



Approved: 10 / 10 / 2020
AOM

Planning Board
Regular Meeting/Public Hearing Minutes
August 18, 2020
Remotely Recorded via Zoom

WINCHENDON TOWN CLERK
RCUD NOV 18 2020 PM4:10

Present: Chairman Guy Corbosiero, Arthur Amenta, Burton Gould Jr., Leston Goodrich Jr., Joseph Sackett, Garrett Wante (Alternate)
Alison Manugian, Planning Agent

Guests: Rodney Galton, Al Gallant, Tony Kurylo, Inanna Arthen, Kevin Clark WVRC

Absent:

6:30PM- Chairman Guy Corbosiero called the Planning Board meeting to order and read the statement about remote meetings during COVID 19

Announcements:

A Manugian notified the Board that the Robert's Way project garage structure is in progress and the front drainage is largely done for the subdivision. The owner stated to the agent that he anticipates approximately 8,000cy of material removal. The Subdivision approval conditions require that the PB ok the grading and drainage prior to removal of materials from site. In this case, given the volume of soil to be removed the grading/drainage can't be completed without permission to remove materials. Guidance was requested as to how to proceed, allowing or halting material removals from the site(s).

G. Corbosiero indicated surprise that they didn't reach out to the Planning Board in advance of removing materials as this is a standard condition. He believes they should halt and then get permission to proceed.

B. Gould expressed ongoing concerns about the operations on this site. He suggested that a site visit and discussion at a posted meeting are necessary.

The suggestion quickly reached consensus and the agent will reach out to shut down material removals tomorrow morning, then setup a meeting followed by a site visit.

Public Comments: None.

Reorganization of Board Positions - Chair & Vice-Chair -

A Amenta motioned that G. Corbosiero continue to serve as Chair and L. Goodrich seconded the motion. All voted aye via roll call.

- A. Amenta nominated JSackett serve as Vice-Chair and L. Goodrich seconded the motion. J. Sackett respectfully declined this role.
B Gould suggested passing this over for now as no further nominations were forthcoming.

MJTC appointment – to be placed on the next agenda and members will seek volunteers.

L. Goodrich motioned to move tree hearing up on agenda – B. Gould seconded the motion and all voted aye via roll call

Public Hearing in conjunction with Tree Warden – Application for removal of Eastern White Pine (50” diam @ chest height) near 98 Hale St. for solar array.

G. Corbosiero read the public hearing notice and opened the public hearing.

Al Gallant - Winchendon Tree Warden explained that Richard Garno has requested permission to remove a large tree near his property. Per MGL Chapter 87, Section 3 the Tree Warden can not remove or allow to be removed a healthy tree in the public way. The Planning Board has jurisdiction to allow such a tree to be removed.

Richard Garno explained that he has 15 trees that need to be removed to facilitate solar array productivity. Fourteen trees are on his property and one is a town tree in the public way. He expressed concern that this tree, with the other 14 removed, may become a hazard due to the existing lean and the newfound exposure.

L. Goodrich moved to close the hearing – B. Gould seconded this motion and all voted aye via roll call.

B. Gould moved to allow tree to be removed – L. Goodrich seconded this motion and all voted aye via roll call.

R. Garno requested a letter affirming this decision which will be forthcoming from the Tree Warden and Planning Agent.

ECOS Solar Site Plan Application - Spring Street; Assessor's Map 9, Parcels 97 & 98 Construction of a 9MW ground mounted solar array w/ work in wetland buffers and wetland crossings

G. Corbosiero read the public hearing notice and opened the public hearing.

A Manugian explained that the project is in progress with Conservation for review of the wetland impacts. A peer review for the Site Permit has been requested, but not yet completed. The peer reviewer, Jean Christy of Tighe and Bond, will be doing a site walk on the 24th with the owner and his wetland scientist.

G. Corbosiero stated that a site walk and peer review response will be needed before any decision can be rendered.

R. Galton of ECOS Energy summarized the project – the site is approximately 72 acres and will have a 9MW solar installation. The fenced area will be approximately 58 acres and will surround

all of the solar system. The remainder of the area will become grassed meadow, in particular he highlighted some mounds on the southern end of the site that will be removed and topsoiled to become meadow.. The site was previously used as a gravel operation and the existing roadways and wetland crossings will be utilized. Some detention basins are proposed to address runoff changes in response to grading and changes in ground cover. He reviewed the distances to the property lines and indicated that the adjacent parcel in Ashburnham is also owned by the same company. The interconnection point, per National Grid, is approximately 2 miles west on Spring Street.

L. Goodrich requested clarification of the location coming off of Spring Street and echoed the need for a site walk to understand the arrays and locations, particularly given the glint/glare concerns from other similar projects.

G. Corbosiero asked which open fields are to be used and the applicant responded that all three open fields will be used. He stated that the array will have a tracker system so the panels will move with the sun, changing angle approximately every 5 minutes.

G. Corbosiero asked about homes within ½ mile of the site and the applicant stated he doesn't think there are any on the Winchendon side. L. Goodrich indicated that there is a home on the Ashburnham side of the project.

L. Goodrich reiterated the need for a site walk to explain how the panels change angle, to what degree they move and what the nearby impacts will be. R. Galton explained that this area in summer is in a SE to NW ellipse for the path of the sun and in the winter a SE-SW ellipse will be used. The primary direction of the panels will be to the south.

B Gould indicated that the site has water, which raises a question of flood plain and means that the Board should focus on what Conservation decisions are made. R. Galton clarified that the project is in Zone C so is outside the flood hazard zones. B. Gould indicated personal knowledge of the site and concern about the age of the Flood Zone determinations.

R. Galton indicated a hope that the Conservation review will wrap up at their next meeting in early September.

B Gould asked about a road/access off of Route 140 – there used to be a paper road to a camping area, which can be clarified with the site visit.

R. Galton invited the Planning Board members to join in on the previously scheduled site walk on August 24 at 11 am. All members indicated that the time works for them and that they plan to attend.

L. Goodrich moved to continue the hearing to 6:35pm on September 15th, allowing for the Conservation meeting to occur. This motion was seconded by B. Gould and all voted aye via roll call.

Master Plan

A Manugian requested that the Board consider reducing the make up of the Master Plan Committee from 7 members to five. There are currently five appointed members and obtaining a quorum

can be difficult. B. Gould motioned to reduce the Committee as suggested. L. Goodrich seconded the motion. J. Sackett and A. Amenta recused themselves due to concerns about conflict. G. Corbosiero, L. Goodrich and B. Gould voted aye via roll call.

A Manugian requested that Planning Board members review the Preliminary Draft Master Plan in the meeting packet and send comments and questions to the Land Use Department. It is the intent to open the document up for public comment in the coming weeks.

Ongoing solar glare discussion with Tony Kurylo, an abutter to Lincoln Solar.

This agenda item is a continuation of past glare concerns raised by Mr. Kurylo following the installation of the Lincoln Solar System. During various times of year glare is present off of the panels and impacts his home and property.

B. Gould agreed that this is of concern and requested that A. Manugian follow up with Town Counsel to get a detailed understanding of legal options and possible Town exposures.

T. Kurylo appreciated the idea that Counsel be consulted. He indicated that the Building Inspector, Geoff Newton, visited the site and agreed there is a problem. He indicated that G. Newton stated he would update the Planning Board and would reach out to the solar array installers.

A. Manugian indicated that the solar company has not made any suggestions to date that would remedy the issues or address T. Kurylo's concerns.

T. Kurylo asked about the process to update the zoning regulations to prevent similar impacts from future projects. G. Corbosiero indicated an interest in this as well.

A. Manugian indicated that a bylaw update would need to be approved by Town Meeting. During the COVID state of emergency the state is not allowing any bylaw changes. There is an opportunity to start doing the research and working on updates for a future town meeting.

The general consensus is that there is clearly a problem and one that we need to learn from to ensure that future projects do not have the same impacts.

B. Gould is concerned that changing the zoning at this point could get expensive.

T. Kurylo asked if the current project would be required to update and adapt to future bylaw changes if they are approved. G. Corbosier stated that they would not.

T. Kurylo indicated that the Planning Board should consider more effective blending with environment and minimizing impact to abutters. He noted that other projects (Robert's Way was highlighted) have included discussion and work to ensure pleasing aesthetics. The Lincoln Solar project has amounted to thousands of mirrors installed with regard only to setbacks and without discussion of vegetation. Winchendon, and other communities, need to improve buffering requirements for these types of projects.

T Kurylo indicated that the solar array has been up and functional for almost a year now and that there are eight months of glare – March through October. Glare comes off of different panels at different points and seems to hit more panels in the summer increasing the impact.

B Gould motioned to request information from town counsel – A Amenta seconded the motion and clarified that his interest is around ‘What can the planning board do legally to help this guy out?’ ‘What are legal ramifications – get us pointed in the right direction legally. What options are there to update and change bylaws now and in the future.’ All presented voted aye via roll call

G. Corbosiero asked for hard copies of the site drawings for ECOS – Solar project and A. Manugian indicated she would mail them to him. Any other members wanting hard copies of any materials should let her know.

Minutes –

J Sackett motioned to delay voting on all minutes as he has yet to review them. L Goodrich seconded this motion. B. Gould indicated that his packet didn’t include minutes. All voted aye via roll call.

Correspondence Update

A variety of meeting announcements and decision notices. The only notable one is from the Town of Rindge which is considering an application for a Major Site Plan and Major Subdivision project located off of Route 119. The project includes 26 single family lots, 16 3-bedroom units and 24 2-bedroom units. Plans are available at www.rindgenh.org under the Planning Board page.

B Gould motioned to adjourn, and L Goodrich seconded the motion – the board unanimously voted aye via roll call vote and Chairman Guy Corbosiero adjourned the meeting at 7:38

Respectfully submitted:

Alison Manugian – Planning Agent

Guy Corbosiero, Chairman

Leston Goodrich Jr.

Arthur Amenta

Burton Gould

Joseph Sackett

Garrett Wante (Alternate)