

FINAL
TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT
MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, 27 January, 2020

I. Call to Order by Vice-Chair, Paul Tillman at 7pm
Planning Commission: Howard Beach, Tyler Harwell, Paul Tillman, Julia Lloyd Wright (Energy Coordinator, ex-officio)

Visitors: David Carpenter, Ralph Meima (Green Lantern Solar) Brian Walter, Weathersfield Landowner (Green Lantern Solar Project), Fred Kowalik, Nikita Lenahan (Residents)

II. Executive session per 1 V.S.A. s/s 313(3) (Personnel)
A motion was made by Howard Beach to go into executive session for “Personnel” at 7pm, seconded by Tyler Harwell. Voted: Unanimously.
The Commission came out of executive session at 7:17pm.

III. Agenda Review - 27 January, 2020
A motion was made by Howard Beach to move Item 7. Proposed 500kW solar project: 1465 Route 106/Waters, Developer: Green Lantern Solar to Item 4. Seconded by Tyler Harwell. Voted: Unanimously

VII. Proposed 500kW solar project: 1465 Route 106/Walters, Developer: Green Lantern Solar
Brian Walter owner of the former Pegasus horse farm on Route 106 in Perkinsville came before the Planning Commission to speak of his plans to protect his property from subdivision and enter into an agreement with Green Lantern Solar to install a 500kW solar project. He said his property is important, he has paid taxes on it for over 18 years, for several years it has been open fields and he is happy with the proposed project and the way it looks. Green Lantern Solar will not have to cut roads, he said. He mentioned the town has two similar projects, he wants to do things right and no-one should be bothered by it.
In reviewing the T.J. Boyle Associates, LLC (Burlington VT) landscape architects maps and photographs Paul Tillman mentioned the sighting from the road of residential buildings and vehicles on Route 106.
There was a discussion on the configuration of the arrays, and the vicinity of wetland areas, which is not expected to be changed. Potential screening and vegetation could be added.
A Preliminary Aesthetic Review by T.J. Boyle addressed to Ralph Meima of Green Lantern Solar states that they will complete the full aesthetic impact review for inclusion with the petition for a Certificate of Public Good from the Public Utility Commission (PUC).
Paul Tillman said that no decision has been made on the proposal and two critical board members were not present. He was unable to be present for the site visit but he would go and see it.
David Carpenter, company attorney for Green Lantern Solar, said that they are looking at a time line. There is new legislation in Montpelier where the State is seeking a use for marginal property. Land users can get aid with property taxes if the land is well sited. Information for the communities, regarding site levels, brownfields, etc., are all at the State level and included in the PUC process. It would be helpful to have a “Preferred Site Letter” for the rate, size of the project, and this doesn’t lock the town in. The completed reports go to the PUC. The 45-day period starts the count down, then the comment period. Abutters are notified and then the project responds to any comments and criteria it must meet with the Town Plan.
Paul Tillman will add the project to the agenda for the next meeting at 7pm on 10 February, 2020.
Paul Tillman asked Ralph Meima if the site was firm - he was assured that this is a stable design and 98 percent set.
Howard Beach spoke of Preferred Site Letters and his concerns for the status when none of the reports have been completed.
Ralph Meima said that if anything doesn’t match you can retract. He plans to finish most of the reports by May (3-4 months) and give the town the final report to go through.

IV. Discussion of Citizen Complaint

Paul Tillman said he has copies of Town procedures and policy to review, procedures were last revised in 2011.

There is no time line and no decisions will be made without all present.

The item will be on the Agenda for the next meeting.

V. Comments from Citizens

Fred Kowalik asked if the new Town Manager would hold the position of Interim Planning Commission Administrator. He will not.

VI. Approval of Meeting Minutes - 13 January, 2020

A motion was made by Tyler Harwell to table the Minutes of 13 January, 2020 until the next meeting on 10 February, 2020, seconded by Howard Beach. Voted: Unanimously.

VIII. Town Report Summary Discussion

Paul Tillman read a draft from his notes of items to include in the Planning Commission submission for the Annual Town Report. These were discussed and due to time restrictions it was agreed he will submit them as written for publication.

A motion was made by Tyler Harwell to approve and submit the Planning Commission report for printing in the Annual Town Report, seconded by Howard Beach. Voted: Unanimously.

IX. Zoning Administrator Vacancy Discussion

Paul Tillman read a statement written by him as Vice Chair/Acting Chair and submitted to the Planning Commission on 27 January, 2020. The notes refer to the future staffing of the (currently vacant) Land Use Administrator position. The Planning Commission was unaware that the selectboard took action to fund the position without consulting with the Planning Commission. Paul Tillman has asked members of the Planning Commission for their recommendations/comments. Paul Tillman will communicate their concerns to the selectboard. It is stressed that these notes are "Personal from Citizen"

XII. Next meeting agenda - 10 February, 2020

- Proposed 500kW solar project, 1465 Rte. 106/ Walters
- Citizen Complaint
- Zoning Bylaw Updates, (a) Conservation of Natural Resources bylaw - riparian buffers (b) Change to zoning map/districts (c) Evaluation of and possible changes to definitions in zoning bylaws.
- Bylaw updates - Status spreadsheet review
- Planning - part/time position - scan docs - digitize for Planning Office

XIII. Adjourn

A motion was made by Howard Beach to adjourn at 8:40pm, seconded by Tyler Harwell