

PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF JUNE 22, 2011

Present: Mr. William Ramsey; Chairman, Mrs. Susan Libby, Vice-Chairman, Mr. David Messier, and Mrs. Melissa Sepanek

Absent: Mr. Peter Krawczyk

Attendees: William Scanlan, Town Planner, Steven Berry, Richard Arsenault

Mr. Ramsey opened the Meeting at 6:05 PM.

Comments and Concerns

Mrs. Libby brought up the subject of the transfer station construction project and wondered if it required site plan approval of the Planning Board. No site plan has been filed with the Board, and it is not known if the Building Inspector, as zoning enforcement officer, has made a determination. The Board asked the Town Planner to request that the Building Inspector make such a determination.

The Town Planner informed the members of the interest of a private company, Eosol Americas, in developing a solar farm on property off Little Rest Road. The company would like to develop a 6 MW project on about 30 acres. Mr. Berry discussed the work his company has done in the area of solar energy, and described this potential project as quite large and capable of accommodating a large portion of the Town's energy needs. Mr. Berry indicated a willingness to help the Board review the project if it moves forward. The Building Inspector has determined solar energy generation is not allowed under current zoning. The Board discussed its proposed solar energy zoning bylaw that would allow such projects. The Board has worked on the draft bylaw for some time and is prepared to present it at a fall town meeting if one occurs. The developer would like to break ground before Dec. 31, 2011 due to the possible expiration of solar tax incentives by the end of the year. If Town Meeting acts favorably, it is possible that the Board could approve a site plan before the end of the calendar year.

Discussion of Zoning Work Items

There are a number of potential zoning articles for the Board to work on in the months leading up to the Annual Town Meeting.

- ❖ Commercial Re-Zoning: The Board will examine areas off Routes 67 and 19 for possible areas to designate as a new commercial district and continue to examine zoning standards for the Village district.
- ❖ The Wright Mill: The developer has indicated a desire to consider a new zoning district for the property since its current designation is limiting development opportunities. He has suggested the possibility of creating a Smart Growth District under the provisions of MGL c. 40R. The law encourages mixed use development at high densities to take advantage of existing infrastructure in village locations. The law provides substantial financial incentives to a community that complies with the law. Another possibility is to create a mill overlay district, which would provide the developer the flexibility to develop the property for a variety of uses and give the Town strong review authority.

- ❖ Major Development Bylaw: The Casino Study Committee has asked the Planning Board to work on this concept. The Town does not have adequate safeguards in place to regulate major development proposals. This concept would allow large developments, such as a casino, resort, racetrack, institution, etc. to locate in Warren under carefully controlled circumstances.
- ❖ Racetrack Zoning: In light of the recent denial by the Board of Selectmen for a permit for a weekend motocross event, it became apparent that the Town does not have adequate regulations in place to control such a use. The members felt a track could be acceptable if it occurs in a non-residential area and if a special permit process provides strong authority to minimize potential negative impacts.
- ❖ Gravel Regulations: The Zoning Bylaw authorizes the Planning Board to adopt regulations to provide careful oversight of this use. The Board is interested in exploring adoption of performance standards to minimize land use and environmental impacts.

Other Business

The Board discussed some of the on-going concerns with the Iverson gravel pit. The Board is concerned that the pit is still not in compliance with its special permit conditions after repeated attempts at enforcement. The Board is especially concerned about a house trailer on the property and feared it is being used as a residence instead of a construction office. The Board instructed the Town Planner to ask the Building Inspector to survey the site and take any appropriate action he deems necessary.

During the summer, the Board decided to meet on July 13, August 10, and Sept. 7 and 28. The Board may schedule a second August meeting if necessary.

Since only two members present this evening attended the Planning Board meeting of May 25, the Board was unable to vote on the minutes of that meeting.

Mrs. Sepanek made a motion to accept the minutes of June 8, 2011, seconded by Mr. Messier. The vote was unanimous.

At 7:45 PM, Mrs. Libby made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Messier. The vote was unanimous.

William Scanlan
Town Planner

Date Approved: _____