature.</p> <p><u>Well water and ground water contamination</u></p> <p>Community interest and public scrutiny are common in relation to any land development and the potential threat to wells, ground and source water. To address these inquiries, the Government of Ontario requires all renewable energy projects to complete a Renewable Energy Approvals (REA) process.</p> <p>Through the REA process, proposals competing under the Independent Electricity System Operator's (IESO) Large Renewable Procurement (LRP) program must, upon awarding of a contract, meet extremely rigorous criteria relating to the environment. This applies to all aspects of the environment, from water sources to flora and fauna. Before construction of a project can even begin, all aspects of the Ontario REA process must be met, or the project will not be built.</p> <p>For more information regarding the REA process please visit: https://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/renewable-energy-approvals</p> <p><u>Solar panel and contamination due to leakage</u></p> <p>Damage to panels can occur from time to time, caused by various factors, including inclement weather, tree branches and other incidents. There are concerns that panels may leak harmful chemicals into the ground if they are broken and left unchecked. While broken panels can be identified through remote monitoring, and promptly replaced as needed, the panels themselves do not leak any harmful materials. The majority of the panel is made up of layers of glass and silicon, both of which are solids.</p> <p>Broken panels indicate a decrease in efficiency, which means less electricity is being produced. Therefore, it is in our best interest to promptly repair or replace any damaged panels, which can be done both</p>
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	<p>easily and quickly. Solar panels are recyclable and the racking and support structures can be recycled as well. We are committed to ensuring that our solar parks operate at their best potential and create as much clean energy as possible.</p>
<p>Format of Public Meeting</p>	<p>Community Member #5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not like the open house format and would have preferred a formal presentation <p>Community Member #4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wanted more information about the project <p><u>Proponent's Response:</u></p> <p>The open house format of the meeting was structured to accommodate everyone's schedule, allowing those with work, family or other commitments to arrive any time between 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm, and not feel they missed a presentation or a portion of the meeting.</p> <p>At the meeting community members talked amongst themselves, and in small groups with SkyPower representatives, allowing them to share one another's interests and concerns. There were six SkyPower representatives present to answer questions. The open house structure maximizes the amount of time community members can spend with registered proponent project team members, allowing for more questions to be answered.</p> <p>While some community members were hoping for more detailed information at the public meeting, at the current phase of project development only desktop analyses have been completed. Other relevant details such as the Site Considerations report are also available on the project website.</p> <p>Only once a contract is awarded can the project begin to be designed and permitted in conjunction with the local municipality, local residents and affected landowners, as well as any potential relevant First Nations groups. Awarded contracts are subject to a rigorous approval process, the Renewal Energy Approval Process (REA) before construction can commence. The REA process includes but is not limited to: environmental, natural heritage, wildlife, wetland, noise and archaeological studies. Projects are also subject to further interconnection studies and must follow local by-laws. Should the proposed project be awarded a contract by the Independent Electricity System Operators (IESO), it then proceeds to the design and</p>



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	<p>permitting phase, which takes approximately 18 to 24 months to complete. Design of the generation facility is subject to permitting and necessary approvals. It is during this phase that detailed designs would be available. Only when all approvals and permitting are acquired may a project proceed to construction.</p>
<p>Visual Impact</p>	<p>Community Member #5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not like the fact that solar park will be visible from private property. <p><u>Proponent's Response:</u></p> <p>Visual impact is one of the most frequent questions from community members with regard to solar park development. Visual abatement is a key component of solar park development. While the park is being constructed, typically a period of approximately nine to 12 months, the solar park can be quite visible as the construction process calls for open space. However, once the construction phase is completed, we work with community members as well as local governments to ensure the integration of the solar park into the landscape. Through the use of various techniques such as setbacks, land forming, strategic placement of mature trees, vegetation and fencing, our goal is for the solar project to be inconspicuous to any passer-by.</p>
<p>Communications Tower</p>	<p>Community Member #6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerned about the height and visibility of the communications tower <p><u>Proponent's Response:</u></p> <p>Solar parks require a communication tower onsite that allows the park to communicate technical information to the local distribution company (LDC). There are some concerns that these communication towers are unsightly and a nuisance as they blink and stand often relatively tall in comparison to the park itself.</p> <p>These towers are required components for the park to operate safely and efficiently. While some towers are taller than others, height is set by a line-of-sight factor determined by the LDC so that communications are uninterrupted. The tower must have a clear line of sight to the LDC's tower.</p> <p>SkyPower will work with community members and municipal officials to determine the best course of action for handling this issue.</p>



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<p>Project Lifecycle</p>	<p>Community Member #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerned about the clean-up at the end of life of the project <p><u>Proponent's Response:</u> As part of the REA process, the proponent is to complete a Decommissioning Plan, which must be approved as part of the REA. If this project is awarded a power purchase agreement (PPA) for the 20-year duration of the Large Renewable Procurement (LRP) program, we will commit to ensuring the condition of the project site is maintained. The lifespan of solar photovoltaic panels is 20 to 25 years, which coincides with the life of the project. Some panels may require replacement from time to time, however, the majority of panels will extend beyond their expected lifespan. In terms of waste material, many of the components from a solar park are recyclable, including solar panels, racking and support structures.</p>
<p>Fire Hazards</p>	<p>Community Member #1 and #8:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerned that the town is not equipped to deal with an emergency in case of a fire Concerned about effects of chemicals that could be used to extinguish a fire <p><u>Proponent's Response:</u> SkyPower's solar parks are valued assets, and as such contain various security measures to ensure they are protected and operate safely. The perimeter of the site is enclosed with a fence that is approximately 10 feet tall. The fencing is in part to protect individuals from wandering onto the site, but also to screen the site from adjacent properties and public roads as much as possible.</p> <p>Added to the security fencing are a series of cameras that are remotely accessible to help monitor the site, should anything be identified as a concern.</p> <p>The site itself is monitored remotely and can even be shut down remotely if an emergency occurs. The same remote control is available</p>



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	<p>through the local distribution company as a precaution.</p> <p>The proponent will work diligently with the local and/or county fire department by sharing site layouts and any additional relevant information to ensure the safety of the community. Emergency fire procedures will also be part of the Operations Plan, which is included in the REA process.</p> <p>After the meeting, SkyPower checked with local fire departments in areas of existing projects and confirmed that no chemicals are used to extinguish an electrical fire. Therefore, there would be no contamination of surrounding areas should a fire need to be contained or extinguished.</p>
<p>Electrical Demand in local community</p>	<p>Community Member #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feels that there is no additional demand for electricity in the local community <p><u>Proponent’s Response:</u></p> <p>Ontario is a large and populous province. As of January 2014, Ontario has a population of over 13.6 million people, accounting for nearly 40% of the population of Canada. While the population is more heavily concentrated in major cities, those in the rural communities still need everything those living in cities do, including energy. With a growing population comes increased need for electricity. Renewables, and specifically in this case solar energy, can help meet the need for increased power supply.</p> <p>The electrical generating sources we have counted on for years can no longer do the job on their own. Nuclear energy, which accounts for over 60% of the province’s electrical generation, is aging and needs refurbishment. When we do choose to refurbish nuclear facilities, we need to replace the generation when the reactors are turned off. With the removal of coal-fired generation by the Ontario Government, the issue has been compounded. The province will need to generate more electricity to make up for shortfalls from the plants being shut down. Natural gas-fired electrical generation will make up some of the needed electricity, but at the expense of the environment, and there will still be a gap left in needed capacity. Renewables, and specifically in this case solar energy, can help fill that gap.</p>