

PLANNING COMMISSION

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

December 15, 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alan Couch, Chair
Terry Carter

Alan Isaacson
Norm Vanasse

Logan Nicoll

STAFF PRESENT:

Rose Goings

OTHERS PRESENT:

Michael Waterhouse

Luke Chrisinger - LPC-TV

Lisha Klaiber, Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Alan Couch called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL BY RECORDING SECRETARY

A. All Planning Commission members present.

3. APPROVE MINUTES

A. The minutes to be approved are from the meeting of November 17, 2015.

B. **MOTION by Logan Nicoll and seconded by Alan Isaacson to approve the minutes November 17, 2015 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

4. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

A. There were none

5. SOLAR SITING – MUNICIPAL PLAN, INTERIM REGULATION, TOWN AND VILLAGE ZONING REGULATIONS

A. Alan Isaacson advised that he had revised, and sent to members, a draft of the revised Energy chapter for the town plan. He noted that the original had only mentioned wind turbines. He said that he changed that to cover all types of renewable energy. He also changed references to CVPS to Green Mountain Power. He sent the revision to Jason Rasmussen and Jason Rasmussen made comments and changes and updated some figures.

- B. Logan Nicoll noted that it contains a map of solar sites and asked if the board would like to have a map showing where wind turbines are.
- C. Alan Isaacson said they could ask Jason Rasmussen if that is available.
- D. Logan Nicoll said maybe they could include a map similar to the one provided by Ranger Solar. It shows the best locations for solar projects in the state. It is a state supported map.
- E. Alan Isaacson said figure 9.7 shows potential solar sites and 9.8 shows wind turbine sites.
- F. Rose Goings said that there are 2 private wind turbines in Ludlow; one on North Hill that is net metered and one on Holby that is not.
- G. Logan Nicoll said if they include the maps now, they would just have to change the figures in the future.
- H. Terry Carter said she would like to include the map.
- I. Rose Goings said that the map Ranger Solar had was an exhibit in their application to PSB and she does not know if we can use it in our town plan. She added that the application was filed with the state.
- J. Logan Nicoll said that he would like the maps for potential locations in the town plan and everything else looks good.
- K. Rose Goings asked if the town plan and solar siting ordinance should mesh. She said they would need to create regulations for screening.
- L. Alan Isaacson said the town plan describes our overall desires for screening and locations; the zoning regulations specify what is required. He said that our regulations about screening are very loose and we can't do the solar siting ordinance until the zoning regulations are upgraded.
- M. Rose Goings said the town plan says solar sites should be in certain areas.
- N. Alan Isaacson said the town plan was written as wind oriented and he and Jason Rasmussen changed it to refer to renewable energy.
- O. Rose Goings said that before we forward this to the Select Board, she wants to make sure that we don't have to name sites in the town plan, just in the regulations. She asked if we want to download or create the maps.
- P. Alan Isaacson said we could try to download them from the state, but it may be two separate maps, one for wind and one for solar. He said that the town plan will have a notation that all energy installations must be screened and we will put the specifics in the regulations.
- Q. Rose Goings asked if we need to change the goals in the town plan.
- R. Alan Isaacson said he did not think so; we were just too wind oriented. He said he changed everything that referred to wind to renewable energy.
- S. Alan Couch said we should put it in each district and come up with a general description that would fit all districts.
- T. Alan Isaacson said that they could also make a section for screening.
- U. Logan Nicoll said he would like a map showing potential wind sites like the one we already have for solar.
- V. Alan Isaacson said he would look for a map and talk to Jason Rasmussen. He said that he and Jason Rasmussen based the draft on the Cornwall ordinance and made it more concise.
- W. Rose Goings said it looks like we are not looking at it as an interim ordinance anymore.
- X. Alan Isaacson said that the state requires that we make our ordinance no more restrictive than what is in the rest of the zoning regulations.
- Y. Rose Goings said the interim regulation would only be good for 2 years.
- Z. Alan Isaacson said he would check with Jason Rasmussen.
- AA. Rose Goings said if we change the town plan, we could make this as a bylaw.

- BB. Alan Isaacson said we need to go through the town and village zoning regulations. We would have to change the zoning regulations to be as restrictive as the screening ordinance. We also need to include requirements for decommissioning. He said he can look at where screening is mentioned in the zoning regulations.
- CC. Rose Goings said it is mentioned in Site Plan Review in Sections 260.2, 490 and 590. She said these are what the DRB looks at for any commercial or conditional use.
- DD. Alan Isaacson said it needs to be more specific. He asked if they wanted to use the language found in the interim ordinance and put it in the zoning regulations.
- EE. Rose Goings said that she did not think they should get into regulating tree heights.
- FF. Terry Carter asked if the board would want renewable energy sites in rich farmlands.
- GG. Alan Isaacson said we have no standing if it is not in the regulations. We may have some ground if we are as specific as we can be. If we insert the language from the ordinance into the zoning regulations, we need to go through it district by district.
- HH. Rose Goings said that the town can't create a conditional use permit on a Section 248 permit. Solar siting can't be permitted or conditional. If you get super specific, it would have to apply to every commercial project.
- II. Alan Isaacson said there is nothing we can do about the Ranger Solar project. We can't specify where a project is permitted, but we can specify the screening and it must apply to every commercial application that comes in for the town.
- JJ. Rose Goings said that every commercial project goes through Site Plan review and this would go along with it.
- KK. Terry Carter said she would like to start moving this tonight.
- LL. Alan Isaacson said it is mentioned in the Ridgeline overlay district and in the section about Aircraft Landing.
- MM. Rose Goings said it is mostly listed in Section 260 and the other sections all refer back to Section 260.
- NN. The board discussed putting the screening ordinance requirements into Section 590 and removing what is currently in there.
- OO. Logan Nicoll asked if the wording includes anything about preserving existing vegetation.
- PP. Alan Isaacson changed the wording in the screening ordinance to include that. He said he would clean up the wording and send out a copy to board members. He asked if this should also go into the Village regulations.
- QQ. Rose Goings said yes.
- RR. Alan Isaacson said they don't have to specify the size of the project, but that this would apply to all commercial projects. We need to include a definition for Solar Project.
- SS. Alan Couch said this would apply to Renewable Energy projects in general.

6. VILLAGE CENTER

- A. Rose Goings said she had been contacted by a representative from the Manchester Ski Club and they are interested in expanding the village center to include Pleasant Street.
- B. Michael Waterhouse said that the state fire marshal had required that the ski club install a sprinkler system at their lodge. The club would like to be able to take advantage of tax credits available for properties in the village center.
- C. Rose Goings said that the Planning Commission had been working on this for some time and have already updated the maps and town plan. If they did want to include this, it would be another undertaking for the board. She said that Jason Rasmussen is not here to discuss this.

- D. Alan Isaacson advised that there is a procedure for this. They would have to change the town plan, hold public hearings, then send it to the Trustees and Select Board and they would also have to hold public hearings. It would then have to be sent to the state for approval. This process would take a minimum of 4 to 5 months. He added that he does not know how far back the state would accept invoices for tax credits.
- E. Rose Goings said that they still may not be eligible because the ski club was not in the village center when the work was done. She said that Jason Rasmussen had also mentioned a Neighborhood Designation.
- F. Terry Carter said she had never heard of a Neighborhood Designation.
- G. Alan Isaacson said that Jason Rasmussen had offered it as a possibility. We had not discussed Pleasant Street. He said they would have to talk to the state.
- H. Rose Goings suggested that a member of the Planning Commission, she and Frank Heald meet with the state to discuss the village center.
- I. Alan Isaacson said he would sit in for the Planning Commission. He asked Rose Goings to make the arrangements.
- J. Michael Waterhouse asked them to find out how far back an invoice would be accepted.

7. **OTHER BUSINESS**

- A. Terry Carter asked the board to include Big Box Stores on the agenda for the next meeting.
- B. Next meeting – January 19, 2016.

8. **ADJOURN**

- A. **MOTION by Logan Nicoll and seconded by Alan Isaacson to adjourn this meeting. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Alan Couch, Chairman

Logan Nicoll

Terry Carter

Norman Vanasse

Alan Isaacson