



TOWN OF WARE

Planning & Community Development
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Planning Board

Meeting Minutes from

Thursday, May 20, 2021

Select Board Room, Town Hall

Planning Board Members Present: Josh Kusnierz (Chair), Rick Starodoj, Ken Crosby, Ed Murphy III

ZBA Members Present: Lewis Iadarola, Philip Hamel

Staff Present: Rebekah Cornell, Director
Rob Watchilla, Department Assistant

Public in Attendance: Steve Pikul, John O'Donnell, Elio Qorri, Jeremy Chapman

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman J. Kusnierz called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Approval of Minutes from April 1st.

Motion by R. Starodoj to approve the minutes from April 1st. Seconded by J. Kusnierz. All in favor. Approved 4-0.

- Approval of Minutes from April 15th.

Motion by E. Murphy to approve the minutes from April 15th. Seconded by R. Starodoj. All in favor. Approved 4-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- Continued. Ware Solar III LLC (c/o Melink Solar Development) for Special Permit (SP-2019-07) and Site Plan Review (SPR-2019-06). Applicant is requesting approval for a 4.2MW ground-mounted solar energy facility approximately 14.5 acres on Greenwich Road, location is parcel 35-0-12, owned by F.T. Smith.

Steve Pikul from Bertin Engineering was speaking on behalf of the applicant. Major updates to the plan include the addition of a habitat easement for the wood turtle and introducing the third phase of grading on the project site. Mr. Pikul ensured that there is no pruning near any wetlands and the total electrical output of the solar panels has increased from the original proposal to be around 3.23 MW. Additional gravel is anticipated to be removed in this plan as opposed to the previous plan, with a 1:4 slope gradient as the anticipated ratio. This will provide a gentle incline that allows for adequate sun exposure for the solar panels. The extent of the turtle habitat will be marked with boundary marker pins will become mandatory in the deed. The batteries used to store the solar energy will be in dry storage and the proposed container will be reviewed by the Fire Department.

Jeremy Chapman of Melink has a presentation that he plans on sharing with the Board on solar batteries in general. In terms of the type of battery that will be used, Mr. Chapman is unsure which manufacturer he will use for the batteries. The Board was assured that the containers for storing solar batteries are becoming smaller in size in order to make them safer. This changes the trend as smaller battery storage are preferred over large. This was a major concern for the Board as the site is situated near Muddy Brook, the Town's major aquifer.

In terms of solar panel specifications with the increased megawatts, Melink will give this information as more updates become readily available. R. Starodoj asked Mr. Pikul about additional gates or security systems for the project site. Mr. Pikul stated that his team will revisit this issue and add additional gates if necessary.

Motion by E. Murphy to continue the discussion of SP-2019-07 and SPR-2019-06 at the next Planning Board Meeting (June 17th 2021). Seconded by R. Starodoj. All in favor. Approved 4-0.

JOINT MEETING WITH ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS (ZBA did not have quorum)

- Zoning Amendments
 - Chickens

The current language in the zoning bylaws allows for up to five chickens and it's suggested that the number should be upped to six. Chickens are usually sold in groups of six. Resident from Beaver Lake area attended the meeting and spoke in favor of allowing roosters. His interested was for the purpose of breeding meat birds.

- Signs

The main topic briefly discussed were flag signs. They are considered cheap and convenient for business owners to use. They can be quite distracting for those who are driving near them. The discussion on signs will be brought up at the next ZBA meeting.

- Earth Removal

The main topics of discussion pertained to cubic amount of removable soil and excavation grading. The Board feels that exceptions could be made for grading within the 50' buffer zone near property lines. Definitions of Accessory, Primary, and Secondary structure should be defined within the zoning bylaws. In terms of allowing access to structures that are not near the street, the Board recommends that access drive ways should be allowed within the zoning code. In terms of allowance of earth removal, the Board stated that one 12 month period to remove 1,000 cubic yards is allowed, but anymore removal after that will require a special permit. The Director stated that Palmer has a fee of \$100 per open acre on earth removal operations. The ZBA urged the idea of incorporating this into the Zoning Bylaws in order to generate revenue for the Town. The Planning Board was not in favor of the additional fee as the earth belongs solely to the property, who is getting taxed already.

o Mobile Homes

Current language only allows for the replacement of a mobile home if it has been occupied within two years of applying for a building permit. The Director proposed language that would allow for relief to be granted through the ZBA. There are some tax titled properties with abandoned mobile homes and this change would allow for potential reuse.

TOWN PLANNER UPDATE

- East Quabbin Land Trust recently ordered a delivery of trees for their spring planting initiative. The idea is to plant these trees in residential and downtown areas as opposed to rural parts of Town. The EQLT is looking for property owners in residential neighborhoods interested in a free tree.

Motion by E. Murphy to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by K. Crosby. All in favor. Approved 4-0

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday June 3rd, 2021 at 7 pm.

Minutes from May 20, 2021

Respectfully submitted by,

Robert Watchilla,
Department Assistant

Minutes Approved on: <u>6/17/21</u>	
Kusnierz	<u>[Signature]</u>
Starodoj	<u>[Signature]</u>
Knight	_____
Murphy	_____
Crosby	<u>[Signature]</u>

