

**Planning Board  
Minutes  
April 12, 2021**

**Meeting held remotely via Zoom.**

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

**Visitors present:** Tom Montemagni, Jon Montemagni, Matteo Ramos-Mucci, Rusty Rowell, Randy Izer (Harold Eaton Surveyors), Lorraine Lynch, Tilman Lukas. From AMP: Andrew Chabot, Camille Littlefield, Michael Larkin, Evan Turner

**Meeting called to order at 7:04 pm.**

Minutes from the previous meetings (February 8 and March 8, 2021) were approved.

Judy requested reimbursement of \$125.42 for supplies. Approved 4/0 (Judy abstained)

**Updates.**

1. Property owners on Buffam Road are considering building a shared driveway with their neighbors. This plan is currently being reviewed by the Conservation Commission. There are wetlands involved. This plan could come to the Planning Board.
2. There is no news about the Centennial Treatment Plant. Because it is in the Village Center, the Planning Board will have to review the plan. At this point we wait for an application
3. We will be working with Planning Commission on driveways, cannabis, scenic roads by-laws

**Shared Driveway request at 66 Daniel Shays Hwy.** The property owner, Jon Montemagni, is proposing to install a shared driveway with his daughter. In order for the Planning Board to approve the request we will need a full plan, engineering plan, wetland delineation, and the driveway staked. If there are chances that wetlands will be impacted we will want a mitigation plan. Then we will hold a public hearing. The owners have been in consultation with the Conservation Commission.

Jon asked if he can get a perc test in the meantime. Yes, if he can do it without crossing wetland: Jabish Brook. Jon and Tom left the meeting

**Solar project on Tower Rd.** Andrew Chabot introduced the group from AMP. They are hoping to be get to know us. Although it may change, they want to give us an overview of the project as envisioned at this time.

Leslie asked that they tell us about the organization and AMP folks were given the floor to make their presentation as follows, with questions from the Board. AMP energy is a solar developer. Andrew is in Watertown. Their focus is on developing projects: ground mounted, several thousand megawatts in size. They are trying to become an environmentally, culturally respectful company. Engaging with towns is a goal. They plan to own projects long-term: to

develop, finance build and stay with a project 25 years or more. They try to be respectful of environmental concerns. They turn cleared land into meadow land. They also respect cultural heritage; Native American or historic sites are protected..

This project is off Tower Rd. and is completely surrounded by Cadwell Forest. The land is owned by WD Cows. AMP purchased a lease option in August 2018. They are working with the local utility for interconnection: Eversource. They submitted ANRAD to the ConCom in Nov 2020. Currently the project is being reviewed by an outside reviewer. AMP will be meeting with ConCom on April 20. Then they will request a determination of applicability. They don't plan to have any impact on wetlands or buffers. The design is in process. They expect to make a permit application in early summer.

Evan presented the preliminary site design via PowerPoint. He reiterated that it is not the final design.

Matteo: Why did they choose this site? Response: The landowner was interested; there are no residential neighbors and there are 3-phase poles already in place. Pete: what is the distance to the 3-phase interconnection? Response: From the intersection of Enfield and Butterhill Rd to the edge of the property is 7800 ft.(1.33 mi.). The overhead poles are in place but the wires will be upgraded. The Tower needs only 2.4kv which is too small for the array. The cost is \$1,000,000/mile but this is mitigated because it is already 3-phase.

Why 48 acres? Arrays of 50 acres or more require special state review. The site is about 50 acres total of the 63.4 acres owned by Cows.

Mike said that the environmental benefits of the pollinator meadow has received a silver certification from UMass. There will be early successional and edge habitat. The carbon offset is equivalent to carbon sequestration of 11,139 acres of forest.

Community benefits: 12,800 MWh per year will serve 1800+ households. Preservation of the cemetery. Payments in lieu of taxes. Public entity opportunity in which the Town could take active role.

Questions. Leslie: What are the choices for the town? Most applicable – town resident can train to help with maintenance. Makes project more cost effective. There are subsidies from the state if the hosting municipality helps run it. Then it qualifies as a public entity. This is a new option so the details need to be worked out. Potentially the town could have more input, more oversight, more money. It allows the company to double the value to the town.

What is town benefit? Not sure yet.

Matteo: what is lifespan? What happens after? Lifespan is at least 25 years (warranty of panels) but it is probably more like 40 years . Money is set aside to decommission the site: remove panels, remove posts and piles, return to natural state either return to forest or keep as meadow. Panels degrade at 1/2 % per year and can be sold on the secondary market.

Judy: Our by-law stipulates that 4X land used for the solar array needs to be protected. Why is this not in the plan? Cows has conserved 200 acres in another part of Pelham and has conceived of that as the offset. Cows feels that meets the spirit and intent of bylaw. That is, they paid in advance.

Judy: We desire to have wires underground, especially from the site to the main road.

Response: AMP can't touch the poles along Tower Rd.

Pelham citizens want to protect the environment. We are happy with meadow but because it is a watershed area, no pesticides should be used. We would want careful engineering for storm water run-off to protect wetland.

Judy's opinion this is probably a better site than some others but she is concerned about 50 acres. Expertise about carbon sequestration: Judy not convinced about offsets being claimed as it contradicts other evidence. We care a lot about our forests and our environment.

Leslie: Once this project is approved, how long to build it out? Response: About 2-3 years. 18 months to 2 years from permits to complete the building. Then wait for utility to turn it on.

Judy: Solar arrays on slopes have failed all over the place. We will want monitoring during construction. Response: there are right ways and wrong ways to do it.

What is the view from a distance? Interested in aesthetics. Response: it will not be visible.

Leslie: Is there one local we can see? Response: Closest one in construction Douglas MA. AMP used to be purchaser. Now they want to participate from ground up.

Tilman member of the ConCom: Can we have a copy of the PowerPoint presentation? Of the total area what percent of the footprint is panels vs. space between panels for pollinators etc.? Response: Maximum system size 47 acre clearing coverage ratio is 46.5%.  $48.65 \text{ acres} \times .465 = 22.5 \text{ acres}$ . At 10 Mw then GCR is 39%.

No more questions.

Next step – submit application in summer. Get more input from town. Planning Board concerns are wetlands protection and the size of array (4x requirement). If AMP requests waiver we will want to know.

AMP to send PowerPoint to Judy.

**77 Enfield Road request to reconfigure lots.** Randy Izer presented survey map showing reconfigured lots to allow owner to build a second house. Plan approved. Planning Board members will sign and take the maps to the Rhodes Building.

### **Priorities for the PB:**

1. 20-22 Amherst Rd: Concerned about safety: sidewalk/ crosswalks, transportation, parking ; dark sky. Lexi or Judy will send around the list of waiver requests. Judy will ask for DEP comments received by ConCom to be sent to PB.
2. AMP/ Cows.
3. Shared driveway request;
4. Centennial Treatment Plant site plan review
5. Scenic roads – deal with in fall
6. Driveways by-laws– be ready for fall TM Ken Comia PVPC in June. Invite Ken Comia for May 3 meeting.

7. Cannabis - Leslie

**Next meeting** Previously scheduled for May 10, moved up to May 3.

**Adjourn at 9:25**