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Rockland gives green light to solar project grant

By Stephen Betts
The Herald Gazette Associate Editor

ROCKLAND (April 7): A proposal by a Rockland company to manufacture solar panels got a strong show of support Monday night from the City Council.

Advertisement

Chris Straka, owner of Ascendant Energy Company of Rockland, made a presentation Monday to the City Council. He is seeking to have the council apply for a \$100,000 Community Development Block Grant on his company's behalf.

That grant would be among a variety of financing that would total \$5.8 million for the manufacturing plant project.

"This is exciting," said Councilor Elizabeth Dickerson. "My dream is to have Rockland lead the way and regain its status as a manufacturing center."

Councilor Brian Harden said nothing would make him happier than for this new green technology to be produced in Rockland.

The council will vote at its May 4 meeting to apply for the grant but the four councilors at Monday's meeting said they were in support of the application.

Straka said he had not selected a site for the manufacturing plant but was looking at various sites in Rockland and had received an additional call on a potential site since the news became public last week.

Straka said he could have had the panels built in China or India but wanted it done locally.

His goal is to employ 39 people. Of those, 33 would be line workers who would earn \$17 per hour with benefits.

Straka founded the company in 2002.

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