

**Planning Board
Minutes
November 16, 2020**

Meeting held remotely via Zoom.

Members Present: Judy Eiseman, Lexi Dewey, Leslie Laurie, Pete Wilson, Anne Stoddard (recording)

Visitors present: Walt Kohler (Project Leader), Tilman Lukas, Barbara Cooper, Megan McDonough (Pioneer Valley Habitat), John Trickey, Charlie Thompson, Rusty Rowell

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.

Approve minutes from previous meetings.

October 19, 2020 Minutes approved (4 for, 0 against)

October 23, 2020 Minutes approved (4 for, 0 against)

November 14, 2020 Minutes approved (4 for, 0 against, 1 abstain)

Announcements.

Cory Shumway requested information on a Town Master Plan. There is a Master Plan that was drafted in about 1987 but was never adopted. Cory wants to come to the next PB meeting. We will put him on the agenda for Dec. 14 at 7:30.

The Conservation Commission has received information about a potential solar array on property in Cadwell Forest. No official notice has been received but an ANRAD will be needed because wetlands are involved. The project should be within the scope of the new by-law. The MACC emergency order will be lifted as of December 1 so approvals can move forward. The ConCom will hire a wetlands specialist and will defer reviews if there is snow on the ground.

Request from Habitat for Humanity to cut trees within the public right of way at 8 Amherst Road.

The primary purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision in accordance with the Town of Pelham Scenic Roads Bylaw and public hearing held on Saturday November 14, 2020, on this request. The Planning Board must make a decision about the request within 30 days and inform the Select Board. The Tree Warden will also make a decision and inform the Select Board.

An abutter, Tom Hartman, submitted comments with photo via email (attached). He requests that three of the trees identified for removal be kept. His rationale includes: 1) the trees provide visual screening; 2) the impact on the solar aperture is limited; 3) the maple provides additional screening when in leaf. Judy wanted to be sure that the opportunity for a solar grant would not be adversely affected. Walt and Meghan that they agree that the solar grant would still be viable and that they will get a definitive reading once the houses are built.

The Board agreed to support Tom Hartman's request and approve the removal of the other trees. (4 for, 0 against, 1 abstain). Judy will draft the Board's response.

The project is planning to ask Northeast Utilities for help in removing the trees. Walt asked the PB to support that request. The Board voted to support the request. (5 for, 0 against) Tilman suggested that Walt also contact the Select Board. Meghan will send a letter to the Select Board.

Leslie asked what the process will be to select the residents for the Habitat houses. Meghan said that they are finalizing the selection materials now. The process will open in January with applications due in March. They will make the final decision in May. The goal is to have the family selected by the time the first wall goes up. The eligibility criteria include a willingness to partner; an ability to pay an affordable mortgage and housing need as determined by income and being a first-time home buyer. There is no local preference. Habitat would like help in spreading the word to eligible families.

Other Business

Sandra Burgess will send the solar by-law to the Attorney General for review.

Judy is scheduled for surgery in January and may be unavailable for PB work for a few weeks.

The board members were asked to review the draft of the Scenic Roads notice flyer for posting on town website.

There is some inconsistency between the driveway by-law and the zoning by-law. The highway superintendent would like us to resolve the differences.

Leslie requested that we put cannabis regulations on the agenda for the next meeting. We need to be prepared in the event that someone wants to grow or sell cannabis in Pelham. She will prepare a list of points for us to consider.

Next Meeting:

December 12, 2020 at 7:00PM

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Stoddard

Attachment: email from Tom Hartman

From: Thomas Hartman <tom@candharchitects.com>

Subject: 8 Amherst Road Shade Tree Hearing

Date: November 14, 2020 at 10:59:15 AM EST

To: dhawkufs@comcast.net

Cc: Judith Eiseman <marchmaid@gmail.com>

Dave and Judy,

As discussed at the hearing, Kristin DeBoer and I would like to state our objection to the removal of the evergreens and maple tree shown in the attached photograph at the western edge of the property at 8 Amherst Road.

There are three considerations:

1. From our kitchen windows, this group of trees provides a visual screening of car headlights throughout the year.
2. The impact on the solar aperture of leaving these trees is minimal in the yearly overall kwh yield. They will block the sun mid day in November, December and January as I demonstrated with the solar path finder. If the evergreens were pruned at the top above the power lines, this would not affect the visual screening we are requesting to remain.
3. The maple tree provides a sense of further separation from the road when the leaves are out.

Please note that the Notice we received in the mail did not request written objections in advance of the hearing. Thank you for considering them now.

As a resident on Amherst Road, I'd also like to offer that some plantings or a fence at the road would be beneficial to the future residents. This could be located so that sight lines at the driveway are not obscured. Our experience in our yard would be far less desirable if we did not have plantings and fencing at the road.

We look forward to having good neighbors.

Sincerely,

Tom

Thomas RC Hartman, AIA
Principal

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