

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

October 7th, 2024

Attendees: Martha, Jeff, Annie, Mike K., Molly C., Bryan A., Alan A., Becky A., Bill M., Lisa M., Amy T., Buckley T., Sonya A., Billy H., Jeanne G., Nick T. Noah B., and Beth R.

Virtual attendees: Bruce W., Joel C., Mike S. Robert S., and Francine

Call meeting to order

Anne called the meeting to order 5:31 P.M.

Update Agenda

No update to the agenda

Public Comment

No public comment

Basil Hill Rd. Solar Project (Norwich Solar)

Martha began with a concise presentation on the history of Norwich Solar, highlighting both her and Jeff's extensive experience in the field. She then transitioned into discussing the specifics of the solar farm project planned for Basil Hill Road, including the total acreage the project would cover. Martha provided a brief overview of the project's progress to date, outlining key milestones and developments.

She explained that the project is a 2-megawatt solar installation, scaled down from the original plan, which had proposed a 5-megawatt capacity. After presenting this information, Martha opened the floor to questions, which helped clarify various aspects of the project. She elaborated on the relationship between Norwich Solar and Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC), clarifying the ownership and operation of different pieces of equipment. Martha explained which components of the project would be owned by Norwich Solar and which would be operated by VEC, addressing how the two entities collaborate on such projects.

At this point, Bucky Tardiff raised concerns about the impact the project would have on his property. He pointed out that the proposed overhead poles would cross his land, a use he did not support. Bucky expressed his desire to avoid this kind of infrastructure on his property, and several other residents, also affected by the project, were present to share their concerns.

Robert S. highlighted additional issues related to the Basil Hill Road project, prompting further discussion. Molly then asked a more specific question regarding the role of the biologist involved in the

project and how the findings from their reviews are communicated between Norwich Solar and the state. Martha provided clarity on this, explaining the biologist's role and how their environmental assessments are integrated into the project planning process.

Martha also offered an explanation of the Public Utility Commission (PUC) process in Vermont, outlining the various studies and reports that must be submitted to the PUC to gain project approval. These include environmental impact assessments, infrastructure studies, and other regulatory filings.

Finally, Martha addressed the topic of decommissioning the solar farm once it reaches the end of its operational life. She explained how this process is managed and discussed the potential financial implications for local municipalities, ensuring that the audience understood the long-term responsibilities and costs associated with the project.

Zoning Appeal (Petition)

The board reviewed the report on the proposed repeal of the zoning bylaws. After discussion, Jeanne made a motion to approve the repeal as outlined in the document. The motion was seconded by Billy H., and the board proceeded to vote on the matter.

Zoning Administrator Report

Beth, the Zoning Administrator, presented her report and reviewed all permits with the board. She noted that permit activity is slowing down as winter approaches.

Zoning Bylaw Review

Tabled

Other Business

No other business

Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting

Jeanne made a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting the board approved the minutes unanimously.

Adjourn

Jeanne made a motion to adjourn the board unanimously agreed.