

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

Date: 6/14/2023

Town Hall: Tom Ewing, Van Stoddard, Molly Daniell, Steve Friedman, and Richard Nathhorst

Not in Attendance: Swan Keyes, Tim Shores

Minutes taken by Molly Daniell

Meeting opens at 7:30 pm ET

1. Housekeeping
 - a. **Planning board votes to approve minutes from last month's meeting. Vote passed unanimously.**
 - b. Request for any additions to the agenda? Tom recommends adding Denzel Hankinson, and the Planning Board agrees to include his agenda item for review.

2. Solar Resource and Infrastructure Assessment Report prepared by UMass Clean Energy Extension begins at 7:36 pm
 - Richard shares that Leverett had a high response rate, tied with Montague as the highest regional response rate. Leverett residents submitted 265 unique surveys.
 - UMass will synthesize survey results and draft a community action plan during the course of the summer
 - By August/September, this report will be shared with the Planning Board and Master Plan Committee.
 - Question: Will implementation of the action plan require significant rewrite of the zoning?
 - Richard shares that he does not believe it will; perhaps just a moderate change to height requirements of residential solar ground mounted panels.

3. Public Hearing of 9 Cave Hill Road Site Plan begins at 7:46 pm
 - a. Site plan is presented by Valley Solar representative, Jesse Brekelbaum. This is a small scale solar project. No concrete required, just driving ground screws.
 - b. Questions from the Planning Board: (1) show us the plot of land where the array will be located? (2) where is the nearest neighbor? (3) Why does the array need to be as high as it is? (4) what is the total height of the array from ground to the highest point?
 - c. Jesse: The installation must accommodate a 25 degree tilt and will be 11-12 feet top to bottom.
 - d. Eva Gibavic shares insights on neighbors and visibility of the panels by nearby neighbors. She does not raise an objection to the plan.
 - e. **Planning Board makes a motion to approve, which is seconded. Vote passed unanimously.**

4. Denzel Hankinson located at 77 Depot Road
 - a. Background provided by Tom: the planning board approved Mr. Hankinson's project in 2020 to make a new lot from his existing property. This lot was large enough to include both buildable land and an aquifer zone. Planning Board approved under the expectation that no construction could occur on the aquifer zones. The lot was put on the market and Mr. Hankinson came into contact with a potential buyer. In the pursuit of building permits, Jim Hawkins indicated that the lot would need to be subdivided further into three distinct lots.
 - b. Tom indicated that he talked with Mr. Hawkins directly to clarify whether three lots were indeed required, or whether the original plan could stand. The confusion stems from paragraph 43.21 of the bylaws.
 - c. Mr. Hankinson, after all, did meet the requirements of the by-laws as originally approved.
 - d. Mr. Hankinson was given a choice whether to stick with the originally approved plan or to pursue for a vote the three distinct lots. Mr. Hankinson requested no vote and to move forward as originally intended.
 - e. **No vote required to resolve this matter.**

5. Rezoning Town Center & Grant Application
 - a. The Planning Board received a request for endorsement of a planning grant from the State to reimagine the "downtown" between the public safety complex through Town Hall. The purpose of this grant would be to generate a greater sense of community and connection through enhanced, more usable public space.
 - b. The study grant would be for \$70,000.
 - c. All planning board members that there should be coordination and alignment with the Master Plan committee.

6. Summer Meetings
 - a. Planning board members agreed to continue meeting over the summer so long as there was timely business requiring discussion. Meetings would, otherwise, be canceled.

7. Future Meeting Topics
 - a. FEMA flood plans
 - b. Updating zoning bylaw language such that it is clearer to read and understand - limits confusion and misinterpretation
 - c. Updating cell tower provisions

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm

