

Note: These proposed minutes should be considered preliminary until they are approved by the board at a future meeting.

**NORTHFIELD PLANNING BOARD
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2020
REGULAR MEETING - 4:00PM
SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM, TOWN HALL, NORTHFIELD
MEETING MINUTES**

Members Present: Chair Stephen Seredynski (SS), Joe Graveline (JG), Tammy Pelletier (TP), Meg Riordan (MR); Homer Stavely (HS)

Members Absent: none

Others in Attendance: Rich Riccio of Field Engineering; Jackie ?? of Field Engineering; Joanne ??, Bee Jacque, Julia Blyth

I. CALL TO ORDER

SS called the meeting to order at ???pm.

II. PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION WITH FIELD ENGINEERING REGARDING POTENTIAL SOLAR PROJECT

Rich Riccio and Jackie ?? presented on the proposed Pine Meadow Road solar arrays. The presentation included an interactive illustration of the area's "summer view," post-installation.

JG (?) asked about the brook near the site. Rich responded. A discussion ensued.

SS (?) asked about the abutters' views, and if the plans included screening. Rich responded. A discussion ensued.

SS (?) asked about the type of poles leading from the array to the power lines on the street. Rich responded. A discussion ensued.

SS asked whether the power generated by the array will go to the power grid, or be used only for the farm's purposes. He also asked about the connection points. Rich and Jackie responded: the power will go to the grid because it is greater than what the farm needs. The community can sign up for net-metering through this, and other, solar arrays.

JG (?) asked about substations. Jackie and Rich responded.

JG (?) asked about the Northfield Mountain project and if this project was related. Jackie responded: it is unrelated. A discussion ensued.

HS asked if there are any visible structures where the array connects to the grid. Rich and Jackie responded: the equipment will rest on a concrete pad, and it is smaller than a transformer.

HS asked if the plans include batteries to store the power for overcast days. Jackie responded: yes, the state requires this.

HS asked if there were any concerns with safety, pollution, or visibility. Jackie responded: the box holding the batteries is small, approximately 40' x 60', and its location will be behind the solar panels and not very visible.

HS asked about plans for the array's decommissioning, and if the land can be returned to agricultural use. Jackie responded: they have plans and bonds to remove all equipment and return the land to agricultural use.

Joanne asked about UMass's approval of the panels, and ongoing agricultural use of the land beneath the array. Jackie responded: UMass and the state will review the plans.

Joanne asked where the panels are made, and if enslaved people make the panels. Jackie responded: it is unknown at this point where the panels will be made, it could be in the United States or China, and her company is a "B" corp and won't knowingly contract with manufacturers that use the labor of enslaved people. A discussion ensued.

Rich responded to questions submitted through the online meeting's "chat" function by Joanne, Bee Jacque, and Julia Blyth. The questions addressed: how the arrays are anchored into the ground; how much digging will occur; native plantings in and around the array; the distance of the project's smallest array to the river; whether the panels are translucent enough to allow sunlight to reach the land beneath the array; and, the project's timeline.

Bee Jacque asked if Field Engineering has worked with local or state historical commissions. Jackie responded: yes, the company's projects go to these commissions for review.

JG asked about slopes, grading, and runoff on the site. Rich responded: there will be very little grade changes, and the company has erosion and stormwater plans.

JG (?) asked about cooling the converters and the noise produced by the coolers. Rich responded and noted the soundproofing plans, sound studies, and sound data. He noted the inverters run during the day when the sun is shining.

TP asked about taxes associated with this project. Jackie responded: the company will propose a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) arrangement if the town is amenable, and the real estate taxes should not change.

Jackie invited attendees to sign up for community solar net-metering through this array or others.

MR asked about the construction timeline. Jackie responded: if the project is approved, and COVID does not interfere, construction is slated to start in the summer or fall of 2021, and it should take about six months to complete.

SS noted this project will require a public hearing. He thanked Rich and Jackie for the presentation, and the Planning Board appreciates it. Rich and SS will work together to schedule the public hearing. A discussion ensued on permitting.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A discussion ensued on the October 22, 2020 meeting minutes.

SS said [unintelligible]. TP said [unintelligible].

**MOTION BY HS TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 22, 2020 MEETING.
MR SECONDED.**

ROLL CALL VOTE:

SS: YEA

JG: YEA

TP: YEA

MR: YEA

HS: YEA

THE MOTION PASSED 5-0.

V. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF FINAL DRAFT OF THE REVISED SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

SS said [unintelligible]

MR reported the Planning Board is likely only waiting on information about the fire engine's turning radius.

SS said [unintelligible]

MR noted Peggy Sloan from FRCOG will help the Planning Board.

SS said [unintelligible]

MR said she will email Peggy.

**MOTION BY TP TO APPROVE THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE SUBDIVISION
REGULATIONS. ?? SECONDED.**

A discussion ensued. HS said the draft looks fine, and he sees no significant changes made to the document since the last meeting.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

SS: ABSTAIN

JG: ABSTAIN

TP: YEA

MR: YEA

HS: YEA

THE MOTION PASSED 3-2.

IV. PLANNING BOARD RULES AND REGULATIONS

SS noted the state directed COVID-related changes to Planning Boards' rules and regulations, but those rules and regulations have reverted back to the original rules and regulations.

VI. ANY ISSUES NOT ANTICIPATED BY THE CHAIR 48 HOURS PRIOR

There were none.

VII. ADJOURN

MOTION BY ?? TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:07PM. ?? SECONDED. VOTE ??

The next anticipated meeting of the Planning Board is Thursday, December 17, 2020, at 5pm.

Respectfully submitted by Wendy M. Levy from minutes taken by Wendy M. Levy.

Approves 1/14/2021 [Signature]