



TOWN OF WAKEFIELD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Held in the Meeting Room

Planning Board Minutes

March 7, 2024

Approved

MEMBERS		ALTERNATES		OTHERS	
Tom Dube, Chairman via Zoom	✓	Johnny Blackwood, Alternate		Peter Gosselin, Building Inspector	
Doug Stewart, Vice Chairman	✓	Stephen Leroux, Alternate		Jen Czysz, SRPC via Zoom	✓
Ken Fifield Selectmen's Rep.	✓	Priscilla Colbath, Alternate via Zoom		✓ Amber Marcoux, Land Use Clerk	✓
David Silcocks, Member		Rose Cleveland, Alternate		Steven Whitley, Town Counsel	
Dick DesRoches, Member				Public Hearing	✓

Others present: Garrett Seibert, Arthur Keller, Terry Brown, Ron McKay, John Shull, Lynn Shull, Bob Benson via Zoom and Gill from Clearview TV

Mr. Dube led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Seat Alternates as necessary

Mrs. Colbath was seated for Mr. Silcocks

Public Comment

An audience member asked what the status on the cell tower. Mr. Dube said he believes it's in a holding pattern.

Public Hearings

Major Site Plan Review: submitted by Nobis Group of Concord, NH, on behalf of Savannahwood, LLC and Province Lake Road Solar, LLC, for property located at Province Lake Road, Map 92, Lot 34, a 136.3 acre lot owned by Savannahwood LLC.

The applicant seeks approval of a Major Site Plan Review for a solar array project to consist of an approximately 3 MW AC solar array on an undeveloped property located between Province Lake Road and Perkins Hill Road. Construction would include solar arrays, utility interconnection equipment, access road, fencing and stormwater management areas. The property is located in the Residential III Zone.

Mr. Keller said he will be giving an overview of the solar project at a high level and Mr. Seibert will speak on the technicalities of the project and the submitted application. He performed all the engineering for this project. Mr. Keller said this project is what they call a community solar project which utilizes a piece of land that allows development in the best possible way. It will be connected to the Eversource grid, sell the power to Eversource and then share the value of that power across New Hampshire communities. This is the early stage of the project. He said they

submitted their request to Eversource nine months ago and they haven't looked at it yet as they are heavily backlogged. It will take six to eight months once the process begins. He said because of time he'd like to know how long the approval would be good for and if there could be an extension without having to go through the process again. We have a lease option agreement with the landowner. From here what will happen is that they will spend time working with Nobis that the state permitting with the alteration of terrain department is in place.

They will come back to see how the panels will be taxed. He expects that they are a year and a half or two years out for when the project may be ready to start construction. He said there are often concerns about decommissioning with these projects. He said they are happy to provide a decommissioning plan. They would also have a bond to cover the cost. The land would be brought back to the way it was. He said we always like to meet with the local fire department prior to construction to talk about contact information and emergency procedures. This will not require many town services. They are at the site two or three times a year for a yearly inspection and grass mowing. Everything else is done remotely.

Mr. Seibert told the Board that they had a soil scientist go out and delineate the different types of soil which helps with stormwater calculations. We have also completed the wetlands delineation. All these calculations meet with the Towns regulations. We have submitted our site plan application and we have submitted a Conditional Use Permit. He said the panels will be located between Perkins Hill Road and Province Lake Road. The access will be from Perkins Hill with a fourteen foot gravel driveway with two turnarounds. The panels will sit on about ten acres with the whole project area about twenty acres. There will be two stormwater ponds.

Mr. Dube asked if the plans were to do a phase 1 and a phase 2. Mr. Seibert said they are and they will take place two months apart. Mr. Stewart asked if they would be using the existing driveway. Mr. Seibert said they will be tying into that driveway. There will be a knot wire fence around the site. The border will be existing trees. Mr. Stewart asked how difficult would it be to move the whole thing over twenty feet so you are further away from the one house on that side of the road? Mr. Seibert said they are dealing with slopes. Mr. Dube suggested a site walk to look at that buffer and send pictures to staff. Mr. Keller said they will only be taking down tall trees which would shade the panels. They can look at adding evergreens and he believes that should be looked at after the project is built to see where vegetation is needed. Ms. Cysz said regardless of the Warrant Article passing there is a Conditional Use Permit that will need to be submitted. She said the new ordinance has additional Conditional Use Permit requirements. Which would still be one permit with additional conditions. Mr. Keller said he is familiar with those requirements. Mr. Dube said they won't be looking for a permit for some time.

Mr. Stewart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fifield, to accept the application as complete with the understanding we will be waiting on items like Conditional Use Permit application etc. (Vote 4-0)

Mr. Stewart said his major concern at this point is good screening for the property with the house. Mr. Dube said he believes the Board is in agreement with that. Mr. Keller said they had met with the Board for a Conceptual Review in August.

Mr. Dube opened the Public Hearing at 7:35. Lynn Shull, 178 Perkins Hill Road said she lives across the street from the house that the solar array will be butting. She asked how far from the

road and her neighbors house will the solar array be. Mr. Seibert said about 40-50 feet. She asked about noise and how many inverters will there be. Mr. Keller told her that the only piece of equipment they use that has any noise will be the transformer which is under 60 decibels. Us talking right now is about 40 decibels. The transformer will be located as far away from any home or street as possible. He said in order to hear that he thinks you need to be within 60-75 feet to even hear it. It will be 400-500 feet from any residence or street. They use string level inverters that have no sound.

John Shull asked how long they will be there doing maintence. Mr. Keller said they would be mowing the slow growing grass they will plant and that should take about eight hours 2-3 times a year. Inspection would be one day. Ron McKay, 84 Perkins Hill Road asked the height of the panels. Mr. Siebert replied 10-12 feet tall. He asked where he could get copies of the proposal. Mr. Dube said he could go to the office downstairs and they will help you. Mr. Stewart said this is a separate project from the cell tower and it doesn't negate a cell tower being erected. That would be in a different location. Mr. Dube asked if Mr. Seibert would mark out where the panels would be for the site walk that would be helpful.

Mr. Debe closed the Public Hearing at 7:47.

Mr. Stewart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fifield to continue this hearing to date, time and location certain including the site walk at TM 92 L 34 on April 4th at 6:00 with the hearing following at 7:00. (4-0)

The Conditional Use permit could also be heard on that day if it is submitted by then.

Board Business

Wyman Cove Mylar-for Board Signatures

Mr. Brown has posted a bond. Mr. Dube went over the required items and they were all shown on the plan. The Board signed the mylar. Mr. Dube told Mr. Brown that when the drainage problem is resolved he and the Coad Enforcement Inspector will inspect the work. He said he recommends that his neighbors know how he plans to resolve the issue.

Approval of minutes

Mr. Stewart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fifield, to approve the February 15, 2024, minutes. (Vote 4-0)

Correspondence

Ms. Czysz sent out information from NH Office of Planning and Development Conference that members can sign up to watch it live on May 11th . But everyone will be able to watch the recording of the conference also. She also sent out the new handbooks.

Public comment

None

Set next meeting date

March 21, 2024

Adjournment

Mr. Stewart made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fifield, to adjourn the meeting at 8:15. (Vote 4-0)

Respectfully submitted for approval at the next Planning Board meeting.

Priscilla Colbath
Planning Board Secretary