

Palmer Planning Board

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 17, 2019

I. Call To Order

Chairman Michael Marciniec called the meeting to order at 7:00PM on Monday, June 17th, 2019, in the Town Administrative Building, Meeting Room. Present were members N. Czech, Paul Burns-Johnson, Kathy Burns and Tom Skowyra. Also present, Town Planner, Linda Leduc and Gillian Davis recording minutes.

II. Public Hearing

7:00pm – BWC Swift River, LLC, 3090 Palmer Road – §171.69 Water Supply Protection District

T. Reidy verbally requested a continuance to the next Planning Board meeting.

A motion to continue the public hearing to July 8th at 7:15pm, was made by N. Czech, seconded by T. Skowyra. The motion passed (5:0).

7:00pm – BWC Swift River, LLC, 3090 Palmer Road, Continued from November 26, 2018, January 7, 2019, February 25, 2019, April 8, 2019 and May 20, 2019.

The following were present on behalf of the application:

Tom Reidy, Attorney of Bacon\Wilson
Brian Hunt, Managing Director of Bluewave Solar
Drew Pierson, Senior Director of Bluewave Solar
Victoria Houle, Engineer of Fuss & O'Neill
Ian Ward, Agricultural consultant, focusing on dual use

John Furman, Engineer of vhb was present on behalf of the Planning Board.

V. Houle presented the plans and discussed interconnection route and utilities. She located the two proposed arrays and discussed interconnection routes and construction vehicle access.

V. Houle asked J. Furman for feedback on one of his comments regarding the use of LIDAR technology.

J. Furman explained LIDAR is accurate to a point, even though it is stamped, the surveyor ground proofs the area. This ground proof needs to be shown on a plan.

V. Houle stated the open space requirements will be verified.

There was further discussion on open space requirements and the needed confirmation on all other areas to validate the 14.4 acres can be met.

D. Pierson presented the interconnection and transmission infrastructure.

D. Pierson explained after discussions with National Grid, two connections systems are viable for this site. The first, being a traditional interconnection system with utility poles within the site. The second, is an underground utility interconnection. He presented visualizations that showed the use of the two existing utility poles at the road and then going underground to a concrete utility pad. This box would be approximately eight feet high and would be enclosed and buffered. The only use of new poles would be traveling through the wetlands, approximately three or four.

N. Czech asked if the utility box could be pushed back into the existing tree patch in addition to the added buffer.

D. Pierson replied that would be viable to push the utility box further back into the existing vegetation.

D. Pierson went over screening plan and demonstrated there are three main screening arrays. Bluewave has hired Appleseed Permaculture from Amherst to add screening and agricultural value to this project. He explained there will be layers of different trees such as evergreen in the back and orchard trees in the front.

B. Hunt explained this design is conceptual, the goal is to integrate as much agricultural activity on the site and the goal is to have the Board's input.

N. Czech questioned if there is going to be livestock on site, what is going to stop cattle from grazing on the fruit trees.

B. Hunt stated, fencing and various farm infrastructure will be put into place. He explained there is a dual use project in Grafton, MA that is implementing both farm and solar infrastructure at the same time.

I. Ward explained this idea of a holistic planning perspective and the relationship between the current land owner and the future of the project. He further explained the MDAR relationship.

I. Ward alluded to how the dual-use component will function. The land owner will be haying the first through third cuts. Instead of the fourth cut, the cows will graze the land.

N. Czech questioned in the original proposal there was supposed to be grazing under the panels, will there be haying and grazing under these panels.

I. Ward responded that the arrays will be fenced and have gates which will allow for both haying equipment and cows to enter the area. He added fencing will allow for a much better rotational graze.

N. Czech asked what if the land owner does not want to hay anymore.

B. Hunt answered, Bluewave has a prime lease on the ground and have entered into a land use agreement with the farmer, Tom Roberts. If Roberts no longer wants to hay the property. Bluewave has the right to replace the farmer to maintain dual-use function.

B. Hunt said the spirit of this project is to create a sustainable environment and production.

T. Reidy asked if it was possible to schedule a sight visit so the Board could visualize the two potential interconnection routes.

A site visit was scheduled for June 18th, 2019 at 5:00pm.

A motion to continue the public hearing to July 8th, 2019 at 7:15pm was made by K. Burns, seconded by N. Czech. The motion passed (5:0).

II. Old Business

Knox Pond Construction Report #140

A motion to acknowledge receipt of Knox Pond Construction Report #140 was made by P. Burns-Johnson, seconded by N. Czech. The motion passed (4:0).

Abutting Town Notices and Monthly Interest Allocation Report were distributed

7:15pm – BWC Dumplin Brook LLC, L22 Sykes Street, L63 and 4215 Main Street, Continued from April 22, 2019.

T. Reidy spoke on the project. There is a third option for access. An agreement with the owners of Battaglia property. Access would meet new ordinance requirements. This additional land does not trigger any new abutters, therefore no new public hearing.

M. Marciniec mentioned the hydrological issues at the high school, in relation to the hydrology in the area and subject site. He asked if Bluewave has done any hydrology studies.

B. Hunt responded there have been extensive engineering on site, especially regarding hydrology and the team is aware of the challenge.

M. Marciniec asked if there will be any cuts on the site.

B. Hunt answered there will be minor cuts but the goal is to work around the existing topography.

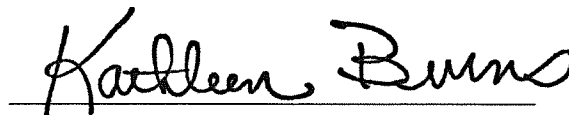
A motion to continue the public hearing to July 8th, 2019 at 7:30pm was made by T. Skowrya. N. Czech. The motion passed (5:0).

Meeting Minutes from June 3, 2019

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from June 3, 2019, as written, was made by N. Czech, seconded by K. Burns. The motion passed (5:0).

V. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at 8:24 pm was made by N. Czech, seconded by P. Burns-Johnson. The motion passed (5:0).



Kathleen Burns, Clerk