

Minutes of Planning Board Meeting
Town of Whately, MA
Town Offices Building, 4 Sandy Lane
October 30, 2018

Members Present: Don Sluter, Judy Markland, Nicholas Jones, Sara Cooper
Members Absent:: Helena Farrell

Attending:

Scott Remer, Hexagon Energy LLC, 722 Preston Ave., Ste. 102, Charlottesville, VA
Daniel Bulka, Hexagon Energy LLC, 722 Preston Ave., Ste. 102, Charlottesville, VA
Aaron Simms, 42 Lead Mine Rd., Southampton
John Baronas, 75 Whately Rd., South Deerfield
John Hannum, 216 Chestnut Plain Rd.
David Lahr, 8 Fairview Way
James Boehm, 38 Bart Dr., Canton, CT
Michael Nolan, 70 Gunn Rd., Southampton
Meredith Savage, SWCA Environmental Consultants, 15 Research Dr., Amherst
Dennis Adler, Hill-Engineering, 50 Depot St., Dalton
Benjamin Wadham, 5 Pocumtuck Dr., South Deerfield
Tom Reidy, 6 South East St., Amherst

I. Call to Order, 7:00p.m.

The meeting was not recorded.

II. PUBLIC HEARING: Continued from September 25, 2018:

Application by David Lahr on behalf of Covestro, LLC Specialty Films NAFTA, for Site Plan Review RE: Temporary Gravel Parking Lot on premises located at 8 Fairview Way, to provide overflow parking for both contractors and employees while interior building modifications are ongoing and while Phase 2 of construction is completed.

Jeffrey D. Randall, of Hill Engineers, Architects, Planners, Inc., Dalton, using a large-format plan on an easel, explained that the plant is going to a work schedule of 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, and is doing some interior remodeling to accommodate this. He showed the board plans for Phase 2 of the project as well, but said they will not be working on Phase 2 for this application. Saying the company wants to put the temporary parking lot in as soon as possible, he showed the location of the light pole and requested a waiver for landscape islands. He said tree planting along the road is going on now. Judy moved to accept the plan as presented. Nicholas seconded and the site plan was approved unanimously. Don will send Jeffrey a site plan approval letter.

III. PUBLIC HEARING: Continued from September 25, 2018:

Application by Scott Remer, of Hexagon Energy LLC, to construct the Juniper Solar Project, a 500 kW, AC, large-scale ground mounted solar power generation project, on 5.77 acres of a 36-acre parcel within the A/R 2 zone and located at E/S North Street (south of and adjoining 68 North Street) and owned by Chester Wroblewski.

Meredith Savage, Senior Wetland Scientist with SWCA Environmental Consultants, Amherst, stated that the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) will hold hearings on November 1, 2018 for the special permit and variance applications that have been filed. She explained that the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program has said that the project is too close to the river channel and will require a special state permit due to the impact on Priority Habitat Areas of endangered species (3 species of freshwater mussel, and the wood turtle). The applicant would be able to avoid this special state permit by moving some of the project into the A/R 1 zone, she said, and has requested the variance in order to do so. Tonight, she said, she wants to present and explain plan revision changes and then schedule a continuance of the hearing to a date following the ZBA meeting on November 1.

Ms. Savage and Scott Remer supplied information and answers to questions from the board and the attendees. Points of discussion included:

- Meredith Savage will send a digital copy of the application package to Judy to distribute to the board.
- The solar panels require no grading or soil removal. They are made of stippled, non-reflective (matte) glass. The panels do not rotate; that would be dual axis tracking. The panels to be used are single axis tracking panels, which follow the sun from east to west.
- Landscaping: Soil under the panels will be scarified, and seeded with a pollinator mix of dense grasses and sedges, and wildflowers. They are considering establishing beehives. Judy noted the requirement for a maintenance plan regarding the plantings and beehives.
- The 10-ft maintenance corridor, the fence, the road and its grading
- The only trees to be cut are 4-5 trees near where the access road needs to go.
- The small impact to wetlands at the existing drainage ditch's crossing between the north and middle fields
- The fields in back will no longer be mowed but will be allowed to go fallow.
- The applicant is waiting until after the ZBA hearing to file a Notice of Intent with the Conservation Commission.
- Noise: a Clean Energy Focus study found that at 50 feet from the inverter, noise drops to ambient level. This would be 300, 400, and 500 feet from abutters.
- Viewscape: The historical area on the west side of the road will be able to see the panels, but the arrays will be broken up, the character of the farm will not change, and the soil can return to agriculture when the panels are eventually decommissioned. If beehives are used, they can post information about them near the panels and the pollinator plantings.

- Nourse Farms was mentioned as an applicant who had applied for a variance due to a similar situation, but was noted that the situation was different because Nourse Farms would have had, or could have qualified for, an agricultural exemption.
- Bylaws section 171-28.5 Solar Electric Generating Facilities [Added section 10-27-2011], C. (2) states that “The project proponent shall provide the following documents in addition to or in coordination with those required for Site Plan Review...” Item (a) v. on the list that follows names “Locations of local or National Historic Districts and Priority Heritage Landscapes;”. Judy noted that a scenic road in the Historic District, the view at the top of Sanderson’s Hill, and other items are not yet located on the site plan, and said that the Historical Commission wants that information to be added to the plan before the ZBA meeting on Thursday Nov. 1, 2018. The board will get the relevant information to Meredith Savage before the ZBA meeting, and she will send the board digital files of the submission.

Don scheduled the hearing to be continued on Tuesday, November 27, 2018, at 7:15 p.m.

IV. Other

Pine Plains 2018 Stormwater Report

The board reviewed “Table 1 – Maintenance Schedule for Structural BMPs”. Nicholas Jones moved to accept the report, Sara seconded, and the board voted unanimously to accept the report as amended.

The board held an informal discussion with John Baronas and Aaron Simms, who sought advice about how to proceed with plans to build a solar power generation facility on property located on Long Plain Road.

The board discussed Judy’s first draft of the document, “Adult Use Marijuana Odor Control Plan”. Judy will edit the document to make it clear that it is intended to be a guide, and not a list of requirements, for marijuana cultivation projects.

At the November meeting, the board will discuss changing the starting time for its meetings from 7:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., starting with the December meeting.

V. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of September 25, 2018

Nicholas moved to approve the minutes as amended, Sara seconded, and the board voted unanimously to approve them as amended.

Minutes of October 16, 2018

Judy moved to approve the minutes as amended, Don seconded, and the board voted unanimously to approve them as amended.

VI. Planning Board Mail

The board reviewed the mail.

VII. Next Meetings –

November 13, 2018 (continued Hutkoski/Urban Grown Marijuana Cultivation hearing)

November 27, 2018 (continued Wroblewski/Hexagon Energy Solar Facility hearing)

VII. Adjournment: At 8:55 p.m., the board voted to adjourn

Documents Reviewed (kept in the Planning Board files)

1. An Application for Site Plan Approval submitted by Covestro LLC, dated September 25, 2018 and Prepared for Covestro by Hill Engineers, Architects, Planners, Inc. of Dalton. The application is part of a bound informational packet about the project – a temporary gravel parking lot>
2. Pine Plains 2018 Stormwater Report: “Table 1 – Maintenance Schedule for Structural BMPs”
3. First draft of Judy Markland’s “Adult Use Marijuana Odor Control Plan”

Mary McCarthy
Secretary
Planning Board
Town of Whately, MA