

Planning Board
Town of Wales, MA
Wales Town Offices
6/18/18; 7:00 p.m.

Present: James Whalen (JW); Danelle LaFlower (DL); Jason Oney (JO); Laurie Hornacek (LH); Ryan Wingerter (RW)

Guests: Bruce Cadieux (BC)

JW opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. as Board Chair WM is absent.

JW; moved to approve meeting minutes as amended, LH seconds, all in favor.

SOLAR BY-LAW DISCUSSION

JW; stated, there will be a special town meeting in November. Leis is working on it. Unless the board can come up with language for size, I do not know if we will make it.

DL; stated, I think we should, we owe it to the developers.

JW; stated, right now we still have the same language for the 5 acre limit. We have it at the point of where we understand it better. The landlord is leasing so much property to work with. If you have 14 acres and someone wants to build a 10 acre solar field, we can say it is more than 60% of your property, preserving forest. You can limit the land size.

LH; asked, does this pertain to personal property or town property?

JW; stated, we are looking at ground mounted solar arrays.

LH; asked, why can other towns say they don't want solar in their town?

DL; stated, you cannot deny them.

JW; stated, what fits for the community and satisfies state law, state law gives it as a by-right. Maybe not as much land gets leased out due to the company's inability to use the extra land. You have the right to do this, but you are limited to this much.

BC; stated, we should be helping business and not limiting companies. You are playing with words to prohibit business development.

JW; stated, unlike a traditional business, solar fields are not taxed as a business or traditional property tax, the town only makes money on the pilot agreement and we are forced to negotiate with the applicant.

BC; stated, it is wrong, and you are talking about ecological reasons and you want to limit what people can do with their property and your taxes go up.

LH; stated, we know the property was a farm that did not pay taxes, and if a company wants to come to town, they should be part of the town, and they should give the town energy.

BC; stated, I heard prohibiting due to ecological reasons.

LH; asked, do you want the town to get into a predicament about property value decreasing and drainage issues?

BC; asked, has DEP gone in there?

LH; stated, National Grid employees believe that it is too wet there to install poles, the Conservation Commission has been there.

JW; stated, we have two (2) problems, we don't have a site plan review by-law, every piece of language we have had has been to help change the language due to the 5 acre limit.

DL; stated, I am trying to protect forest land.

LH; stated, you need to have a limit, and I am glad Norcross is there, it will impact the animals.

JW; stated, I believe we do need to have a discussion with Norcross about payment in lieu of taxes. Bruce is correct, Norcross does own a lot of land and they do not have a formal agreement.

JW; stated, no matter what language we propose, there will be two (2) public hearings.

BC; stated, I do not agree with limiting people with their property.

JO; stated, we are talking about future development.

JW; stated, the only real restrictive thing you can do is limit solar fields to specific zoning locations.

JO; stated, I do not want to see just solar fields in town.

JW; stated, we are going to have two (2) public hearings and a town meeting, anyone can comment on it. It is an ongoing discussion. We are running into local and state laws.

DL; moves to have public hearing and board meeting on July 16th, JW second, all in favor.

SOLAR APPLICATION

JW; stated, we should publish the third hearing, and have it the same meeting as the by-law hearing. The third hearing would be a decision hearing at that point.

JO; asked, would we have our third party reviewer by then?

JW; stated, yes we should. However, our town counsel and NEXAMP know each other quite well. I asked Ben if they knew each other. They are in the same Hamden County Bar Association and told me that he is on me every day asking what is going on. I told him to be our attorney.

LH; asked, how does he take himself out of that because it is a conflict?

JW; stated, we need to ask him at the third hearing, and I am thinking that their relationship has evolved into him helping NEXAMP. In my opinion, we have not had information withheld from us. Attorney aside, Chris Clark does have a good relationship with everyone. It is something to keep in mind.

LH; asked, does this get discussed before the hearing?

JW; stated, it would be during their hearing and we need to have something drawn up and decided. It would be good to do it at the senior center July 16th

DL; stated, we have the scenic roads and tree hearing too.

JW; stated, I think we should have three (3) in the same night, starting at 6:00.

DL; stated, the scenic roads will be a joint meeting with the tree warden.

JW; stated, the tree removal meeting will be dependent on the Tree Warden's availability. There would be two (2) separate decisions that night.

LH; asked, does the abutters notification need to be sent out?

DL; asked, is it just abutters or everyone on the road?

LH; asked, has the board seen a permit from National Grid for the interconnection?

JW; stated, I do not believe this board would see that and I believe it is the companies permit.

JW; recited section 40A and stated it is an exempt usage.

DL; asked, are we sending out abutters notices or are we making NEXAMP, and can they go out as one package?

JW; stated, it should be two (2) letters in one (1) envelope.

JW; asked, Bruce, you said the tree removal can just be the Tree Warden right?

BC; stated, yes.

JW; stated, yes it is a special permit and it is required. The town will have to do it. I will take care of it.

JW; stated, I will call him (Tree Warden) to confirm.

JW; asked, do I hear a motion for July 16th to have a public hearing for the NEXAMP Bradway Farm application at the Wales Senior Center at 6:45. JO so moved, LH second, all in favor.

Motion to have the Tree and Scenic road hearing upon confirmation of the Tree Warden on July 16th at 7:45, JO so moved, LH second, all in favor.

GIS/ROADS

DL; stated, we need to have a public hearing to write in “town road” next to Hegan St. It will need a notice sent to the one (1) abutter.

JW; stated, we can have it on the agenda for July 9th meeting to pick a public hearing date.

Third Party Consultant

JW; stated, I need to just walk in and discuss it with the company. I will take care of it.

NEW BUSINESS

JW; stated, Lake George Tavern has to go to a public hearing with the Planning Board for a special permit for signage. The liquor license has gone through and they have a license to have televisions and are applying for a permit for outdoor entertainment that goes through the Select Board. We are trying to support their efforts as much as possible. They are ok with a restrictive license if needed. They have a temporary sign which is permitted and if they want a new sign erected, they will need to have a special permit hearing which is on the 26th.

CORRESPONDANCE REVIEWED

JW; discussed encumbrances. If we don't encumber the money it becomes free cash.

JW; stated, I will entertain a motion to transfer \$150 from line item 100-175-5100-00 planning board salaries to 100-175-5400-00 JO so moved, LH second, all in favor.

JW; asked, do I hear a motion to encumber \$321.05 for public hearing notices and postage, JO so moved, LH second, all in favor.

PVPC

JW; Discussed PVPC grant about recaptured funds. I decided to put it towards some people that are in a bad position. There is an eagle scout trying to get his project done, and the recaptured funds do qualify. In the interest of diplomacy I wanted to help our neighbors. The money is for people who cannot keep up with their home. We are at the head of the line for the master plan money.

JO; Motion moved to adjourn meeting, LH second, all in favor. 8:50 p.m.