

Plympton Planning Board - Minutes

August 19, 2019

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Meeting opened at 6:40 p.m.

Planning Board members in attendance: Ms. Sobolewski; Mr. Schmid; Mr. D'Angelo; Ms. MacDonald

Pre-filing presentation for two solar arrays on Ring Road (131/137 Ring Road and 126 Ring Road)

131/137 Ring Road

The applicant's representatives presented plans and described the proposed solar arrays to be located on either side of Ring Road at the Kingston town line. The first parcel consists of 47 acres of which 17 acres are bogs. 13 acres are located in Plympton and the property owner plans to install a 2 megawatt solar array with 9,430 panels. The panels are to be located in the bogs (approximately 10 feet in the air) to allow continued cultivation of cranberries. The setback from Ring Road is 80 feet for the inverters, the panels are set back approximately 240 feet. The property owner and his engineers sought feedback from the Board to use in preparing their formal application.

The Board members discussed screening the panels from the road and from neighbors. Questions were raised as to how the construction access would be facilitated and the property owner's representatives noted that there was break in the vegetation to allow construction access.

126 Ring Road

The property owner's representatives presented an initial plan for a 3.5 megawatt solar array on 15 ½ acres of land. These panels will also be installed on the bogs. The array is located in very close proximity to the road, at the bend in the road. Ms. Sobolewski asked what the proposed form of screening was. The property owner's representatives stated that they were proposing to create a mounded earthen berm and then to plant a row of evergreen stress on the top of the berm to provide screening. They included a depiction of this proposed screening on one of their draft plans. Ms. Sobolewski stated that, in her opinion, the screening was unnatural, unattractive and ineffective. The property owner was encouraged to re-think the proposed landscaped screening. Mr. Schmid suggested that the applicant pull back the panels from the roadway, noting that by pushing the panels back from the roadway, more effective screening could be installed. Mr. D'Angelo informed the property owner and his representatives that they would need to provide an adequate surety, specifically, one that would last the life of the solar panels and be sufficient to cover decommissioning and any other issues that may arise in the decommissioning process which were caused by the existence and operation of the array. He also inquired as to the type of panels that would be installed. He requested that the application include spec sheets identifying what is in the panels. Dean Smith of Borrego Solar provided updated information and the batteries, with additional information sufficient to determine whether there were any environmental risks associated with their installation. Finally, he noted that the application should

provide information to address any concerns about road safety given the location of the bend in the road and the need to provide screening, which the property owner's representatives noted could include a fence.

The owner's representatives noted that they were also meeting with the Town of Kingston in furtherance of their desire to locate solar panels on those portions of the property owner's land which are located in Kingston. Ms. Sobolewski noted that the Planning Board would be flexible in an attempt to accommodate proceedings on any application submitted for the Plympton land with hearings that may be scheduled in Kingston on the Kingston portion of the property, particularly since both Boards meet on Monday nights.

0 Brook Street Expansion of Existing Solar Array – continued hearing

Dean Smith of Borrego Solar provided updated information on this expansion project. This is an expansion of the Vopat's solar array located on their property adjacent to Plympton Sand and Gravel near the Industrial Park. In response to the comments of John Chessia, P.E., the Planning Board's consulting engineer, a treatment basin was added, he agreed to provide an updated SWPPP plan using the most recent form of template.

The Board will provide the updated information to Mr. Chessia for his review and comment and will continue the hearing to allow review of that information.

Lake Street –Solar Array Application

Sarah Stearns submitted an application for a solar array off Lake Street. The Board discussed scheduling the public hearing and a site walk with her.

Old Business

Those members of the Planning Board working on the revised Solar Bylaw sections of the Zoning Bylaws presented a status update.

Warrant articles for past expenses signed.

Meeting adjourned 8:30 p.m.
