

MINUTES
Workshop Meeting
Sanbornton Planning Board

Meeting Date and Time: Thursday, February 7th, 2019 at 7:00 PM

Meeting Place: Meeting Room, Sanbornton Town Offices

The meeting was called to order by Don Bormes at 7:15 PM

Roll Call

Regular Members present: Will Ellis, Don Bormes, Selectman John Olmstead, Jody Slack, Debra Schneckloth

Alternate Members present: Andy Sanborn

Others present: Steve Laurin, Town Planning Assistant

Approval of draft Planning Board minutes from 1-3 and 1-17 – Selectman Olmstead made a motion to approve the draft minutes of 1-3. Debra Schneckloth seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. Selectman Olmstead made a motion to approve the draft minutes of 1-17. Jody Slack seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business

a. New members – Don Bormes explained that Dick Gardner has resigned from the Planning Board and there is now an opening for a full member, which is traditionally offered to the most senior alternate member. He also noted that Andy Sanborn and Debra Schneckloth will be seated as voting members at tonight's meeting. Jody Slack made a motion to recommend to the BOS that Debra Schneckloth is appointed as a full member. Andy Sanborn seconded the motion and the motion passed, with Selectman Olmstead and Andy Sanborn abstaining.

b. Discussion with Kevin Leonard, P.E., and Randy Shuey, Northpoint Engineering, regarding solar farm application review – Kevin Leonard explained that his firm conducts technical reviews for construction projects for items such as sediment and stormwater control, and to make sure that permits are being adhered to. Randy Shuey is a soil scientist and has worked on three solar farm projects in Massachusetts previously, as well as reviewing site plans for subdivisions for planning boards in southern New Hampshire for projects such as airports. Kevin explained that they can perform a zoning compliance review as well as complete construction monitoring, depending on what the Planning Board chooses to do. He also explained that DES has recently created new guidelines for Alteration of Terrain permits in regards to solar energy projects. He stated that the outer limits of a solar project constitute the entire area of disturbance. Steve Laurin noted that the application for the Tower Hill project lists the area of disturbance as only the posts of the array and the road, which greatly affects the application fee as it is based on this total area. He stated that the board should look at this fee because there is currently no cap and he does not want to fee to be exorbitant for an applicant.

Randy Shuey noted that he has looked at the application and the steep slopes are concerning and that this will be a major construction project. Don Bormes stated that technology has made it possible for erosion control on almost any type of terrain, but it can be very expensive. Jody Slack noted that many residents would like to know who owns the power lines and poles leading up to the project, as this runs through the historic district and residents are concerned about the look of three-phase power if the poles need to be upgraded. Andy Sanborn stated that if Sanbornton continues to grow then those poles will need to be upgraded in the future, regardless of any solar farm project.

Deb Schneckloth asked if an estimate could be provided to do the technical review and construction monitoring of the project. Kevin responded that it depends on the complexity of the application and project and how compliant it is from the beginning but he can provide an estimate, but this figure could change. He also noted that normally an escrow is set up for third party review of the application, and then a second escrow set up for construction monitoring. He noted that the applicant would need to provide two copies of all materials for review as well.

Andy asked if the Planning Board will be meeting with other engineering firms and Debra responded that this is the only firm that responded. He also said he would be leery to hire an engineering firm for this project without knowing their fee structure, and Don responded that the Planning Board is authorized to do this. Jody Slack made a motion to hire Northpoint Engineering for review of the solar farm project on Tower Hill. Debra Schneckloth seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Steve noted that he has not received the interconnection agreement with Eversource that was discussed at the last meeting with the applicant. Secretary Audry Barriault explained that Attorney Fillmore stated via email that she spoke with other attorneys and learned that the type of agreement that was being requested of the applicant is usually not provided until the end of the project. However, the Board can still request similar documentation from the applicant. This information had been relayed to Dick Gardner before he resigned and the letter to the applicant reflected this.

Other Business

a. Information on solar energy – Andy provided documents regarding solar arrays in Massachusetts to all members, and noted that the FAA states that there is no glare provided by arrays.

b. PB handbook – Don requested printed NH Planning Board Handbooks for all members as they are easy to read and quick resources for members.

c. Planning Update – Steve received notification about a cell tower in the town of Gilmanton. He also stated that he will be providing proper notices to Tilton regarding the solar project which was designated to be a Development of Regional Impact at the last meeting.

d. Future agenda items – Debra asked if the Board would like to work on Accessory Dwelling Units as their next ordinance to update. Members were in agreement that they would like to do this, as it is next on the priority list that the Board developed last year.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 21st at 6:00 at the Old Town Hall.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Audry Barriault**