

NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING MARCH 17, 2021

MINUTES

Present: Bill Llewelyn, Chair; Mike Barry, Charlie Blanker, Robin Conley

Guests: Rich Riccio, Jackie Firsty, Jood Alshirawi, Mike Zimmer, Theodore Bakas, Kavita Ravi, Eugene L'Etoile, Nathan L'Etoile, Stephen Seredynski, Tammy Pelletier, Homer Stavely, Tom Reidy, Beth Greenblatt, Anna Santana, Deb Giard, Melissa Gamache, Melissa Kalinowski, iair, jenfi

The meeting was called to order via Zoom at 7:16 PM.

Bill stated that this meeting would focus on the proposed **solar project on Pine Meadow Road**, Northfield, and that the project is divided into three areas titled Solar Array A, B, and C. This meeting was scheduled as a hearing, but Bill said he did not find any file numbers for the ConsComm to review. Robin reported that she spoke with Mark Stinson of MA Dept of Environmental Protection on Monday, March 15, and that he and Rich Riccio of Field Engineering were still working on coordinating several preliminary issues regarding the three Notices of Intent (NOI). Charlie shared that he spoke with Mark S. in the afternoon of March 17 and that the issuance of file numbers for all 3 NOIs were being sent to Stinson's boss for review and approval. Bill said that since so many people were assembled that this meeting would be a discussion of the proposed solar project, not a hearing.

Jackie Firsty of **Blue Wave Solar LLC** introduced herself and presented an overview. This project focuses on dual use of solar arrays and agriculture pursuits on the L'Etoile farm on Pine Meadow Road. Sheep grazing is the intended agricultural endeavor. There was a brief discussion of other buildings needed for the sheep.

Rich Riccio presented details of the plans for **Solar Array A** and shared the screen with map SL1 – Array A. This is the most northern array of the project. The modules are tracking panels raised a minimum of 8' off the ground to allow for the agricultural operation beneath the modules. There are approximately 14,000 panels on this array. Two wetland systems were marked east of the site that are offsite of the intended solar array. Rich displayed a more detailed map of the flagged area showing the 100' buffer zone. The only work planned within the flagged area will be fencing. Buildings are intended for sheep. Rich explained the erosion control and gravel entry road. Jackie stated Blue Wave is negotiating with the Planning Board about wiring. Charlie said the buffer zone needs to be properly flagged, a requirement for DEP filings. ConsCom unanimously voted to continue hearing of Solar Array A on April 21, 2021 at 7 pm.

Solar Array B, the southernmost array, was presented by Rich Riccio. This array will have just over 10,000 panels, approximately 26 acres within an 8' agricultural fence. There are more wetland areas associated with this site and a flood zone area. Rich explained his calculation for soil volume displaced by solar module posts and fence posts within the flood zone. Pine Meadow Brook, the resource area, has not been flagged. Much discussion followed. ConsCom unanimously voted to continue hearing of Solar Array B on April 21, 2021 at 7 pm.

Solar Array C, located at 612 Pine Meadow Road, was presented by Rich Riccio. This is a proposed smaller, conventional fixed-tilt solar site without dual agricultural use. Fenced area will be 1.9 acres

with 1,400 panels. A flood zone is avoided. There is no impact of wetland resource areas. Erosion control is planned along the fence lines and gravel road. ConsCom unanimously voted to continue hearing of Solar Array C on April 21, 2021 at 7 pm.

Bill stated that ConsCom needs to hire an independent wetlands specialist to review all buffer zones, riverfront areas, and flood plains. Jackie said Blue Wave agrees to pay for this **peer review**. Bill shared ConsCom will hire Bill Lattrell. NOIs will be sent to Mr. Lattrell. Bill said ConsCom will conduct a site visit with the approval of the landowners prior to or during Mr. Lattrell's review.

ConsCom unanimously voted that a **letter of support** for the newly revised and updated Open Space and Recreation Plan be sent to the Open Space Committee.

Anna Santana gave an **update of the 4-Mile Brook site**. The owner of the company originally hired to do the cutting has agreed that he did cut into the buffer zone and is willing to replant about 10 native trees. Mike shared that he and Charlie made a site visit and that many trees were cut down within the 200' riverfront. It is planned that Charlie will meet with Derrick C, the tree cutter, to determine the 200' riverfront line and review the plot plan for replanting of trees.

Eversource sent a letter indicating they will **replace four utility poles along East Northfield Road**. They consider it regular maintenance and so no NOIs need to be filed.

Mike gave an update on the **Warwick Road situation**. A contractor for Eversource cut an access road up a steep hillside off Warwick Road and caused a large gully. The access road is not exempt from DEP regulations. A Cease and Desist order was issued, and now DEP is overseeing the legalities. Mike shared that temporary measures for runoff are failing. He has not been able to get a response from the involved parties. Although Eversource says they are resolving the issue, Mike requested that ConsCom be in the loop and that we have input into a permanent resolution.

MINUTES of December meeting were unanimously approved.

Mike shared he is helping Julia Blyth with the **Mill Brook Trail NOI**.

Next meeting is scheduled for Wed., April 21, 7:00 PM via Zoom. (rescheduled)

Meeting adjourned at 8:52 PM.

Minutes unanimously approved 5/5/21. Submitted to Town Clerk 5/6/21. RC