



Planning Board Minutes – January 28, 2020

A meeting of the Town of Freetown Planning Board was held on January 28, 2020 Freetown Town Hall Assonet, MA. **Present:** Chairman Keven Desmarais, Mark Rogers, James Frates **Absent:** Debra Robbins, Robert Jose

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Continued Public Hearing – Michkev RE LLC

Chairman Desmarais called the public hearing back to order and read an email from the applicant's engineers asking to continue the public hearing.

Chairman Desmarais entertained a motion to continue the public hearing for Michkev RE LLC to February 18, 2020 at 6pm in the Freetown Town Hall. **Mr. Rogers** moved and **Mr. Frates** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Continued Public Hearing – TJA Clean Energy LLC

Chairman Desmarais called the public hearing back to order and read an email from the applicant's engineers asking to continue the public hearing.

Chairman Desmarais entertained a motion to continue the public hearing for TJA Clean Energy to February 18, 2020 at 6 pm in the Freetown Town Hall. **Mr. Rogers** moved and **Mr. Frates** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Continued Public Hearing – 186 ½ Braley Road

Chairman Desmarais called the public hearing back to order and read an email from the applicant's engineers asking to continue the public hearing.

Chairman Desmarais entertained a motion to continue the public hearing for 1 Madeicha Way to February 4, 2020 at 6 pm in the Freetown Town Hall. **Mr. Rogers** moved and **Mr. Frates** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Continued Public Hearing – High Street – Farias Solar LLC

Chairman Desmarais called the public hearing back to order and explained that due to a lack of quorum at the previous week's meeting all the public hearings were continued to the tonight's meeting.

John Connell, Sitec Engineering, approached the Board and said that they were currently responding to EPG's (Environmental Partner's Groups) comments. **Chairman Desmarais** explained that EPG is the company that the town hires for engineering peer review. Mr. Connell said that the plan has a detention basin to deal with stormwater. Mr. Connell said that the entire site will be fenced in with a 7ft high chain link fence. Mr. Connell

explained that there would be no earth moving and that trees will only be cut to allow area for panels and to allow sunlight for the panels.

Bob Brown asked how many acres of solar will there be and how far into the site does the solar begin. Mr. Connell said that the solar begins approximately 1500 ft from the entrance. **Chairman Desmarais** told Mr. Connell to have an answer for the acreage of the solar panels for next time. Ed Brightman, High Street, asked how wide the road will be. Mr. Connell said 16 ft.

Jeannine Ludovicz, High Street, asked how close the solar panels will be to the state land. Mr. Connell said the panels will be 50 ft away and the fence will be 40 ft. Ms. Ludovicz asked if the project will require any blasting. Mr. Connell said he did not foresee any blasting, but that it depends on what is required. **Chairman Desmarais** said we will need an answer on whether or not you will be blasting, because that will affect the conditions of approval.

Mr. Rogers asked if any test pits or boring have been done. Mr. Connell said yes. **Mr. Rogers** asked if that was on the plans. Mr. Connell said no, and that they were going to revise the plans for next time.

Ms. Ludovicz said that wells were drained in 1983 when the ground was blasted. **Chairman Desmarais** said the Board is very concerned and cognizant of that.

Maura Wolfe, 115 High Street, said that the access road is going along the perimeter of their property and that they are particularly concerned with the health and safety of their family. Ms. Wolfe said her main concerns were what will be done to physically separate the properties and dust control during and after construction. Mr. Connell said that they typically just put up a silt fence. **Chairman Desmarais** told Mr. Connell that they might want to consider putting up a temporary construction fence. Mr. Connell said, regarding the dust, that one thing that is always specified is that there will be a construction pad at the entrance that keeps dust and silt from tracking on to High Street. Mr. Connell said that they could water the dust or put down calcium chloride to keep the dust down. **Chairman Desmarais** said that a dust control plan will be needed and you can decide if it will be water or calcium chloride. **Chairman Desmarais** said a fence that is prohibitive to children and pets must be included during construction. Ms. Wolfe said she would like them to consider wrap instead of gravel for the access road. Mr. Connell said he would have to go back and ask to see if they could do that for the perimeter along the property lines.

Marcia Blanchette, 105 High Street, said she is on the other side of the access road and asked if there would be a fence on that side as well. Mr. Connell asked if she was talking about something temporary. Ms. Blanchette asked why it has to be temporary. Mr. Connell said he can ask. Ms. Blanchette said she has animals and children on her property as well. **Chairman Desmarais** asked Mr. Connell to speak to what happens typically after construction. Mr. Connell said after construction there is very little need for anyone to come down there since all the panels can be monitored remotely. Mr. Connell said that the panels are checked out every month.

Chairman Desmarais said that residents usually want a softening of the road, specifically hedges or greenery around the entrance.

Ms. Blanchette asked how long construction would take. Mr. Connell said usually one season once everything is permitted. **Chairman Desmarais** asked Mr. Connell to please have an answer for next time as well as a shrubbery/landscaping plan for upfront.

Ms Ludovicz asked if the site will be lit up at night. **Chairman Desmarais** said not in our town and that the Board has no tolerance for that.

Mr. Rogers said the Board will need to know the anticipated construction hours, number of anticipated works, and parking for workers.

Chairman Desmarais said he believes that Will's Way has been cleared for the most part. Ms. Blanchette said that Will's Way has an easement to allow access to her house. **Chairman Desmarais** asked Ms. Blanchette if she had a deeded easement. Ms. Blanchette replied that she did. **Chairman Desmarais** asked that there be a note on the plan noting that there is an easement.

Chairman Desmarais entertained a motion to continue the public hearing for High Street Solar site plan review to February 18, 2020 at 6 pm in the Freetown Town Hall. **Mr. Rogers** moved and **Mr. Frates** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Continued Public Hearing – 76 Quanapoag Road

Chairman Desmarais called the public hearing back to order.

Dean Smith, Borrego, introduced himself and explained that the project is a 5 megawatt solar array with 41.9 acres of solar. Mr. Smith said there will be no excavation for foundation for the racking system and that there will be a 7 foot tall chain link fence. Mr. Smith said that there will be motion activated lighting at the equipment pad and that it will be an unmanned facility. Mr. Smith added that the snow tends to slide right off and there are no chemicals on site.

Roberta Oullette, 11 Chipaway Lane, asked if this was the same company that had a solar array on Braley Road. Mr. Smith said it is.

Mr. Smith stated that they are not proposing any disturbance to wetlands, there is a proposed 14 ft wide gravel access road, and a proposed detentions basin to ensure they are not increasing runoff. Mr. Smith said they will be clearing and stumping within the fenced area and some clearing of other trees to prevent shading. **Chairman Desmarais** said what the Board typically likes to see is an elevation allows sun but is not stumping, like cutting at 10 or 12 feet. Mr. Smith said that it is a possibility. Mr. Smith said that there are some steeper areas that will be flattened out on the site.

Alice Cornell, Chipaway Lane, asked how it will affect Betty Springs. Mr. Smith said they have to do water management and it should not affect Betty Springs. **Chairman Desmarais** said it will not affect it. Ms. Oullette said she has more runoff on her Braley Road property after solar went in. Mr. Smith said that could be due to the winter weather we have had the past couple of years. Ms. Cornell asked if the town cares about the wildlife and mentioned that there are beautiful paths throughout that property. **Chairman Desmarais** said private landowners have certain rights to develop their property. **Mr. Rogers** asked Ms. Cornell if she would rather see 40 acres of solar or 50 acres of houses. **Chairman Desmarais** said that from a planning perspective, prior to allowing solar, landowners only had the options to build houses or to donate the land. Ms. Cornell asked if it was true that the dump cannot develop the property. **Chairman Desmarais** said he was not sure.

Chairman Desmarais told Mr. Smith that he needs to look at entrance, egress, and line of sight in order to make sure that there will not be any issues with vehicles going over the hill.

Chairman Desmarais said that the Board needs to start getting comprehensive plans from the start. **Mr. Rogers** said not to take personally and to not let it happen again.

Mr. Rogers asked what the construction duration would be. Mr. Smith said 4-6 months. **Mr. Rogers** said the Board will also need construction sequencing, parking, dust control.

Ms. Oullette asked the Board members if they had solar near them. **Mr. Rogers** said yes, across the street. Ms. Oullette said the more trees that can be saved the better. **Chairman Desmarais** said that the Board is anticipating changing the regulations in February and that the current buffer is 50 ft and the Board is thinking of increasing it to 100 ft.

Chairman Desmarais entertained a motion to continue the public hearing for 76 Quanapoag Road Site Plan Review to February 18, 2020 at 6 pm in the Freetown Town Hall. **Mr. Frates** moved and **Mr. Rogers** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Continued Public Hearing – Quarry Drive-Bryant Hill LLC

Chairman Desmarais called the public hearing back to order.

John Connell, Sitec, approached the Board. Mr. Connell said that site is a 78 acre parcel with existing cranberry bogs that are confirmed upland bogs. Mr. Connell said that the panels will be located right in the bogs and will be fenced and bermed as required. Mr. Connell said the access point is Richmond Road. Mr. Connell added that they will be filling in ditches next to the bog.

Chairman Desmarais said Mr. Connell knows the concerns from the previous public hearings. Mr. Connell said construction will enter the site from Richmond Road and that it is pretty straightforward implementation of solar. Dean Pettey, property owner, said that not trees are being cut down, there is plenty of parking, and that traffic should not be an issue. Mr. Pettey said that as far as he can tell no houses will be able to see it.

Chairman Desmarais said that all details and requested information from the other public hearing applies to this plan as well.

Chairman Desmarais entertained a motion to continue the public hearing for Quarry Drive-Bryant Hill LLC Site Plan Review to February 18, 2020 at 6 pm in the Freetown Town Hall. **Mr. Rogers** moved and **Mr. Frates** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Continued Public Hearing – 45 Braley Road

Chairman Desmarais called the public hearing back to order.

Dean Smith, Borrego, said that the project is located on Braley Road at the rear of the property. Mr. Smith said that there could be some changes to the wetland area over some concerns about the flagging. Mr. Smith said that there are not a whole lot new issues and that he will provide all the same stuff that was requested of the prior project.

Chairman Desmarais entertained a motion to continue the public hearing for 45 Braley Road Site Plan Review to February 18, 2020 at 6 pm at the Freetown Town Hall. **Mr. Rogers** moved and **Mr. Frates** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Receive Minutes/Receive Schedule of Bills Paid

Chairman Desmarais entertained a motion to approve the minutes from December 18, 2019. **Mr. Rogers** moved and **Mr. Frates** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Desmarais entertained a motion to adjourn. **Mr. Rogers** moved and **Mr. Frates** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

C. Nils McKay