

MINUTES
Workshop Meeting
Sanbornton Planning Board

Meeting Date and Time: Thursday, February 1st, 2018 at 7:00 PM

Meeting Place: Meeting Room, Sanbornton Town Offices

The meeting was called to order by Don Bormes at 7:00 PM

Roll Call

Regular Members present: Don Bormes, Dick Gardner, Selectman Karen Ober, Will Ellis, Justin Barriault

Alternate Members absent: Jody Slack

Others present at the meeting: Contract Town Planner Dave Jeffers

Approval of draft Planning Board minutes from 1/18 – Will Ellis made a motion to approve the draft minutes of 1/18. Justin Barriault seconded the motion and the motion passed, with Selectman Ober abstaining.

Public Hearing

The Board discussed the changes to the previous draft of the Solar Energy Ordinance. Dick Gardner noted that the Historic District Commission is mentioned as only being able to “review” any solar energy system proposals and not “approve”. Don Bormes stated that he wasn’t sure if they have the authority to approve proposals anyway, but if they can then it’s already in the regular ordinance. Dave Jeffers noted that the newest draft shows that the Board eliminated the 5-kilowatt maximum and added that roof-mounted systems cannot surpass 50% of the roof surface.

Andy Sanborn explained that he has been researching State guidelines for solar energy systems and that RSA 672:1-III states that “the collection of renewable energy shall not be unreasonably limited”. He feels that much of the ordinance is not needed to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public and should not be in place. Betsy Bryant stated that her welfare is affected by solar energy systems if they affect her property values. Andy Sanborn noted that the Sanbornton Energy Committee worked on a section for the Master Plan that encouraged solar energy rather than restricting it. Don Bormes stated that the ordinance needs to be in place to have some control over solar energy endeavors and to have guidelines for the Board and the public to follow.

Jeff Burns asked why the height limit for ground-mounted solar energy is limited to 20 feet. Dick Gardner responded that 10 feet was in the previous draft, but Ian Raymond had noted that solar tracking systems would need more area to pivot and that 20 feet was more reasonable. Justin Barriault noted that waivers can be requested by applicants in certain circumstances, and that a taller system wouldn’t have as much impact in a larger parcel, but could see multiple systems on a small parcel being more problematic and unattractive. Andy Sanborn asked if the Planning Board has had any issue with ground-mounted systems in the past. Selectman Ober stated that there will be a formal complaint about one in Town coming before the Selectmen soon. Andy Sanborn noted that he does not think ground-mounted solar energy systems are unattractive at all. Will Ellis noted that there are several pole-mounted systems the area and most people know exactly where they are because they stand out.

Andy Sanborn stated that requesting engineering studies and copies of interconnection agreements with utility companies is asking too much of applicants. Betsy Bryant stated that much of what is in this draft ordinance is already required of someone putting in a solar energy system, so it should not be that much of a burden for a resident. Rob Pearlman stated that even if there is a dispute between the applicant and the Planning Board, the Court will be the final arbiter in that case. Dick Gardner stated that this ordinance is more lenient than the other towns’ ordinances that it’s based on. The Board only made several editorial changes to the draft. The Public Hearing closed at 8:15 pm.

Selectman Ober explained that there will be copies of the final ordinance in the Town Report, which will be available at the Town Offices before voting day. The ballot question reads as follows:

Shall the Town of Sanbornton adopt a Solar Energy Ordinance in accordance with RSA 674:17(I)(j) and the purposes outlined in RSA 672:I-III-a as amended, for the purpose of accommodating appropriate ground- and roof-mounted solar energy installations in accordance with policies outlined in RSA 374-G and 362-F?

Dick Gardner made a motion to accept this wording of the ballot question for the Solar Energy Ordinance. Justin Barriault seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Dick Gardner made a motion to accept the ordinance with the corrections made at tonight's meeting and to recommend including on the ballot at 2018 Town voting. Justin Barriault seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

a. Planning Board Schedule – Dave Jeffers provided 2018 Planning Board schedules to members. He noted that the State requires that applications are submitted to the Board 21 days in advance now, rather than 14. Applications will be sent to other department heads within Sanbornton in case they have any comments; input is required a week in advance. Dave Jeffers also noted that he is working on finalizing the Planning Board Annual Report.

b. New PB members – Dave Jeffers noted that a resident is interested in being a Planning Board member and submitted a letter of interest to the Town Clerk. Selectman Ober explained that the usual procedure is to have that person attend several meetings and then the Planning Board can submit a letter to the BOS stating that they recommend the person for the position. Dave Jeffers also stated that terms are up for some current PB members. Selectman Ober stated that after Town Meeting, probably around April/May, the BOS will work on re-appointments.

c. Spring Planning/Zoning Workshop – The Spring workshop will be held in Concord on April 28th and Dave Jeffers noted that there is money in the budget if members want to attend. He will send out information.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 15th at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Audry Barriault