

BARRE TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

The Town of Barre Planning Commission held their regular meeting on **Wednesday, March 21 , 2018** beginning at **7:00** p.m. at the **Municipal Building**, Lower Websterville.

Members Present:

Cedric Sanborn George Clain
Charlie Thygesen Sr
Chris Violette Debra Pierce

Members Absent:

Claire Duke
Byron Atwood

Staff Present:

Emily Marineau

Others Present:

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

Clain would like to add a follow up to the proposed battery storage.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion to approve the February 21, 2018 meeting minutes by Clain, second by Pierce. Meeting minutes approved unanimously at 7:05pm, as corrected

A motion to approve the amended minutes by Pierce, second by Clain.

ENERGY PLAN:

The Planning Commission has been continuing the discussion on the energy plan and the best way to go about working on the document. Violette suggested using a program called "Google Docs". In Google Docs everyone would be able to pick a color text and edit the document and see what other members have changed. Once all the changes are complete one person will need to go through the document and do all the rewrites. Violette hopes to have the energy plan in Google Docs by the next meeting.

Clain questions if one of the vacant lots in the Industrial Park could be turned into commuter parking. Sanborn states he is not sure if that is allowed under the covenant, Clain doesn't see where it isn't allowed. Violette states it would be up to the Select Board if it is allowed.

MOTION:

No motion was made by The Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will continue to review the material that was provided by CVRPC and work on incorporating it into the Town Plan.

POSSIBLE ZONING AMENDMENT:

Staff Comments of Chris Violette

This item was discussed last month after Barre Area Development Executive Joel Schwartz gave a brief presentation and asked the Planning Commission to consider rezoning the portion of the Wilson Industrial Park that is zoned office building retail (OBR) to industrial (IND) which would match the rest of the park zoning. As discussed last month, the Planning Commission begins the rezoning or any zoning amendment and must look at the feasibility and the overall impact rezoning a property may have. Ultimately a report is supposed to be generated for review by surrounding towns and the Regional Planning Commission. The item is on this month's agenda to begin the process.

I've included a zoning map of all of Barre Town so that you can see how much and where land is zoned OBR and IND. OBR zoning was created with the intention it would be for businesses to which people/customers must go to for the business to operate.

After doing a little research I found out that the portion of the industrial park that is zoned OBR (approximately 25 usable acres) was done so for the purpose of having a place for office buildings to go. The intent was never for retail/commercial business. Zoning was amended several years ago to allow office buildings in the industrial zone seemingly making the original purpose of having office building retail a moot point. It should be pointed out that the original zoning of the land was just commercial, office building retail did not exist until 2007.

Also, seemingly making sense to consider changing if the Planning Commission chooses to move forward with this zoning change is the roughly 87 acres of open land to the East of Bolster Road, behind the Town office. This land is all mitigated land as a result of the ACT 250 permit for the Wilson Industrial Park. This land is set-aside for prime agricultural soil lost as a result of the Wilson Industrial Park. It can't be developed. Not to mention poor access and the residential nature of the surrounding area.

I've included a copy of the Wilson Industrial Park expansion (the area in question is part of the Wilson Industrial Park expansion).

Clain states that he is not in favor of changing the zone because the covenant would allow an industrial use and not allow a shopping center. Clain feels that the covenant will protect the land based on what he has read and his understanding of it.

Sanborn states he is in favor and feels that changing the zone would open the door to more industrial business.

Sanborn questions if the Town of Barre (land owners) want to change the zone from OBR to IND. Violette states that he has not talked with the Town yet, Violette wanted to talk with the Planning Commission first. If the Planning Commission would like to go forward with the zone change then Violette will go to the Select Board to get their thoughts on changing the zone.

The Planning Commission had a brief discussion on the zone change then took a poll on what they would like him to do.

PIERCE: YES
CLAIN: NO
THYGESEN: YES
VIOLETTE: YES
SANBORN; YES

Violette will try to get on the agenda with Select Board for April 10, 2018. When Violette is there talking about the zone change, he will also ask the Select Board to look at section V and lot coverage of solar panels in the current covenant.

MOTION:

No motion was made by The Planning Commission.

MISCELLANEOUS:

FOLLOW-UP: BATTERY STORAGE

Thygesen asked if anyone has seen any pictures of what the battery storage will look like. Thygesen feels it is too close to the road and not in a good location.

Clain states that he has looked at pictures online and the piece of land that are proposing to use is off the road a little bit.

Thygesen doesn't feel that it is going to generate tax dollars. Clain states the minutes from last month reflect the total cost of the project and they feel it will generate tax dollars. The part that concerns Clain and triggered him to look into the batteries some more is the life span of the batteries and what happens to them once the batteries are no longer useable. Clain is worried that the batteries could be stored within the park and not be removed because the covenants allow storage of batteries on site. Clain states the pictures he saw online looks like shipping container with the fans on top of the containers to cool them down. Clain does not feel the fence will contain the noise from the fans if they are on top of the container. The convenience allows up to 65 Dbs and the containers are going to be at about 35 Db. Clain questions who is going to monitor the noise. Violette questioned where the 65 Db couldn't be heard past. Pierce found where it states in the covenant that the Db cannot exceed 65 Db at the property line.

Sanborn questioned when the public hearing is going to be. Violette states they have not filed an application yet.

The Planning Commission agrees that they need more information before they can write a letter of support for this project. Once the application is filled then the Planning Commission will write a letter asking the Public Utility Commission not fast track the application for the battery storage project. The Planning Commission has many questions that still need to be answered.

MOTION:

No motion was made by The Planning Commission

CORRESPONDENCE:

ROUND TABLE:

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Debra Pierce, seconded by Chris Violette , the Planning Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting of March 21, 2018 at 8:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Marineau

Cedric Sanborn, Chair

Byron Atwood

Charlie Thygesen Sr.

George Clain

Chris Violette

Claire Duke

Debra Pierce