

BARRE TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

The Town of Barre Planning Commission held their regular meeting on **Wednesday, May 23, 2018** beginning at **7:00** 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:

Emily Marineau

Others Present:

Troy McBride – Norwich Solar
Michael Curtis -Washington County Mental Health Services

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

Violette states that the third solar presentation has been withdrawn. Review hand out from Town Manager, Carl Rogers.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion to approve the March 21, 2018 meeting minutes by Clain, second by Pierce. Meeting minutes approved unanimously at 7:04pm.

A motion to approve the April 11, 2018 meeting minutes by Clain, second by Violette. Meeting minutes approved unanimously at 7:05pm.

REVIEW PROPOSED SOLAR INSTALATION:

Staff Comments of Chris Violette

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.

Troy McBride from Norwich Solar and Michael Curtis from Washington County Mental Health Services (WCMHS) presented the two proposed solar projects.

McBride states the PC should have received two 45-day notices for the project, he states they are also doing a roof top project with WCMHS at another location. McBride explained the process of applying for 500kW solar projects. First is the 45-day notice to all abutters, town, regional and State parties that would be involved. Second, starting in 2017 all ground mounted solar projects larger than 15kw are required to get preferred site designation. Preferred site was added to give Towns an ability to weigh in on the location of solar projects. Third, is a letter from the Town Planning Commission, Select Board and Regional Planning Commission stating the location is preferred. Once they have that letter then Norwich Solar will move forward with the application process. Violette asked McBride when he planned on filing the application. McBride stated he plans on filing the application the last week of June because as of July 1st the net metering rates go down 2 cents. If the application is filed before the 1st then they will get the current rates. McBride states there is an environmental review that is taking place June 15, 2018 so they can not file until that is done. McBride states that a 500kW array can produce enough electricity to offset 100 homes. McBride states that under Vermont net metering guidelines the arrays need to be on a minimum of 3 acre lots. McBride goes on to list the 7 possible preferred siting requirements in order to consider 500kW projects. McBride states that you only need to meet one requirement and WCMHS is filing under the requirement that they must get preferred siting and a letter from the Town PC, Select Board and Regional PC. McBride states that the letter is very basic and would need to be signed by all 3 boards and if one of the boards does not sign the letter than they can not go any further with the project. McBride states that if they did a 15kW there is a cap to one large residence or 3 small houses. Sanborn states that he thought he read somewhere that the land owner had to take up to 50% of the power. McBride states that is one of the preferred sittings on the same parcel or adjacent to the parcel to the customer that will allocate 50% of the power over 10 years. McBride states that Norwich Solar is doing a project in Windsor that is a retirement home where they will not need preferred siting because they will use that power. McBride states that the Town can come up with a Town Plan/Energy Plan and list the preferred sites for solar power and they could use that. McBride states that he has not looked at the Energy Plan yet, he will do that when he submits the full application. Duke questioned if just meeting one requirement is enough. McBride states that they need to meet just one criteria. Duke questioned what happens to the arrays when they phase out? McBride states that the arrays are very recyclable. The silicon that is in the panels can be reused and put back into new panels. He states that there is no dedicated money set aside to recycle them, but it is expected, and a plan is put in place to decommission and recycle the panels when the time comes. McBride states that WCMHS is going to do a roof top array at their building on the South Barre Rd. Curtis states that they will get the power credits from the roof top array and will lease the land that the ground mounted solar arrays are on. Clain questioned if WCMHS owned the land and how they received their funding. Curtis states that they do own the land, he has found it beneficial to own the land as opposed to renting. Curtis states they have owned Grandview since the late 1980's and Beckley Hill since the mid 1990's. Curtis states that WCMHS receives State and Federal funding but they need to do something to supplement the money that they are losing with Medicare /Medicaid reimbursement. Clain questioned what the tax revenue would be. Curtis states that they do not pay taxes, but they do pay a payment in lieu of taxes (piolet) instead. McBride states that the arrays are taxed at \$4.00 a kW by the State and about the same for the Town. Atwood asked what the value of each system is? McBride states that each system is about 1.3 million dollars. Violette questioned why McBride felt these locations were preferred sites. McBride states they are preferred sites because the location is near 3 phase power, credits are given to GMP, Beckley Hill location is south facing, and Granview is flat and has good sun exposure, both locations are tucked away and will not be easily seen. Thygesen was concerned about drainage and the arrays being visible to the neighboring houses. Duke questioned if they

would be cutting any trees down. McBride states that there is a 50ft setback and they would leave a buffer, as to cutting down the trees they would cut down the trees but leave the stumps in the ground to help with drainage, Curtis states that most of those trees that they would be cutting down are falling and need to be cut down anyway. Violette pointed out that these sites are tucked away and not in a field. The Town doesn't want them in a field so having them tucked away is a better option, we can't say no to everything.

The Planning Commission decided they would like to do at site visit and have a special meeting before deciding whether to support the locations. The Planning Commission had a short discussion about the date and time. They settled on Wednesday May 30, 2018 at 3pm with a meeting to follow back at the Municipal building

MOTION:

No motion was made by The Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will continue to do a site visit and have a special meeting on Wednesday May 30, 2018.

ENERGY PLAN:

The Planning Commission continue the discussion on the energy plan and review dropbox file sharing program. Violette reports he is still trying to import the document and have it been a working document for everyone to use. He will report back next month.

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.

ZONING AMENDMENT:

Staff Comments of Chris Violette

Possible review of report regarding the rezoning of a portion of the Wilson Industrial Park.

Discuss any other potential zoning amendments if going to begin the rezoning process.

Discuss whether to set date for a public hearing on zoning amendment(s).

Violette reports that he has not been able to get in touch with his contact person at the State to get the proper documents. He will continue to work on that and report back next month.

MOTION:

No motion was made by The Planning Commission.

FOLLOW-UP:

Staff Comments of Chris Violette

Hand out:

Village designation program application guidelines
Swanton Energy Plan (draft stand-alone plan)
Richford Town Plan (Includes energy planning as an element – has received energy compliance) (available but not copied)

Violette informed the board that these documents were available to them. The majority of the board requested them emailed to them. An emailed version will be sent to them.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Staff Comments of Chris Violette

Review Vermont Transportation Board's request for input regarding private aviation and helicopter landing facilities.

Draft Berlin Town Plan (available but not copied)

Planning and Zoning Roundtable, May 30, 2018, 6:00pm, hosted by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

Violette will have more to report on for next months meeting.

MISCELLANEOUS:

The Planning Commission reviewed the All Board and Commission Members hand out from the Town Manager. They Planning Commission had a slight discussion on the matter then voted on who they thought would be best to serve on the board.

MOTION:

A Motion was made to elect Cedric Sanborn, as representative, by George Calin, second by Chris Violette.

ROUND TABLE:

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by George Clain, seconded by Byron Atwood, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting of May 23, 2018 at 8:46pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Marineau

Cedric Sanborn, Chair

Byron Atwood

Charlie Thygesen Sr.

George Clain

Chris Violette

Claire Duke

Debra Pierce

DRAFT