

DATE: May 24, 2012
TIME: 6:00 P.M.
PLACE: Fire Station
FOR: Regular Meeting
PRESENT: Jonathan Hankin, Chairman; Suzanne Fowle Schroeder; Jack Musgrove;
Ethan Culleton
Chris Rembold, Town Planner

Mr. Hankin called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

REORGANIZE:

Mr. Musgrove made a motion to nominate Mr. Hankin as the chairman, Mr. Culleton seconded, all in favor.

Mr. Musgrove nominated Ms. Schroeder as the vice chairman, Mr. Culleton seconded, all in favor.

Mr. Musgrove nominated Mr. Dohoney as the clerk, Ms. Schroeder seconded, all in favor.

Ms. Schroeder nominated Mr. Culleton as the Planning Board representative to BRPC, Mr. Musgrove seconded, all in favor.

Mr. Rembold will continue as the Board's alternate member to BRPC.

Mr. Musgrove nominated Mr. Hankin as the Planning Board's representative to the Design Advisory Committee, Ms. Schroeder seconded, all in favor.

Mr. Musgrove made a motion for Ms. Nelson to continue as the Planning Board's Associate Member for a three-year term, Ms. Schroeder seconded, all in favor. A letter will be sent to the Board of Selectmen asking them to support Ms. Nelson's reappointment as the Associate Member.

Mr. Musgrove made a motion to have Ms. Schroeder continue as the Planning Board's representative to the Lake Mansfield Improvement Task Force, Mr. Culleton seconded, all in favor.

FORM A'S:

There were no Form A's presented.

MINUTES OF MAY 10, 2012:

Ms. Schroeder made a motion to approve the minutes of May 10, 2012 as amended, Mr. Culleton seconded, all in favor.

OTHER ISSUES AND CONCERNS:

Mr. Rembold had two zoning maps to show the Board. One map had parcel lines and the other did not.

Ms. Schroeder suggested the parcel lines be shown only for the village centers and to keep the delineation of the Water Quality Protection District.

Mr. Hankin suggested it might be helpful to have both versions available.

Mr. Rembold said the version without the parcel lines would be available for sale in the Town Clerk's office and the version with the parcel lines would be on the website.

Mr. Hankin said he did think it should be on the website.

Mr. Rembold said he would bring the updated zoning pages to the next meeting.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF FUTURE BYLAW AMENDMENTS:

Mr. Rembold said there was a forum on Solar Energy held the previous Monday. He said it was a positive meeting. A power point of the existing law was shown. It demonstrated that currently Site Plan Review is the tool that helps to shape a project.

Mr. Rembold said no one was opposed to a large scale project but it would have to be on specific terms. People wanted the energy to stay local and for there to be mixed use such as combining the solar use with farming. He said no one said they did not want it in a specific zone or only in a specific zone.

Mr. Rembold said it would be a good idea for the Board to address some new regulation but there should not be an attempt to over-regulate as the State law is adequate. It would be good to create something to give solar companies some guidance to what the Town wants.

Mr. Rembold said the special permit process could be required. It might make people feel more comfortable to have a way to comment and control a project.

Mr. Hankin said the special permit process may discourage companies from applying in Great Barrington.

Ms. Schroeder suggested prime agricultural and state soils as a place to start. Instead of looking at solar regulations in terms of an overlay district, use prime soils as a trigger for Site Plan Review. She suggested requiring all large-scale solar projects on prime soils be part of a mixed use plan, one that includes agriculture. Solar installations could be a way of leveraging more agriculture in Great Barrington.

Mr. Hankin suggested chapter lands might be a trigger for prime locations.

Mr. Musgrove said it would appear that the people would like a special permit process to allow a solar use.

Ms. Schroeder said that a Special Permit promotes the misunderstanding that Mass. General Laws allows denial of a solar array, whereas Site Plan Review is more in line with state law.

Mr. Hankin asked if land is not used agriculturally how do we dictate that it have an agricultural use in order to have a solar farm?

Mr. Musgrove said he feels the Board should have a consultant to help sort out the questions.

Mr. Culleton said he is not sure the Board can pick an ultimate solar site.

Mr. Rembold said the Town needs to look at how to regulate and direct a process through a bylaw.

Mr. Musgrove suggested a site plan review criteria be written specifically for large scale solar projects. He said he would like to get the Selectmen to authorize a consultant to assist with a process.

Mr. Hankin suggested the Board have a scope of work before seeking a consultant. He suggested that the Board see what comes out of the solar meetings over the summer then we move forward in September.

Mr. Culleton said he thinks the Board should be proactive in dealing with the solar issue.

OTHER ISSUES AND CONCERNS:

The Board briefly discussed the process for reviewing mail. A list of mail received will be available at the meeting on a separate sheet of paper.

Mr. Hankin adjourned the meeting, without objection, at 7:24 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Kimberly L. Shaw
Planning Board Secretary

