

**Minutes**  
**Northfield Board of Health**  
**March 27, 2024**  
**6:00 PM**  
**Northfield Town Hall**  
**69 Main Street, Northfield, MA**  
**Board of Health Office 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

**Call to Order:** 6:01 pm

**Quorum Established:** David Balk, Kathie Bridges, Ali Wahlstrom, Karen Boudreau, Ruth Potee  
Also in attendance – Pam Veith, Board Secretary, John Buxton (private citizen), Jesse Robinson (private citizen and Blue Wave employee)

**Business:**

- Invoices review – Reviewed Transfer Station invoices and set aside for Bob to approve
- Discussion of newly purchased copier/scanner/printer for Board of Health office. Currently working through technical installation issues with IT company.
- Review of burial permit on private property. Ali asked if this was going to be allowed only to Northfield residents. Kathie states that the Board does not have the authority to make that a requirement. Further review will take place when and if there is a request for a “green” burial. All Board members to be emailed the current draft permit and discussion will take place at next meeting concerning any additional requirements.
- Board received a response from our inspection agent, Claudia, concerning a complaint at a local residence. Our inspector’s resulting advice is that the Board should not intervene in this situation as it is a tenant/landlord dispute. The Board agreed to take this advice but keep track of any newly occurring developments with debris at the property which may cause a health concern as the weather warms.
- Ali reports that she spoke with Michael McDonald at the State’s Ethics Board concerning her possible conflict of interest with the proposed solar array. She states he instructed her to recuse herself from any Board discussions but can speak during Citizen Concerns as a private citizen. Ali recused herself. David states she must recuse herself and not comment at all. Ali agrees to abstain and not comment at all during this meeting. The Board asked to see Michael McDonald’s instruction in writing which Ali states she did ask for and he refused to provide it stating it wasn’t necessary.
- David described for the Board where the proposed solar array will be located. The Board members will do a site review. David reminds the Board members that any objections or conditions the Board has with the proposed solar array plan must be based on real issues and cannot be arbitrary.
- Kathie states that one condition she feels should be added is that there is a sanitary station (porta potty) on site during construction for the workers. This porta potty shall be maintained throughout the duration of construction.
- Ruth states the Board should have assurances that there will be no chemical leaching into the soil from the panels – David reads to the Board the portion of the information provided by the applicant where this is addressed to Ruth’s satisfaction. Ruth states she sees no visual medical issues with this proposed array.
- John Buxton, abutter to the proposed solar array project, feels that being so close to the project (150 feet) compares to being next to industrial energy projects. John provided the Board with a variety of information he has collected on this topic. John is concerned that glare from the panels will adversely affect himself and his family. He is also concerned that the project is located in the 100 year flood zone. John states an additional concern about electromagnetic fields with long term exposure, debris collecting against the perimeter fence for the project which, in his opinion, would make for a dangerous situation during high waters.



- Ruth states that many health concerns could possibly be unknown at this time. The Board will ask for an updated FEMA flood zone map as the one provided as new maps were produced in 2021.
- Jesse Robinson, an abutter and an employee for Blue Wave states that the screening trees will adequately address any glare concerns. He states that glare from the panels is also less and not ground level due to the rotation of the panels being only 60 percent maximum tilt. Jesse states that there will be a 70 foot “farmer’s strip” between rows of panels and that this is a State standard. He further states that the array covers more area due to changes and requirements in the State regulations. The setbacks from the river are also State requirements.
- John Buxton states that health concerns are his greatest fears. John also states he is concerned with Eversource’s ability to close the Turners Falls dam and flood the fields. Ruth states that she doesn’t feel 10 years of collected health data around large solar arrays is enough time to know everything. She will look further into the medical health area of concern to abutters.
- Jesse states that any additional questions the Board may have should be directed to Blue Wave directly. He further states that just about everything that is powered by electricity produces an electromagnetic field and that solar arrays create less than a normal household.
- Karen’s main concern is the location in the flood zone and safety.
- David states the Board will revisit this proposal during our next meeting. Kathie to overlay the currently provided flood map with an updated FEMA map for the next meeting.

#### **Review and Approval of Minutes:**

- March 13, 2024 minutes – Tabled to next meeting due to printer/computer issues

#### **Citizen’s Concerns:**

- John Buxton and Jesse Robinson spoke with the Board with concerns and clarifications on the proposed solar array.

#### **Permit Applications:**

- Septic Tank Replacement Permit – 179 Captain Beers Plain Road - approved

#### **Reports:**

- Septic pumping reports – reviewed
- Well report – reviewed
- Vegetation spraying report from Eversouce – reviewed
- Title V report – Old Wendell Road - approved

#### **Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair within 48 Hours:**

- David and Kathie met with Department of Environmental Protection about water supply for a current business after a change of location/use. Ali asks that this be a topic on our next agenda.
- David and Kathie met at the proposed Pierson Road campground with Department of Environmental Protection, agent for the applicant and engineers for the septic system design for this project. The Department of Environmental Protection has given permission for a public well to be sited – The Board will be copied on all communications between parties. The setbacks and known wells will be in compliance with the State’s requirements. Three wells will be drilled and analyzed. Noting that Strowbridge Brook has a 200 feet setback, Notice of Intent is required by the Department of Environmental Protection from the Northfield Conservation Commission. Clockwork did attend a meeting of the Northfield Conservation Commission on March 20, 2024. David laid out how and when to expect a request from Clockwork to be allowed to start construction on the septic system.

- Update from Department of Environmental Protection from site visit to relocated business – they are requesting a copy of the establishment's Food Permit.
- Board received a complaint about a burned out car on at a private residence. Complaining party requested this be removed. This is not within the Board's authority. The Building/Zoning officer was also copied on this complaint and the Board states action on this would fall under that department.

Adjourn: 7:48 pm

Robert 4/11/24

Kathryn B. Bridger 4 April '24

Juan Bourdeau 4-11-24