

MEETING MINUTES



10 MW SOLAR PARK QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Date: September 20, 2023

Time: 10:30 AM and 3:30 PM

Meeting called to order by: Chief Andrea Paul

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

Brief overview of how the sessions will run and an opening prayer to begin the day.

Community Questions: 10:30 am Session

1. Will the information from Power Point be provided?

Yes. It will be shared on our social media page and on our website.

2. What is the build timeline on this project? Do any homes have to be modified for this project?

The timeline includes an approximate 6-month preconstruction phase once funding, PPA and contracts are finalized. This preconstruction phase includes technical and environmental field studies, engineering and surveying. Construction phase timelines are estimated at approximately 12-14 months following pre-construction. No homes will need to be modified. The solar project for homes is a completely different project.

3. Where is the proposed location?

The current location is PID65229643. The current land (and preferred) location is also shown in the presentation package (available online). Note: this is the proposed location. It still requires us to study the land to confirm the sustainability from a technical and environmental perspective. The location has a favorable Nova Scotia Power grid interconnection location which is one of the first requirements to assess when sitting solar farms. Proximity to the PLFN community was important when contemplating the potential coupling of energy generation with future battery storage.

4. Is there an environmental report on these proposed lands?

The lands have been regionally studied from an environmental baseline perspective over many years as part of the remediation project. As part of the remediation process, there was a report done on these lands by Nova Scotia Lands. If the project is approved further environmental due diligence studies will be performed as part of our design process to understand the land and potential environmental sensitives to avoid or mitigate.

5. How many community members have to vote for this to be approved?

There is no number, it goes by a majority vote. There is a process to change it to 50 percent plus 1 and this vote does not have time to make this change as ballots have gone out.

6. Will the community have to pay for power? Or will the community be charged for power that is generated from this project?

The community has to decide how things will work; at this stage we are looking for project approval. There will be no charge for power generated from this project. The community will decide how the new revenues will be utilized. There could be an option to offset a portion of power bills for a period of time following project commissioning. Unlike solar panels installed on homes and directly connected to the house electrical panel for self-consumption of power, using a NS Power net metering program, this project is a utility scale project that will generate revenues for the entire community and will be connected to the NS Power electrical grid. The solar roof homes project is separate and being pursued under a separate funding application.

7. How do community members benefit who live off reserve?

Benefits should go to all community members, those living on and off reserve. This will need to be determined by the community.

8. There are solar panels at the school, do they see anything from them?

Yes. They cover approximately \$20,000 annually in power costs to the school.

9. What happens to the power we are not consuming? Is it sold to NSP?

All power is sold to NS Power as a new source of revenue for the community.

10. Will this create any jobs?

Yes, it will generate jobs. Lindsay Construction already has employed a member from a community, and she has been working for 3 months with them out of their Trenton location as a Project Manager Intern. There will be construction employment opportunities for the 12–14-month construction period as well as approximately 2 operational opportunities to operate the Solar Park over its 25-plus life span.

11. Can flowers grow in this location? Can there be flowers for the bees and greenery?

Yes. Bring Indigenous design elements like this to a project is what makes a project good. The world will look at the way we do this and want to share this story with other Communities. We can design the site to plant medicine plants, and other pieces that support biodiversity.

12. How long will it take to pay off?

The project funding is structured such that the federal government will provide a non-repayable grant for 75 percent of the project costs (up to 20 million). The remaining 25 percent will be financed, likely over a 25-year term, but these details are not started at this stage, because we must have an approved project to discuss with potential funders. Financing options would be the next stage of development. We do know we have \$20 million committed and this grant funding is specific to this project.

13. What will you do if the vote is No?

We will look to see if there are other options.

14. What are we going to do when everyone wants to move back home because we are getting free power or power at lower rates? Where do we house them?

All potential residential development sites have been mapped and we have plans for one additional subdivision after the current subdivision is completed. When we design the next subdivision, we will optimize the design for plans to house more Community. We know housing is an issue right now and we are working to address this issue currently, we will continue to work on it.

Community Questions: 4:30 pm Session

1. What about the other towns? Will they see an increase in power because of us?

No. Power rates would be blended with NSP, and no one would see an increase. It would just be another source of power. Power rates in NS are regulated by the utility and review board and take into account all sources of the power from NS Power.

2. What is the size compared to football fields?

Approximately 25 football fields.

3. It has been determined that we suffered a severe loss and a connection to the lands that has impacted us for decades through the well-being study. The fight was to return all the lands we lost to what it once was. How will animals and wildlife return when acres of land are clear cut and have no refuge or protection?

Unfortunately, wherever the solar park goes, we will affect trees and wildlife. In many areas land that is equally as beautiful and more pristine than the proposed site. Developing land is not something we like to do, for all the concerns you are expressing but for any future development, be it housing, etc. we will need to clear some areas for growth to keep up with the community needs.

The best thing we can do is bring Indigenous knowledge to the projects we choose and build, design and manage sites in the most responsible and environmentally friendly way.

4. Does a fancy design/ layout cost more? This shows a curve design, will that cost more?

The design as shown in the presentation package was conceptual only since the design has not been finalized. It is an example of how we can design things in a better way by giving a project more love and care.

There can be marginal cost impact to the design or layout, but if it ensures more biodiversity or less disruption to nature then it should be explored as an option.

5. Is the solar roof housing separate from this project?

Yes, it is a separate project.

6. What about solar panels in other areas? Malgomish? The Glebe House?

Yes. We could look at other areas to find grants for other projects to get power to place like Malgomish. This is a great idea.

7. Are the numbers for the school real? Can we see them?

Yes. There is a monitor that shows up to date information every day on this. We can share this. We can share this in the newsletter and the website.

8. Does a rainy season affect the infrastructure?

No, they are built for the elements.

9. Does a rainy season affect the solar panels?

Yes, solar energy produced was down this summer based on the weather. But even in cloudy days, solar is still produced. PLFN already has a good amount to analyze for our geography from the solar sites it already operates. So, we understand the impact of sunny years vs rainy years and will publish more info on this in the coming months.

10. Is the land suggested for this area stable?

Yes, as far as we know, but we will complete more tests.

11. What happens to the water that runs off the solar panels? Is it contaminated? Will it hurt the grass if it's too hot from the panels?

No, it will not be contaminated. It will run off with minimal contact on the panels which are covered in a window like glass.

12. Can the run-off water be stored in barrels for say a green house?

Possibly, we are at that stage where no design has taken place so that could be worked out into a plan, or considered after the solar park is built as a separate "value added" initiative for the land. This is an awesome idea to explore.

13. Why didn't we have power in the community when it was out with all the solar panels we have?

The panels we currently have are not designed to power a community. They are designed to offset total energy usage of a building. The existing solar arrays are not comparable in size to this project.

14. Are the existing panels in PLFN connected to the grid?

Yes, they are.

15. Why this site?

This was chosen in the initial process because of the proximity to the community, there is a favorable power interconnection point to the Nova Scotia power grid access for the site operations and community access and control, the land is south facing slope ideal for solar production.

16. How far away can the panels be to generate power for the community?

This question needs to be investigated a bit more. We will get back to you with this answer. This question is also tied to the solar for homes program. The presence of this solar farm into the future opens new opportunities tied to battery storage capabilities, power outage mitigation, electrical vehicle charging, etc.

17. Will there be power poles, or will it be underground?

There will be power poles, but only a few as the interconnection to Nova Scotia Power is close by the current parcel of proposed land, NSP does not do underground lines in NS.

18. Is the power unlimited from the grid?

It is in a sense of what you can use. None will be wasted

19. Why don't we put solar panels in another plot of land we own instead of industrializing Asek again?

For the land to return to what it was, the land will need to go through the process of becoming one of the largest remediation construction sites in the province for a period of 8 – 10 years after the start date of remediation. Asek will be industrialized for almost a decade after a decision is made on how to remediate the land. It will take another 2 – 5 years to go through the next round of healing on the land.

During that time....a project like the proposed solar park would have benefited PLFN for almost half of the solar project's life, generating clean energy, offsetting thousands of tons of CO2, taking thousands of homes off coal and fossil fuels. This is an industrial energy project, a clean and responsible, Indigenous owned industry.

20. There is an old forestry in Asek that originates from the original NS Forest. Do they know about the trees that have been there since the province started?

Yes, we do know about the forest, and we do understand that cutting down any trees is never easy to consider.