

# SOLAR ARRAYS BRING OVER \$3.1 MILLION TO SHERMAN COMMUNITY

The development of two community solar arrays located on **land owned by the Village of Sherman** for a 25-year project provides \$3,104,000 to the Sherman community. This is **BEFORE** the discounts on electric bills being negotiated for the residents, businesses, and Village municipality after the interconnection of the constructed arrays; not including the employment of regional contractors on the construction expected to be completed later this fall of 2023, and the local business they bring during that period; and the maintenance contract with local farmers.

Solar Liberty is the developer of the 4.625MW array owned by SL Sherman LLC and the 5MW array owned SL Sherman II LLC. While the Village owns the land, SL Sherman and SL Sherman II lease the land and own and operate the solar energy system. The O&M – Operation and Maintenance Agreement between the Village and SL Sherman & SL Sherman II involves agrivoltaic practices keeping the land in agricultural production. The selected seed mix is designed for grazing and apiculture (beekeeping), while replenishing and enriching the soil. SL Sherman and SL Sherman II will contract with an area farmer for the maintenance.

This project, including the land purchase, was overseen by the Village of Sherman’s special legal counsel, local legal counsel, fiscal advisors and bond counsel. The exhaustive and thorough environmental review conducted by the engineering firm of Barton & Loguidice includes a strong Decommissioning Plan. The State’s Historic Office of Preservation, the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Army Corp of Engineers, among many other agencies have reviewed the project for stormwater prevention and pollution, wetlands, glare, noise, contaminants, agricultural and other impacts before giving approval, consent, or opinions leading to the negative declaration of environmental impact.

The electricity generated is immediately added to the grid. There is **no battery storage**. Therefore, not creating a fire hazard, noise, or other concerns with battery storage. The electricity generated does not directly supply the Village of Sherman. The sub-transmission lines carry the electricity over a loop supplying areas within WNY, including Sherman.

## Facts:

- Solar panels do not leak material into the ground.
- Solar panels do not make noise; the transformers are very quiet; **NO BATTERY storage**.
- Current noise heard is from an old blower at the Sewer Department’s Wastewater Treatment Plant, the noise will end with the start of the new WWTP operations, scheduled for June 5<sup>th</sup>.
- The **Village’s** acquisition of land **is lawful** under New York State’s Consolidated Laws **for Villages**.
- The Village is **not** in the electricity generating business; the lease relationship with SL Sherman and SL Sherman II provides for the bonding (insurance) of the arrays and their final decommissioning (shut down & removal).

What started as an inquiry to expand existing solar panels to reduce electric utility costs at the WWTP, led to the opportunity to do what is not believed to have been done anywhere else in NY. **The full advantages of the community solar array benefit the PUBLIC**. It’s very exciting to have found a way to creatively provide revenue to defray the increasing costs of supporting essential and substantial infrastructure over a small rural Village with less than 300 residences. The percent to be discounted off electric bills remains to be negotiated and will add considerably more to the benefits for residents and businesses above the lease payments, PILOT, and HCA. Presently, these alone average over \$124,000/ year injected into the local economy.

**PILOT** (Payment in Lieu of Taxes – approved by the Chautauqua County Industrial Development Agency) provides to:

Sherman Central School	\$17,200 the first year	\$550,900 over 25 years
Chautauqua County	\$ 9,250 the first year	\$296,200 over 25 years
Town of Sherman	\$ 5,735 the first year	\$183,660 over 25 years
Village of Sherman	\$ 1,500 the first year	\$ 48,200 over 25 years

## Host Community Agreement

Town of Sherman	\$12,765 the first year	\$408,900 over 25 years
Village of Sherman	\$13,490 the first year	\$432,250 over 25 years

For more information and video of CCIDA meeting summarizing the solar project:

[www.shermanny.org](http://www.shermanny.org) under **Government** tab ‘**Village Community Solar**’

### Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement

The new WWTP operating system went online Wednesday June 14<sup>th</sup>. The 44-year-old plant has served us well, but the \$7 million upgrade came in the nick of time.

Receiving \$4,386,250 in grant funds from USDA RD, CDBG, and NYSEFC-WIIA is keeping the average annual sewer bill under \$870, an affordable level for our median household income; along with Rural Development's low interest rate of 2.125% on the long-term financing. The new plant provides efficiencies and UV disinfection that is safer and better for the environment.

### Complete Streets

Stay tuned... with the organization GOBike Buffalo and the firm of Barton & Loguidice, the Village will be hosting a **Complete Streets Workshop** to engage the public (of all ages) in walking through Sherman to 'audit' and share their perspective on the safety, walkability, bike-friendly, traffic challenges, and parks, providing input into the Village's Complete Streets Plan which will be the template for addressing concerns and plans to the NYSDOT and prospective grant funders. The kickoff of the Complete Streets Initiative is funded by Chaut Co Partnership for Economic Growth CCPEG.

### NY Main Street – Façade Restoration Project

One big part of the NYMS project is the Walkway Awning Project, funded in part by the \$25,000 CCPEG award, updating, brightening, and bringing sound to the heart of the Village!

### Municipal Code & Zoning Law Updates

Since the 2021 adopted Comprehensive Plan, the Village's Steering Committee and Planning Board began to review and update the Village's Zoning Law and Municipal Code. Most recently adopted LL 2-2023 Pest Remediation and LL 3-2023 Sewer Rent Law Amendment. See [www.shermany.org](http://www.shermany.org)

### George Edmunds Memorial Park

Over \$120,000 in donations received for Edmunds Park has paid for the materials to build the volleyball court, the restroom and fence to be constructed, and the playground to be installed.

This investment into parks & recreation for placemaking in Sherman is both an economic and community development opportunity.

### The Nature Center

The Village is cleaning up the Nature Center and relocating **THE DOG PARK** to the Nature Center from the Hart St location, away from the aquifer.

### Drinking Water Infrastructure Improvement

The \$2.4 million water project that replaced two well-pumps, built a new treatment facility, added detention, and completed the 20-year water main replacement is in its final stage of inspection.

Though typically at the personal cost of the property owner, the lateral connections from the residence to the main were covered by grant funds and Village's Municipal Water Department.

The 60% NYSEFC grant for hardship due to the condition of the well-pumps and treatment building is keeping the water rates effectively *well below* what NYS considers affordable.

### Trails

In cooperation with the Friends of the Chautauqua County Greenway FCCG and the Chautauqua County Rails to Trails, the Village of Sherman has a vision for a number of trail improvements and additions to be developed under the advisement of GOBike and the engineering of Barton & Loguidice, that will be achieved through the developing opportunities with a Complete Streets Plan and the Stormwater Management Project.

The trail system(s) is the gateway to the Village's economic development and stability, as well as building a healthy community with a high quality of living.

### Sherman's Yorker Museum Restoration Project

The Sherman Historical Society's CRCF grant award of \$20,000 is going to provide foundation work for two buildings, replace a deteriorated log on the log dwelling, and a list of repairs to windowsills, the shed doors, etc., along with providing the \$6,000 to match the Village's application for the Preserve NY Grant to prepare a Historic Structure Report for future funding applications and National Registry.

## 2023 Status of Village Projects

### EV Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

The \$250,000 EV charging station project has been provided by the NYSDEC's ZEV Infrastructure Rebate and National Grid's EV Program grant. The hardscape is nearly complete at 106 Church St, and the charging stations themselves will soon be installed after the delivery of the electric panels.

### Still much more to do...

Trees: first apply to the NYSDEC for a tree inventory and maintenance planning grant with an arborist; to be followed in subsequent grant cycles with a tree maintenance and planting grant application.

Stormwater Management: first apply to CDBG for Main Street Stormwater Infrastructure Improvements for \$1.25M, co-funded with Rural Development's long-term financing at a rate of 1.25%. Then continue with additional detention and green infrastructure improvement applications.

Lighting improvements, signs, placemaking...