

TOWN OF STOW  
PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of the May 11, 2016 Planning Board Meeting

Planning Board Members Present: Len Golder, Ernie Dodd, Steve Quinn, Lori Clark

Voting Associate Member: Mark Jones

Absent: Margaret Costello

Lori Clark called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

**Discussion of Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Minutes of 4.5.2016**

*Ernie Dodd moved to approve the Minutes of April 5, 2016 as written.*

*Steve Quinn seconded.*

**VOTED: 3-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Steve Quinn).**

Len Golder Arrived.

**Meeting Minutes of 5.4.2016**

*Ernie Dodd moved to approve the Minutes of May 4, 2016 as amended.*

*Steve Quinn seconded.*

**VOTED: 4-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Steve Quinn, Len Golder).**

**Public Input**

None.

**Correspondence Updates**

Lori Clark noted that the price of the 241 Boxboro Road Right of First Refusal is being offered for what seems like a good bargain for the amount of land being offered.

**Member Updates**

Len Golder reported that he was elected to a five year term on the Planning Board.

Len Golder said he has heard that there is some concern about a commercial landscaping operation on Old Bolton Road that is causing some concern regarding use and drainage.

**Planner's Report**

*Merrill Property*

Karen Kelleher reported that Chris Merrill is scheduled to meet with the Board for Preliminary Discussion on May 17<sup>th</sup> regarding a proposed "Conventional Subdivision."

### *Housing Production Plan*

Karen Kelleher said that staff have provided comments on the Draft HPP. SMAHT's consultant will provide an updated draft prior to the Planning Board Meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

### *Vacancies*

Karen Kelleher said that staff, Lori Clark and Kathy Sferra have reviewed resumes for the Assistant Planner/GIS Administrator and narrowed them down to 5 to be interviewed.

Planning Staff reviewed resumes for the part-time Administrative Assistant Position and narrowed them down to 4 to interview.

### *Gleasondale*

Gleasondale residents met on Monday to begin discussions about the potential for a Historic District or similar program.

Karen Kelleher said the Survey of the Town-owned land should be complete next week.

### *EDIC*

Karen Kelleher said the EDIC began meeting with Lower Village Property owners to get some insight as to their needs, idea of the market and how the EDIC can assist them.

### *Joanne Drive Sitewalk*

Lori Clark asked to see the original plan for Joanne Drive.

## **Public Hearing**

### **Special Permit - South Acton Road Commercial Solar PV Project**

Lori Clark read through the Public Hearing Guidelines.

## **Present**

### *David Albrecht – Borrego Solar*

David Albrecht said that the subject property contains 20.5 acres in Stow and 4.5 in Acton. David Albrecht said they have submitted plans and gained approvals from the Conservation Commission in both Stow and Acton and the Planning Board in Acton. David Albrecht said many may be familiar with the site as the old Stow landfill. David Albrecht said they have done a Phase 1 and 2 environmental assessment, which came up clean.

David Albrecht noted different areas of the site, outlining the existing conditions, including the existing gravel access road that crosses into Acton and then back into Stow. There is a large wetland complex on the Acton side, wrapping around the property to the north and west. David Albrecht noted the old access road in Acton. David Albrecht said the elevation is about 300 feet at the top of the hill and 190 feet at the base of the hill.

David Albrecht noted that the project is 2.8 Megawatts DC. He noted that the project is just shy of 8000 solar modules mounted on racks in portrait orientation. David Albrecht said

he is not sure if it will be a piling mount or 4 screws and a rack. Each rack has 12 modules mounted in portrait orientation. The darker panels on the plan will have a stronger driven piling to stand up to the wind. David Albrecht said that about 10% of the system is in Acton.

David Albrecht said the area in red is a 6' security fence with an extra foot for barbed wire. The fence will be elevated about 4" for wildlife. David Albrecht said the main access gate is at the northpoint of the system. He said he met with the Fire Chief and spoke about the concerns that he had. The four foot man gates for operations and maintenance were changed to 14' wide double leaf gates to get a pickup truck in as advised by the Fire Chief. There are three double gates on the plan.

David Albrecht said all of the panels are connected into strings of 19 panels and into a string inverter. There are 36 string inverters, he said. In the past, the inverters would go to a few large inverters, which can be noisy. David Albrecht said string inverters are much smaller and can be mounted on a unit with sonitube footings, with 34 inverters in all. David Albrecht said they all get tied to a transformer near the main gate along with a data acquisition system and two concrete pads, less than 500 square feet in all. At that location there will be a small weather station with thermometer and anemometer to measure production. All panels face due south and are about 8-9 feet in height, said David Albrecht.

David Albrecht said that the first step of the project is to clean up the site of debris and remove the stumps in areas that are graded. If the trees removed are inside the fence the stumps will be removed and graded. Outside of the fence any cut trees will have the stumps left in place. A seeding table has been included. Among the panels there will be two seed types, one for shade under the panels and one for within the panel rows. Everything else, including conduits are in electrical trenches underground. David Albrecht said the electricity wires will enter Acton go up a riser pole and utilize the Acton access to make way to 127 Stow Street at the end of the Eversource circuit. All of the utility poles will be located in Acton, said David Albrecht. There is no access to the project from Acton.

David Albrecht said that there will be a lot of topographic grading due to the orientation of the site, 8% in any direction is the maximum slope for the particular racking they are using. The erosion and sediment controls are shown, said David Albrecht, including silt fence and mulch socks near wetlands. Stump grinds will be tub ground to create a three foot tall berm and after being used they can be taken away and sold or spread for stabilization. There is a stabilized construction entrance, fence detail and rack detail included, said David Albrecht.

David Albrecht noted he has gone through two rounds of review with Sue Carter of Places Associates and noted that he and Sue have spoken and resolved many of the issues.

*Lori Clark opened to the public for questions.*

*Sandy Taft of 33 Red Acre Road asked where the access road is located and where the old town dump is? David Albrecht noted the location.*

Steve Quinn asked if the space between the racks could be driven in and whether there would be remote monitoring? David Albrecht responded yes. David Albrecht said they monitor the site 24/7 and Borrego Solar will likely be the operator for the system owner.

Ernie Dodd confirmed that there is no exposure to high voltage wire? David Albrecht said no. Ernie Dodd asked who monitors the output. David said Borrego's operations and maintenance group monitors the site 24/7. There are two areas to shut down the system – one near South Acton Road and one at the main headquarters of the site.

Ernie Dodd said safety is his main concern and in the past they have had the safety personnel trained. David Albrecht said prior to operation, they will invite all emergency personnel in town trained, and the Operations and Maintenance staff will show personnel what to stay away from and how the equipment works.

Len Golder asked how far the wire is from wetlands. David Albrecht said all of the conduits can handle being under water. Len Golder asked if there were any proposed poles on the Stow side. Len Golder asked if the overhead utilities were OK. Because of the wetlands in Acton, the Acton Planning Board waived the underground requirement said David Albrecht. There will be no construction within the 35' buffer, he added.

David Albrecht said that the areas outside of the fence will be reseeded with wildflower and grass mix. Len Golder said that perhaps some annuals can be put in in the meantime. David Albrecht said the property is going to be phased in two phases. They will spray bonded fiber or hay after it is graded. David Albrecht said they will only be grading five acres at a time so it is easier to maintain a safe site, in terms of erosion.

David Albrecht said that the site has many cut and fill locations and there will be a general smoothing out of the site. There will be a reduction in the amount of the flow.

Lori Clark said that in Acton's decision they were trying to minimize tree cutting. Where are construction vehicles coming in from she asked? David Albrecht said they will enter from the Stow main entrance. Lori Clark said that she saw that Places Associates has some feedback on decommissioning costs and landscaping plans. David Albrecht said they went over all of the comments. Places suggested a \$125,000 dollar bond, which David Albrecht said Borrego could agree to. David Albrecht said they will need a waiver from the Rules and Regulations to use the NVGD datum, which better corresponds to the datum used by FEMA for floodplain calculations.

*Steve Mong of 70 Old Bolton Road* said he supports solar and that tree cutting around solar sites can enhance different habitats and the wildlife is still well supported.

Sandy Taft of 30 Red Acre Road asked how cleaning of the panels takes place. David Albrecht said they use a water truck from the local hydrant when necessary, with a special brush. David Albrecht said they do not use any chemicals or soaps and no pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers.

Steve Quinn asked when they expect to be finished. David Albrecht said that they will need to be up and running on January 8, 2017. He expects that it will take 6 -7 months. Grading will take the majority of the time he said.

*Ernie Dodd moved to close the public hearing.*

*Steve Quinn Seconded.*

**VOTED: 4-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Len Golder, Steve Quinn).**

### **Public Hearing**

#### **Jillian's Lane Definitive Subdivision Plan – 113 Walcott Street**

*Ernie Dodd moved to waive the reading of the Notice of the Public Hearing*

*Steve Quinn seconded.*

**VOTED: 4-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Len Golder, Steve Quinn).**

Lori Clark read through the Public Hearing Guidelines

### **Present**

*Greg Roy – Project Engineer*

Greg Roy noted that the Planning Board originally provided a Preliminary Plan that was approved by the Board. Greg Roy noted that the plan is substantially the same in terms of lot layout, with proposed Jillian's lane in a cul-de-sac format. There are two new house lots. One change is that the applicant's have developed the house plans and can show specifically where the houses will go on the site. The driveway has been restructured, Greg Roy said, adding that it is a longer distance but shallower slope and is less disturbance to the site. Greg Roy said that the catchbasins, swales, and detention basins are now shown on the plan. Greg Roy said he met with the fire chief and left a set of plans with him. The Board discussed the driveway width and agreed they do not want a 20' foot wide paved driveway, but would rather utilize shoulders to make up the required NFPA width. Greg Roy said the site will be designed to fit an SU-30 vehicle. Places Associates has asked them to look at a few different things on the site and will be responding shortly with a revised plan set, he said. All of Places Associate's concerns will be addressed, including those with drainage report and grading, said Greg Roy.

*Charles Jowett of Walcott Street* asked about the drainage basin on Walcott Street and noted that there is a large drop from the basin to the street. Greg Roy said that they have taken a more precise topographic survey of the road to better analyze the street area to be sure that there are no runoff issues along the road.

Greg Roy said they could not find the culvert. Bill Maxfield said it is a stone culvert. Bill Maxfield said that when the Cushing's put in their driveway it changed the flow of water off of the hill. Bill Maxfield said that it may be in the Planning Board's best interest to see that a legitimate culvert would be placed in the road.

Charles Jowett asked if the proposed homes would need to have dirt removed. Are there any variances requested for height of buildings? Greg Roy said the project will require a net fill and no variances are requested.

*Mark Jones Arrived.*

Bill Maxfield said that the lot immediately adjacent to the parcel proposed, used a berm to try to keep the water out. Bill Maxfield asked about the approvals for a hammerhead lot? Is it the Board's intent to suggest a subdivision instead of a hammerhead lot? Lori Clark said that a hammerhead lot minimum is 50' of frontage and 4.5 acres. Lori Clark said since the Board prefers not to have the disturbance of the road, they supported the plan for a proposed a common driveway to be constructed instead. Bill Maxfield asked what would it cost to put in a 400 foot road? Economically, is it feasible in this market? Greg Roy said he is unsure.

The Board discussed the common driveway impact versus the construction of the road.

Steve Quinn said it would be good to do a sitewalk with the revised plans. Ernie Dodd would like to do a sitewalk with Sue Carter and Mike Clayton. Bill Maxfield said there is another culvert down the street also falling in. The Board agreed that the Fire Chief needs to give feedback.

Len Golder asked what the slope and grades of the site consisted of. 48% of the site is between 10 and 15% slope he said. Greg Roy said the grades in the cul-de-sac have been lowered from 12% to comply with the standards. Ernie Dodd said they will need to have more erosion controls along the home lot cuts. Greg Roy said they are adding a profile for the entire driveway and addressing the t-turn around. Greg Roy said the barn will still have a 20 foot width.

Lori Clark said it appears they will need to continue. The Board agreed the best day for a sitewalk would be wednesday May 25<sup>th</sup> at 4pm or the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> at 8am.

The Board agreed to continue the hearing until Monday the 27 of June at 7:30pm.

*Steve Quinn moved to continue until June 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm.*

*Ernie Dodd seconded.*

**VOTED: 4-0 Unanimously in favor (Lori Clark, Ernie Dodd, Len Golder, Steve Quinn).**

### **163 - 165 White Pond Road Contractor Yard – Special Permit Preliminary Subdivision**

*Present – Rich Harrington*

Jonathon Bransfield – Potential Applicant

Rich Harrington said he is working with John Bransfield regarding the creation of a contractor yard at the address and are hoping to get some insight from the Planning Board. Rich Harrington said the site is over 10 acres with only 1.5 acres for site plan approval and the remainder of the land in Chapter 61A. 1.5 acres contained the historic house lot that was never in chapter. Lori Clark asked what they would envision after conversion? Jonathan Bransfield said the concept design is well suited to a contractor yard now and in the future as most of the potential expansion would take place to the north of the site rather than the south where there is a wetland buffer. At the outset, Jon Bransfield said half of the site would be used for his business, Bransfield Tree and the other half leased. He confirmed there would be no customer visitation.

Rich Harrington described the concept plan with a driveway and proposed septic area. Lori Clark asked about paving. Jon Bransfield said only the access would be paved. Len Golder asked about the structure. Jon Bransfield said it would likely be a steel garage building. Not all vehicles would be in the garage space, he added.

Rich Harrington said that Astro Crane and Melone surround the property and both are happy to see a contractor yard in this location. Across the street there are some small ranch style homes, he said. Lori Clark asked how the visual impact would be mitigated. Rich Harrington said it will fit in with that neighborhood and would utilize the same curbcut generally and will look like an improvement. Jon Bransfield said the sellers have been trying to sell the residence but no buyers have come forward.

The Board discussed that this is right in line with the Commercial District uses. Ernie Dodd asked about the stormwater basin and what it was going to be servicing. Rich Harrington said that it would be for the access and building runoff.

Steve Quinn said it sounds like a good use, although it would be good to be sure that the site is oriented in a way that mitigates impact on abutter's homes during construction.

Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jesse Steadman.