

BARRE TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

The Town of Barre Planning Commission held a special meeting on **Wednesday, May 30, 2018** beginning at 5:00 p.m. at the **Municipal Building**, Lower Websterville.

Members Present:

Cedric Sanborn George Clain
Charlie Thygesen Sr Byron Atwood
Chris Violette Debra Pierce
Claire Duke

Members Absent:

Staff Present:

Others Present:

Troy McBride
Mike Curtis

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

None, special meeting.

REVIEW PROPOSED SOLAR INSTALATION:

1. 45-day notice of application for a 500kW solar facility by Norwich Solar Technologies for Washington County Mental Health Service located at 50 Granview Drive.
2. 45-day notice of application for a 500kW solar facility by Norwich Solar Technologies for Washington County Mental Health Services located at 260 Beckley Hill Road.

This is a special meeting for the purpose of a site visit and meeting to follow.

Violette summarized the site visit and mentioned that if anyone wanted to put something on the record now is the time to bring it up.

Pierce wanted to mention the question came up about where the 3-phase power was? Violette states that there isn't 3-phase power beyond the intersection of Richardson Rd and Granview as pointed out on onsite by Clain. Clain states they observed wetland, Violette states that it has yet to be determined if it is in fact wetland (Grandview property). McBride states that it has been delineated but it hasn't been determined which class it is. Violette states that he is sure the application will avoid those wetlands. McBride states that they will also meet a 50ft buffer.

Violette states that is all that they have to put on the record about the site visits.

Violette states they first visited Granview, the vast majority of the project is in a wooded area, they walked up to the property line to see how it would affect the neighbors. McBride states that there will be a 50ft no cut zone and the arrays would begin about 70-75ft in from the property line. There were no notable houses along the rear property line. There are houses below the projects but trees being left should adequately shield any house from seeing the project.

From there the board went to Beckley Hill Rd, they again did a walk of the property line where the array would be and again there would be a 50ft no cut zone, 70-75ft to where the arrays will be. Sanborn noted some of the members went up to Buena Vista and looked down onto what the neighbors might see. They noted 3 phase power goes up to the WCMHS building. It was noted that very few people will see this site.

Pierce asked if we (the Planning Commission) agree that their sites were preferred locations would that then mean the whole parcel is a preferred location? Violette states he believes he knows the answer and it does not mean the whole parcel is preferred just the project area. Each project is looked at separately.

Clain questioned if they can take the projects one at a time and start with Granview. Sanborn agreed.

GRANVIEW:

Violette states that Granview site is mostly hidden and if the Town wants to keep sites hidden then we should seriously consider this site. He further stated that we can't have it both ways, we don't want solar projects in fields and visible so that when we have sites that are mostly hidden we need to take advantage of them.

Sanborn agrees with that.

Clain disagrees with that. He does not believe that it is hidden and worries about water runoff. Cano Dr has a 13% grade and he feels that the water will be a problem for that road. Clain also feels that extending 3-phase powers is adding cost to the power company. McBride states that the solar company will pay for the 3-phase power upgrade unless it is already an area that GMP is looking to upgrade.

Atwood doesn't feel that the water runoff is a concern.

Violette reminds the board that they still have a chance to bring up the runoff concern when the application is filed. This is just giving the approval for the site. We can request that ANR look at stormwater runoff concerns.

Pierce states that she was first concerned about the water runoff but once she got up there her concerns went away. The applicant is keeping the stumps and with all the current tree coverage very little grass or other things to hold the soil has survived. Clearing and planting grass will help she feels.

Thygesen states he is not totally convinced that there isn't going to be a water issue. He states they have been dealing with the water issue for a long time. Thygesen wants to know who is going to take care of the water if there is an issue, since water runs downhill.

Clain questioned whether preferred site status will allow them to file an expedited permit? McBride states that there isn't an expedited process.

Duke states she is satisfied.

BECKLEY HILL:

Atwood liked the Beckley Hill site better than the Granview site. Atwood doesn't believe anyone from Buena Vista will be able to see it. Most all agreed and liked the site. Clain didn't feel the site was good. Thygesen liked it better than Granview.

Duke agrees that with the 50ft buffer the trees will cover the site.

Sanborn states that a little extra planting of trees in the 50 ft buffer would screen it that much more.

Clain would like to know what the buffer zone would look like. McBride states that the 50ft buffer will all be treed just as it is today. McBride states that there is an aesthetic review as part of the 248 processes, that will require low level plants for that one house that might see the panels. Clain questioned what if a tree were to blow down in the buffer? McBride states that it would be up to the landowner to decide whether to do anything with the blowdown or not.

MOTION:

A motion was made by Claire Duke, seconded by Deb Pierce, the Planning Commission voted to approve the preferred siting for a 500kW Solar array located at 50 Granview Dr; Parcel ID: 039/003.02

SANBORN: YES **VIOLETTE: YES** **ATWOOD: YES**
PIERCE: YES **DUKE: YES**
CLAIN: NO **THYGESEN: NO**

A motion was made by Chris Violette, seconded by Claire Duke, the Planning Commission voted to approve the preferred siting for 500kW Solar array located at 260 Beckley Hill Rd; Parcel ID: 008/030.00.

SANBORN: YES **VIOLETTE: YES** **ATWOOD: YES**
PIERCE: YES **DUKE: YES**
CLAIN: NO **THYGESEN: YES**

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by George Clain, seconded by Deb Pierce the Planning Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting of May 30, 2018 at 5:42pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Marineau

Cedric Sanborn, Chair

Byron Atwood

Charlie Thygesen Sr.

George Clain

Chris Violette

Claire Duke

Debra Pierce

DRAFT