

Minutes of Planning Board Meeting
Town of Whately, MA
Town Offices Building, 4 Sandy Lane
September 24, 2019

Members Present: Don Sluter, Nicholas Jones, Judy Markland, Sara Cooper, Tom Litwin

Members Absent:: none

Attending: Christopher Kellogg, 163 Chestnut Plain Road

I. Call to Order, 6:35 p.m.

The meeting was not recorded.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Minutes of August 2, 2019: Nicholas moved to approve, Sara seconded the motion, and the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes

Minutes of August 27, 2019: postponed to next meeting

III. Old Business

Scott/Skroski Common Driveway

Don explained that the common driveway was approved at the August 2 meeting despite its being only 12 feet wide when the required width is 15 feet. He and Highway Superintendent Keith Bardwell have spoken about this. Don gave a copy of the plan to new board member Tom Litwin, who had not seen it. The board considered that this driveway already exists, and that town safety officials must approve any deviation from the requirement. Don called Fire Chief John Hannum from the meeting, and Chief Hannum explained a problem: the driveway is too narrow for a fire truck to get all the way up it in the winter. Don will follow up and ask Chief Hannum to visit the site. Further discussion was postponed to the next meeting. Don will explain the situation to Elizabeth Scott and the Skroskis.

IV. Other

Whately resident Chris Kellogg, of 163 Chestnut Plain Road, told the board that he had heard that a solar power field is to be built across the street from his house. He said no formal plans had been filed yet, but said he is concerned. Nicholas mentioned to the board that Mr. Kellogg has worked for Eversource and has technical knowledge. Mr. Kellogg said he had come to the meeting with information for the board regarding upcoming regulatory changes regarding future solar power projects. He noted that the sites for the eastern Massachusetts SMART program are limited and may be opened up to western Mass, where there is more land available. He said western Mass. will see more large projects flowing into our area as a result.

Mr. Kellogg said that projects with battery storage will now be included. He described semi-trailer size batteries built on concrete slabs and steel-encased. He noted possible problems with

permeability/non-permeability, emergency response, higher fire risk, and sufficient numbers of prepared staff.

Mr. Kellogg also said it is not true that 3 poles for interconnection transformers must be installed 1-2-3, mounted on three separate poles. The installing project owners prefer to do it that way, he said, because other installation options would cost them a lot more – for things like underground structures. The board stated that it had been told by installers for several projects that the pole-mounted method is required by Eversource; Chris Kellogg said Eversource does *not* have such a requirement.

Mr. Kellogg mentioned having attended a meeting of the Massachusetts Department of Energy and Resources and said he would email the board the address for the “Comments” website. Sara suggested that the board address updating the bylaws for solar projects.

V. Judy noted that she has volunteered to serve on the visioning committee for the center school.

VI. Planning Board Mail
The board reviewed the mail.

VII. Adjournment:
At 7:45 pm, the board voted to adjourn.

Documents Reviewed (kept in the Planning Board files)

None

Mary McCarthy
Secretary
Planning Board
Town of Whately, MA