

Planning Board  
April 15 2020

The PB's first ever video meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. In attendance were Ray Merrill, Ted Gerber, Charles Tarbell, Recording Secretary Cindy Kimball and Chairman Colin Holme, along with Selectman and Code Enforcement Officer John Bell.

After a pause to remember former CEO Bill Haynes who passed away recently, the February minutes were reviewed. Ted made a motion to accept them as presented. Charles seconded the motion and the vote was a majority in favor.

The second item on the agenda was an update of a proposed wedding venue on 264 Passaconaway Road owned by Eric Braciska. He told the PB that he has chosen a surveyor who will begin work within the next couple of weeks. There will be no new construction on site and no disturbing of existing grounds. He has added exterior lighting around the barn and outbuilding. Colin noted that the survey will be needed for the final application along with letters sent to property abutters to allow them to provide feedback. The PB discussed noise and hours the venue will be open as well as signage. Eric said he has signage already in the works that will be placed at the end of the driveway. As for complying with noise levels, he is being proactive and will schedule the weddings during what he considers business hours early afternoons into evenings and will be looking for feedback from neighbors to make sure their concerns are taken into consideration. Eric will provide a site survey and updated application for the May meeting.

The next item on the agenda was the solar project on Bisbee Town Road. Kevin Corbett, developer and in charge of the construction on the project, was present as was Kara Moody, in charge of environmental studies and technicalities. Kara provided a brief update of the proposed 5 mega watt project that includes solar panels, inverters, storage batteries and access roads. There will be a 7' tall chain link fence surrounding the project with gates and locks and the town will be provided a key for emergency access. The site will not have security alarms systems. There will, however, be motion detector lights directed at equipment in case of needed repairs

during non-daylight hours. Permits have been filed with DEP and the state and there is an ongoing review of possible vernal pools. Once a determination on their status is made, the layout may change minimally to accommodate them. Kara noted that the 250' buffer requirement does pose some restrictions on the layout but they will work within that. Colin noted his concern for herbicides being used to keep vegetation under control annually on the wetland sites and would prefer to have that vegetation managed manually. Kevin Corbett said this is a common request and told the board that this change would be made to the plan.

Colin requested a decommissioning bond to be a part of the project in order to protect the town. It would insure proper removal of equipment and restoration of the environment to a pre-existing state should their be property tax default and abandonment of the project. Kevin noted that the bonds are renewable annually, but are not available longer term. He did ask that the bond not be needed until a building permit is issued and the PB agreed.

Ted brought up the subject of how the town will receive taxes from the project. Kevin said the details are still in process but does know the developer/owner will not be paying them but more likely it will be a government reimbursement.

Kevin was asked why this particular site was chosen and he replied that there were no proposed projects on the sub station nearby, this is the first one in the queue, the property provides a hill with good sunlight exposure and slopes to the south, and there will be minimal cost to connect with CMP. He also has been working with CMP and anticipates no electrical disturbance to neighbors during the construction phase.

A site walk was scheduled for Wednesday, May 13th at 5:30 p.m. with an inclement weather date of Thursday, May 14th at 5:30 p.m. A public hearing will be held on May 20th at 6:30 p.m. with the regular PB meeting to follow at 7:00 p.m. Colin noted that the application is very well done and it appears all permitting has been submitted. He would like to see more details on ownership within the application's proof of financial capability.

The last item on the agenda was Ted speaking about medical marijuana facilities, and the board's consultation on a property last month where a person wanted to buy a house and grow marijuana. He was concerned that the person wouldn't come back to provide details of the proposed home occupation. Charlie noted the "for sale" sign has disappeared but there is no sign of anyone moving in as of yet. Colin noted that the home occupation requirements in the Site Plan Review Ordinance only requires a consultation regarding the business, and this is not an approval and the applicant likely met this condition. If the new owner were to operate a business at this location beyond the limiting criteria of a home occupation, then they would either have to go through a full site plan review process or shut down.

Ted made a motion to adjourn at 8:22 p.m. Ray seconded the motion and the vote was 4-0 in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Kimball