



TOWN OF PLYMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS PLANNING BOARD

Plympton Planning Board – Minutes – September 2, 2020

Meeting opened at 5:30 p.m. members present A. Sobolewski, J. Cohen; J. Schmid;

Mr. D'Angelo arrived at 5:32 and left at 6:15

Ms. MacDonald arrived at 5:33

1. 5:30 Continued Public Hearing – BE RE, LLC for Site Plan Approval to construct a proposed solar facility under Zoning Bylaw Section 6.10- Solar Facilities – dual use with cranberry bogs on land identified as 131/137 Ring Road, owned by Roger A. Correira M/B/L 8/2/29.

David Kelley Meridian Associates has submitted a written request for a continuance.
Ms. Sobolewski moves to continue the public hearing to Wednesday September 23, 2020 at 5:35 pm. Mr. Cohen seconds - unanimous.

2. 5:35 Continued Public Hearing – BE RE, LLC for Site Plan Approval to construct a proposed solar facility under Zoning Bylaw Section 6.10- Solar Facilities – dual use with cranberry bogs on land identified as 126 Ring Road, owned by Wayne Dunham M/B/L 8/1/27 and 27A.

David Kelley Meridian Associates has submitted a written request for a continuance.
Ms. Sobolewski moves to continue the public hearing to Wednesday September 23, 2020 at 5:40 pm. Mr. D'Angelo seconds - unanimous

3. 5:40 Public Hearing on Modification to Site Plan Approval - 61 Upland Road –

Brandon Smith of Borrego Solar appears on behalf of the applicant. Requesting approval of a modification to a site plan review approval that was granted in May 2018. The changes to the layout are minor and include a reduction in the footprint of the site. The tree clearing footprint is approximately ½ acre smaller. The two equipment pads are in the same general location. The main change is the interconnection. Originally the plan had two options for interconnection: one to Brook Street and one through a bog area to Upland Road. This modification uses the interconnection off of Upland Road and as a result there is a slight change to the permitted layout. The interconnection will run underground through the existing bog road to Upland Road. The approved plans had the telephone poles to the north and these plans locate the utility poles to the south.

Mr. Schmid asks for clarification that the poles on the driveway to upland road are existing and Mr. Smith confirms that. The poles along the driveway are the same as those which are currently in existence.

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Mr. D'Angelo asks whether there will be any impact on the neighbors from the proposed change and Mr. Smith states that there is no additional impact. He says the rationale for the change is that the utility requires additional permanent equipment on the utility poles – the utility requires additional poles and there is more space in the new layout to place the poles.

Ms. Sobolewski asks the number of new poles and is informed that there are nine (9) new poles.

Mr. Schmid asks whether the Conservation Commission needs to approve the plans. Mr. Smith states that the plans have been through the Conservation Commission. That process resulted in some of the footprint changes that are shown on these revised plans.

Discussion opened to the public:

Jim Herbert 25 Dukes Brook. He will see every one of the new poles and the things that will be put on top of the poles from his house. Mr. Smith points out the location of the new poles and the location of his house. Ms. Sobolewski asks for additional information to show what the poles will look like or what effect the reconfigured poles will have on Mr. Herbert's view.

Candace Mackinna-Imlach asks what zoning bylaw is in effect for this proceeding. Ms. Sobolewski replies that the application was dated October 19, 2017 and therefore the Zoning bylaw in effect at that time is the Bylaw that controls.

Ms. Mackinna-Imlach asks why the Brook Street access is not being followed. Mr. Smith states that Eversource wants them to use the Upland Road access way.

Mr. D'Angelo explains that the reason the Planning Board approved the two options is that the utility can require the applicant to go the direction that the utility wants.

Ms. Mackinna-Imlach asks whether there was a vote. Ms. Sobolewski indicates that there is a vote recorded in the minutes.

Mr. Schmid asks whether there is a copy of the plans that have been approved.

Mr. Jeff Randall, 98 Ring Road owns parcels that abut the property. He has an ongoing property dispute with the property owner about a parcel called the 9 ¾ acre parcel. He has a claim of ownership to the lot. It is listed as owners unknown. In 2006 Webby recorded a plan that includes the parcel but it is not an ALTA plan. He has discussed this issue with the engineers and the property owner and has not received an appropriate response. He has rights of passage over the project site. There is a question of whether he owns it or whether someone owns it and he has a title exam indicating that the applicant does not own this. Mr. Smith indicates that the parcel that he is speaking of is within the boundary of the solar field but he also notes that the title they have shows the applicant as the owner. Mr. Smith agrees to provide a copy of the deed to Mr. Randall.

Ms. Mackinna-Imlach asks questions about the Planning Board vote to approve the project. Ms. Sobolewski notes that there is a vote in the minutes of a February 2018 meeting. There is continued discussion about the vote. Mr. Smith offers to provide additional information to evidence the Board's approval.

Mr. Randall asks the applicant whether they are not using Brook Street because the electric utility's connection in that area is full. Mr. Smith indicates that this may be the case.

Ms. MacKenna-Imlach asks what the result would be if the plan was not approved. Mr. Smith indicates that if the modification was not approved they would likely have to locate the poles as shown on the plans as approved.

Mr. Schmid asks whether it is possible to lower the poles and fence around them so that people won't see them. Mr. Smith says that he would have to defer to an electrical engineer.

The applicant requests a continuance. Ms. Sobolewski moves to continue the public hearing until September 23, 2020 at 5:45 p.m. Mr. Schmid seconds. Vote is unanimous.

4. 6:35 Continued Public Hearing -- Continued Public Hearing 399 Main Street – Site Plan Review for Large Scale Photovoltaic Project.

Brandon Smith of Borrego appeared on behalf of the Applicant. With him is Matt Swansburg, project developer and Katherine Figuero, the property owner. Mr. Smith provides a new cross section of the topography from the residents across Main Street. He states that they are looking at whether landscaping will be effective to mitigate the view from across the street.

Mr. Smith describes the landscaping as proposed stating that it is black hill spruce with 10 to 12 foot spacing. The location for trees is south around the electrical area and then to the north. Shielding the northwest corner of the array on 10 to 12 foot spacing. They took photos of the existing vegetation that currently provides screening from view.

Ms. Sobolewski asks whether they have consulted with a landscape engineer.

Mr. Schmid notes that we require a landscape architect plan showing the location of the plants.

Mr. Smith states that the property across the street will be screened by the proposed landscaping.

Ms. Figuero states that in her opinion the panels will not be visible from the road. Ms. Sobolewski notes that our bylaw requires screening to be empirically proven.

Discussion opened to the public:

Paul McDermott, 389 Main Street asks how the decision was made to use black hill spruce as the landscape screening. Mr. Smith notes that it is what they have done in the past. Mr. McDermott asks what the soil conditions are in those other locations. Mr. McDermott asks whether it would be useful to put up balloons at the height of the solar field. Mr. Smith notes that it might be a good idea. Mr. McDermott notes that 90% of the vegetation shown in the photos is deciduous. Mr. Schwansburg asks where Mr. McDermott's house is and its location is identified. Mr. McDermott notes that the area in the photographs depicting existing vegetative screening consists of deciduous plants.

Ms. Figuero raises a claim that it will not be possible to screen the field completely.

Ms. Sobolewski reiterates that Zoning Bylaw requires screening and the Planning Board enforces that requirement with respect to all of the solar projects permitted in town.

Mr. Schmid reiterates what will be required in order to screen the panels appropriately as required by the Zoning Bylaw.

Mr. Schwansberg states that they will work on the landscaping plan; will identify what the existing vegetation is in that area depicted as providing existing screening; will meet with the abutter to discuss the landscaping plan; and will develop something to demonstrate that there will be screening from the road.

The applicant requests a continuance. Mr. Schmid moves to continue the public hearing until September 23, 2020 at 5:50 p.m. Ms. MacDonald seconds. Vote is unanimous.

5. New Business

Russell Kierstead 37 Crescent Street appears with a request to change the lot line to add some land from his mother's abutting property onto his existing lot. The Board reviews the plans and determined that it met the requirements for an ANR plan. The Board signed the plans.

Submission of Application for 2 Mayflower Site Plan Approval for a small store of 410 sf. The matter is scheduled at 5:30 on September 23, 2020.

Old Business:

The board reviewed the draft minutes for the August 5, 2020 meeting. Ms Sobolewski moves to accept the Minutes as written, Mr. Schmid seconds, vote is unanimous in favor.

Bills are reviewed and warrants issued for payment.

7:17 p.m. Motion to adjourn made by Ms. Sobolewski, Mr. Cohen seconds unanimous vote in favor.