

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
FEBRUARY 10, 2020
DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paul Tillman, Michael Todd, Howard Beach, Jason Rasmussen
Senior Planner, SWCRPC (Acting Land Use Administrator),
Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager

OTHERS PRESENT: David Carpenter, Ralph Meima (Green Lantern Solar), Brian
Walter (Landowner, Green Lantern Solar Project), Fred Kowalik
(resident), Nikita Lenahan (resident)

1. Call to Order

Call to order by Vice – Chairman Paul Tillman at 7:01PM.

2. Executive Session per 1 V. S.A. §313(3) Personnel

Motion was made by Mr. Todd to move Executive Session to Item 3 on the Agenda to take up Green Lantern Solar Site next.

Motion seconded by Mr. Beach

Vote-unanimously.

3. Proposed 500kW Solar Project – 1465 Route 106 (Walter)

Developer: Green Lantern Solar

Mr. Tillman outlined discussions with Green Lantern Solar held at the last meeting to bring those not present at that meeting up to date.

Mr. Meima asked if the Commission had any questions from the last meeting. None were voiced. He distributed a copy of a Memorandum from T.J. Boyle Associates, landscape architect for the project, addressing the stone walls at the south end of the site and referring to them as ‘stone rubble walls.’ He pointed out that the Town Plan (pg.22) identified “stone walls that line the edge of the road right-of-way”, as being part of the rural character of the town that need protection, but that the rubble walls on the site would not qualify.

Mr. Kowalik expressed concern about the number of solar sites along Route 106 and the visibility of the proposed panels at the north end of the site from the road.

Mr. Todd commented that additional buffering will need to be placed at the south end of the site to screen the panels from 3 houses on Bean Hill. He pointed out that the Commission was trying to come up with a list of parameters any site would have to meet to be considered a ‘Preferred Site’.

Mr. Rasmussen expressed concerns about the Commission creating a set of standards not identified in the Town Plan.

The Commission countered that the list would mimic the list the siting council uses.

The idea of flying balloons along the proposed display site at the height of the proposed panels was discussed and agreed to be Green Lantern.

Mr. Walter, owner of the property, indicated that he didn't want any trouble with the neighbors or the Town and would require whatever buffering was necessary in his contract with Green Lantern.

It was agreed that Commissioners would forward a list of concerns/parameters to attain 'Preferred Site' status to Mr. Rasmussen so he could compile a list for the next meeting. Mr. Carpenter stated Green Lantern's need of a 'Preferred Site' status letter to proceed with the project and the Commission reiterated its' concerns about issuing such a letter without submission of critical data about the project. The idea of a memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was discussed in which a tentative approval could be indicated provided that certain concerns were met. The idea requires further exploration.

Mr. Todd made a MOTION to move the discussion of the Zoning Administrator vacancy. Motion seconded by Mr. Beach.

Vote: unanimously

4. Zoning Administrator Vacancy Discussion

Mr. Gulnick, Town Manager, confirmed that Jason Rasmussen has agreed to fill the position of Land Use Administrator until a replacement can be appointed. He indicated that two candidates have applied so far, and that March 9th is the deadline for applications.

Mr. Tillman expressed the need to get someone on board as soon as possible and to that end called for a Special Meeting, Executive Session per 1 V.S. A. §313(a)(3), to review resumes.

5. Executive Session – 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3)

Motion was made by Mr. Beach to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters as outlined in 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3) at 8:48PM.

Seconded by Mr. Todd.

Vote: unanimously

Motion was made by Mr. Todd to come out of Executive Session at 9:05PM.

Motion was made by Mr. Todd to move to Discussion of Citizen Complaint.

Motion seconded by Mr. Beach.

Vote: unanimously

6. Discussion of Citizen Complaint

Mr. Tillman read the statutory requirements pertaining to Commission minutes (1 V.S.A. §312(b)(1)). He then advised Ms. Lenahan and Mr. Kowalik of the Commissions' decision that no violation was found as the minutes in question are still in draft form and Commission members could find no errors or misstatements in the minutes as presented. The Commission did however note inappropriate behavior by an appointed member of

the Commission and indicated that a review of personnel policy will be initiated and appropriate action taken subject to that review.

7. Approval of Meeting Minutes – January 13, 2020 & January 27, 2020

Mr. Todd made a Motion to approve the minutes from January 13, 2020.

Mr. Beach seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Ms. Lenahan and Mr. Kowalik were asked to elaborate on the defect they had cited in their complaint. Ms. Lenahan was concerned that comments she and Mr. Kowalik made at the meeting about a flawed A.N.R. report on the solar site proposed next door to their property was not in the minutes.

The Commission responded that the minutes are not a verbatim transcript of the proceedings and that there are practical limits as to how detailed minutes can be.

Vote: unanimously

Mr. Todd made a Motion to TABLE the minutes of January 27, 2020.

Motion seconded by Mr. Beach.

Vote: unanimously

Motion by Mr. Todd to TABLE Zoning Bylaw Update to next meeting.

Seconded by Mr. Beach.

Vote: unanimously

Mr. Tillman asked if any Commissioners had items they wanted added to the next meeting agenda. Hearing none, he entertained a Motion to Adjourn.

8. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Beach at 9:27PM.

Seconded by Mr. Todd.

Vote: unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Beach