



## TOWN OF WAKEFIELD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Held in the Meeting Room

Planning Board Minutes

November 16, 2023

Approved

| MEMBERS                      |   | ALTERNATES                               |   | OTHERS                             |   |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Tom Dube, Chairman           | ✓ | 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<br>Via Zoom | ✓ |                                    |   |
| David Silcocks, Member       | ✓ | Rose Cleveland, Alternate                |   | Steven Whitley, Town Counsel       |   |
| Dick DesRoches, Member       | ✓ |  |   | Public Hearing                     | ✓ |

### **Others present**

Thomas Kelly, Stanley and Stacey Dodier, Matt Belliveau via zoom and Michelle Keating from Clearview TV.

### **Pledge of Allegiance & Call to Order**

Mr. Dube called the meeting to order at 7:00 and led those present in the Pledge.

### **Seat Alternates as necessary**

None

### **Public Comment**

None

### **Public Hearings**

Conditional Use Permit Application:.. submitted by Matt Belliveau of SolarWerks LLC, of Ipswich, MA, for property located at Map 182, Lot 008, an 18-acre lot, at 95 Wentworth Road, owned by Stanley and Stacey Dodier. The applicant seeks approval of a Conditional Use Permit to install a 9.6kW DC Solar Photovoltaic Ground Mount Array. The property is located in the Agricultural Zone, within the Aquifer and Watershed Overlay.

**Mr. Silcocks made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stewart, to accept the application. (Vote 4-0)**

Ms. Czysz put a picture of the parcel on the screen. She explained where the house is located in relationship to the array. It was determined that no one would be able to see the array from any place outside the property. Mr. Belliveau said the dimensions of the array would be 32 ½ ft long by 14 ft. deep by 8 ft high. He said that in recent years wattages have increased on panels so this is pretty average. Anything under 10kw does not need a supplemental review from the utility

companies. This will cover the homeowners usage. Mr. Kelly explained that he installs the solar units.

(Mrs. Colbath was seated for Mr. Silcocks at 7:08 after he was called away.)

Ms. Czysz read the seven criteria:

1. The proposed use(s) shall be only those allowed in this Ordinance by Conditional Use Permit; yes
2. The proposed use(s) is/are consistent with the adopted Master Plan; yes. Based on the installation it will have no impact on the rural character.
3. The specific site is in an appropriate location and of adequate size for the use; yes. The lot is eighteen acres and the installation is set back on the lot and not be visible to any parcels. All the town setback requirements are easily met.
4. The use, as developed, will not adversely affect the character of the area in which the proposed use will be located; yes. There is no need for tree cutting and will not be visible to abutters. The array will be significantly lower than the house.
5. There will be no nuisance or serious hazard to vehicles or pedestrians; yes. Given the distance from the roadway there should be no impact.
6. The use will not place excessive or undue burden on Town services and facilities; yes. None foreseen and it would be a reduction in demand on the grid. It would have a positive impact.
7. There would be no significant effect resulting from such use upon the public health, safety, and general welfare of the neighborhood in which the use would be located. Yes. None anticipated

Ms. Czysz read her notes on the seven criteria and found no issues and has no concerns. The Board also had no concerns. Mr. Dube opened the Public Hearing at 7:14. Mr. Dube closed the Public Hearing at 7:14.

**Mr. DesRoches made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stewart, that the project and application meets all the seven applicable criteria in the regulations as articulated in the staff notes stated 11-16-2023. (Vote 4-0)**

### **Conceptual Review**

None

### **Board Business**

#### **Septic Ordinance continued discussion**

Mr. Stewart did some research on the septic ordinances for Chesterfield, Derry and New Durham and summarized his findings. Chesterfield seems to be more complete including things like a twenty five dollar fee for a property that would require a septic evaluation. They name penalties and the amount charged for them. The other two towns don't specify fee amounts. One town specifies maintenance whether you have an approved design or not. New Durham requires septic systems that don't have a state approved design to get that system inspected.

Mr. DesRoches and Mr. Stewart feel the Chesterfield one is clear and concise. Mr. Stewart said all of these are health ordinances. Mr. DesRoches said we have a well-defined planning document and he asked if this could be added to that document. Mr. Dube said he's been convinced by many that it would be a health ordinance and he said by talking to people he feels it has to be pretty simple. He feels that the fees and fines should be written there may be a fine or fee. It would be up to the Selectmen if they wanted to charge a fee. We need something that we

can sell to the towns people for the protection of the lakes. We're talking about properties in the R2 zone.

Mr. Dube said he doesn't feel they can mandate pumping out septic tanks every three years and there's no way to enforce it. The Board discussed other items they would like to see in the ordinance. They want it to be simple, advisory with recommendations. Mr. Stewart will send Ms. Czysz a copy of the draft he's putting together. This will be on the next agenda.

Solar Ordinance discussion – key points to address:

How do we address solar farms?

Should there be a buffer, if so, what is appropriate?

Fire department training

Definition of a solar farm

Table of uses – clarify what's there for solar versus farm

Ms. Czysz sent an email to members with her questions and suggestions. She asked the members to look at what she sent and send any questions or comments to her within the next week. The ordinance that Somersworth just passed is the simplest and least restrictive. But it treats solar the same. She would break it down to roof mounted accessory, ground mounted accessory and ground mounted systems as a primary use like solar farms and how do we define solar farms. She doesn't think they need to. Solar farm is when there is nothing else on the property except solar. There should be a higher set of standards for those.

Mr. Stewart asked what if there is a house on the property and they want to install a solar farm on their 50 acre property? He suggested they use her term of small scale, medium scale and large scale. Mr. DesRoches would like to see with the conditional use, that they submit a site plan. The existing Article 29 conditional use permit is all we really need for small accessory solar. Ms. Czysz pulled information from the model plan and other ordinances for discussion. The Board would like to have some kind of screening and not worry about placement as long as it meets town setbacks.

Mr. Dube asked about the RSA that says a solar farm can be put in our town. Ms. Czysz said that Steven Whitley, Town Council agreed that it doesn't matter the size and that the table of permitted uses allows ground mounted solar. Someone could come in and apply for a solar farm, they would have to submit a site plan because it's a non-residential use. Mr. Dube feels that the ordinance we have should include some of the requirements Ms. Czysz has mentioned in her email. Mr. DesRoches said there is nothing in our regulations that mentions solar. It only appears in the zoning table. Free standing solar is not allowed in the Historic District and he believes it should be allowed there. Ms. Czysz will send the Word version for people to add their thoughts.

### **Correspondence**

None

### **Approval of Minutes**

**Mr. Stewart made a motion, seconded by Mr. DesRoches, to approve the minutes of November 2, 2023. (Vote 4-0)**

### **Public comment**

None

**Adjournment**

**Mr. Stewart made a motion, seconded by Mr. DesRoches, to adjourn the meeting at 8:40.  
(Vote 4-0)**

Respectfully submitted for approval at the next Planning Board meeting,

Priscilla Colbath,  
Planning Board Secretary