



Zoning Board of Appeals Planning Board

Minutes of Thursday, September 28, 2017 – 5:45 PM

Board of Appeals members present: Charles Dudek, Gerry Mann & Osa Flory

Planning Board members present: Stephen Smith, Stepehn Snow, Christopher Flory, Jean O'Neil

Applicant Present: John Perry-Dynamic Energy & Kevin McCaffery-SWCA Environmental

Public Present: Paul Mock Jr., John Cotton, Fran Ryan-Daily Hampshire Gazette, Emily Cohen & Ted Eiseman

Public Hearing-Williamsburg East Street Solar LLC-103 Briar Hill Road

This joint public hearing was called after an application for a Special Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals and a Site Plan Review from the Planning Board was received By Williamsburg East St. Solar LLC to construct a commercial ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (pv) array with a total area between 1.25 and 20 acres in the Rural District (RU) on property owned by Hull Forest Products, Pomfret Center, CT property identified as Assessors Map A, Lot 4. The Site Plan Review is required by Section 5.6 and The Special Permit is required by Sections 3.2, 6.0 and 7.4 of the Zoning Bylaws of Williamsburg.

(CD) opened the public hearing and told the public present that the secretary was taping the meeting for accuracy of minutes and requested if anyone else was recording the meeting to please let the Board know. No one spoke.

The Planning Board Chair requested a moment of silence in memory of Jim Locke who had been chair of the Planning Board who had recently passed away. They mentioned his many contributions to the Town of Williamsburg.

John Perry from Dynamic Energy gave an overview of the project. The entire property is 370 acres. Most of it is forest except a gravel pit. Eighteen (18) acres will be used for the solar (pv) array in the gravel pit area. The Planning Board had already studied the project during recent Planning Board meetings and had no questions for Mr. Perry.

Emily Cohen who is an abutter asked about herbicides and pesticides and whether they would be used to keep vegetation down. J. Perry stated that is not a typical practice to use chemicals. Any cutting would take place once or twice a year. It would be done with machinery not chemicals.

There was some discussion about a decommissioning plan. The abutters want to make sure they are not left with a polluted site at the end of the 20 years. There will be a plan in place as the Town requires one.

John Cotton, an abutter asked about well water and whether any wells could become contaminated. It was again stated there would be no chemicals used on the property. That is not a common practice for this type of project.

Kim Boas from the Energy Committee asked about the transformers and how they will be sited in the area. J. Perry stated they would be on concrete slabs and he will provide a data sheet on the transformers to the Town.

The panels will be post driven into the ground and there will be approximately 17,000 panels installed in this project, which was presented to the Planning Board at a previous meeting.

J. Perry stated that Massachusetts Department of Energy, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and Massachusetts Clean Energy Center have put out a Clean Energy Results booklet which he presented to the Board.

Ted Eiseman, who is another abutter asked if Dynamic Energy will be doing the cutting if needed. That work is contracted out and that company will be notified to use no chemicals, herbicides or pesticides at the site.

Ms. Cohen asked about noise generated during the install and what time would work start. J. Perry noted that the post driving is a little noisy and they hope to have that work done in four weeks once they start. There will be some grading done with heavy machinery. The Town sets what hours work can begin and end by in each permit if approved. They typically start around 7 am and they hope to have ground breaking next spring. Once the installation is complete the only people in or out of the area would be the landscapers twice a year and someone checking out the area every three months.

John Cotton noted that the area is perfect for this type of project as it sits in a very remote area.

Motion made (GM) and seconded (OF) to close the Public Hearing regarding the Zoning Board of Appeals.
Motion made (S Smith) and seconded (S Snow) to close the Site Plan Review hearing. Both motions were so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Lessard, Secretary