

Sutton Planning Board
April 25, 2011
Minutes

Approved _____

Present: T. Connors, R. Largess, D. Moroney, W. Whittier, J. Anderson
Staff: J. Hager, Planning Director

General Business:

Minutes

Motion: To approve minutes of 4/11/11, D. Moroney

2nd: T. Connors

Vote: 2-0-3, RL&WW&JA abstaining as they were not present

* These minutes may need to be re-voted after quorum requirements are reviewed.

Form A Plans

King/Roy – Boston Road

Motion: To endorse the Form A plan dated 4/20/11 showing creation of a non-buildable lot, R. Largess

2nd: D. Moroney

Vote: 5-0-0

Windle/Esler – Point Way

Motion: To allow the Chairman to endorse the Form A plan dated 4/25/11 showing a conveyance of land from one parcel to another once missing information has been added, D. Moroney

2nd: W. Whittier

Vote: 5-0-0

Filings None

Correspondence/Other:

- Mr. Gus Abalo from EOSOLAmericas was present to review a potential solar farm on Eight Lots Road with the Board. Realtor Jodi Healy and Attorney Brian Beaton of Bowditch & Dewey were also present. The project would occupy about 50 acres of an 80 acre parcel and would house 6 to 8 Megawatts of panels.

Mr. Abalo outlined the companies back ground including various wind and solar projects in Europe and one wind project in Indiana. They are interested in establishing projects in Massachusetts because of recent legislation. He stressed there is no noise generated by the facility as all inverters are sound proofed. They will need to upgrade power lines to the east of the project. The structures will be a maximum of 20' high with 100' setback

from the roadway and 50' from abutters. There will be an ample landscape buffer to shield the project from view. There will be an access road through the project with parking spaces to access the conservation land behind the project. The only lighting will be minimal lights at the inverters and security lighting and cameras that would only come on if motion activated. They would like to install two 3 MW components immediately with one 2 MW component in the near future. It is also their policy to hire locally at all stages of the project.

J. Hager noted if the project moves forward, Jon Anderson and Dan Moroney will not be eligible to participate as Board members, but will of course maintain the right to give input as abutters.

R. Largess asked if there are similar installations in the area? Mr. Abalo stated as the legislation was just passed last year, he isn't aware of any similar installations in Mass to date, but similar facilities do exist in New Jersey and California.

W. Whittier asked about the landscaping that will be installed. Mr. Abalo stated they will provide substantial landscaping to completely screen the facility.

J. Anderson of Eight lots Road made it clear he was speaking as a direct abutter and private citizen. He stated he is actually in favor of a solar installation but as an abutter he has some concerns. He was concerned with the effect of a project this big on property values, on historic assets in the area, and on the character of the neighborhood. He stressed he knows the Board is going to have to consider all of these things during Site Plan Review. The sheer scale of 50 acres of solar panels that feels industrial, how will that change the character of this rural farm scape? He felt that in order to comply with Town regulations the project should be scaled down, pushed back to maintain the farm field scape, and properly screened. Mr. Abalo stated his company is open to scaling down the project by 2 MW and is open to increasing setbacks. They have been committed from the beginning to proper and complete screening and will also look at different solar arrays to see if they can reduce the height of panels.

T. Connors stressed a project this size WILL affect the area and that he is very concerned with the impact. He asked why fencing is required and noted ideally there would not be fencing to allow the continued passage of wildlife in this substantial area. Mr. Abalo stated they need fencing for security of this expensive equipment and to keep animals and people out of the installation for safety reasons.

R. Largess asked for an explanation of a MW. Mr. Abalo stated a MW powers about 100-150 homes. A typical nuclear plant generates approximately 1000-2000 MW and large wind turbines like the one in Worcester generate about 2 MW.

Jerry Bailey of 97 Highland View Drive asked if there will be any hazardous materials on the site. No. He also asked if the project will create a thermal footprint? Mr. Abalo stated the panels in this project will be designed to capture the maximum amount of thermal energy, not reflect it and create a heating effect in the area.

R. Largess asked if there is there an opportunity to fix tight spots along Eight Lots Road? Even during construction, there would not be tractor trailers. They utilize smaller delivery trucks during installation, and afterward there would be about one maintenance trip to the facility per week.

Nazaire Arcand of 99 Manchaug Road asked if there will be any wetland impact with this project? Mr. Abalo stated they are required to comply with State law that makes them show where wetlands are and how they will protect them during a construction project. They do not intend to do anything that would alter or impact the wetlands in the area.

J. Anderson asked how the landscape will be altered. Mr. Abalo stated they will do geotechnical evaluations and will not alter anything they don't need to get the panels properly installed. It's too early to know how much earth work will need to be done, but that will be addressed in the permitting process. J. Anderson noted this is valuable farm and forest land. Again he stated he is in favor of solar at this location, he just hopes it won't look like a fortress.

Mr. Abalo thanked everyone for their input and asked that any additional thoughts be forwarded over the next week.

Public Hearing – Gosselin Accessory Apartment

T. Connors read the hearing notice as it appeared in The Chronicle.

Frank Noel, builder and brother of the applicant, spoke for the applicant. He noted his sister was recently diagnosed with MS and wants to create this unit so she can live with her son and his family, but in a separate space.

R. Largess read through the accessory apartment requirements. He also read departmental comments. The Board of Health did not comment as the home is on Town sewer.

The Board reviewed the proposed elevations of the addition. It was noted while an additional door is shown on the front of the home, it is at a different level than the current front door.

Michelle Prescott of 8 Highland View Drive felt adding an apartment would change the character of the neighborhood. J. Hager explained how the bylaw came into being, and the requirement that allows the Board to make sure the structure maintains the appearance of a single family home.

Motion: To waive the requirement that additional entrances be located only on the rear and sides as the proposed front door is on a different level and does not affect the single family appearance of the home, D. Moroney
2nd: W. Whittier
Vote: 5-0-0

Jerry Bailey of 97 Highland View Drive asked about the driveway configuration. The currently driveway will remain with no extensions. Where the snowmobile trailer would be parked? Not within the setback with the neighbor. Will construction equipment be housed on the site? Commercial construction equipment may not be housed in a residential neighborhood. Hours of construction will generally be limited to Monday through Friday from 7AM to 5PM and Saturdays from 8 to 12.

Motion: To grant the Special Permit for an accessory apartment at 15 Highland View Drive with the following condition: D. Moroney

1. Approval of all other local, state and federal departments, boards and commissions, especially the Board of Health and the Sutton Sewer Department.

2nd: J. Anderson
Vote: 5-0-0

Motion: To close the public hearing, W. Whittier
2nd: R. Largess
Vote: 5-0-0

Motion: To adjourn, D. Moroney
2nd: W. Whittier
Vote: 5-0-0

Adjourned 8:20 PM