

Union Planning Board Minutes
Thursday, January 14, 2021, 6:30 p.m.
ONLINE INTERACTIVE

Present: Gerald S. Brooks (“Jerry,” Chair), Dale Flint, Robin Milliken, Glenn Taylor, Laura Curtis, Michael Johnson

Others present: Grant Watmough (CEO), Jay Feyler (Town Manager), Chris Byers, Matt Kennedy, Dale Knapp, Greg Carey, Bill Lombardi, Wanda Gamage-Wyman, Deidre Wallace, S. Blake, Sarah Drickey, Mike Drickey, David Vose, Erik Amundsen, Dot Wyman

PUBLIC HEARING

Boyle Associates Site Plan Review for Solar Farm, Map 8 Lot 46-1 and Map 9 Lot 2

Discussion was similar to previous meetings. The agricultural-type fence that must be at least 7’ tall will also be secure. The solar farm will be “a relatively quiet neighbor” according to Boyle Associates. DEP will work with them on berms and drainage. Technology is advancing, but the panels will not be redone as there is no cost benefit.

On the map just above the Drickeys, there will be a gate restricting people that will be locked at all times. There will be no full-time staffing. There will be a lock box for emergency personnel. Typically, there are high voltage warning signs. In 11 years, Boyle Associates noted they haven’t really seen people trying to get into any solar farms.

Sarah and Mike Drickey brought up a concern about a shared driveway. They have ingress and egress through the Ahlholm property and said people have been parking there. Boyle Associates replied there would be construction to the north of their driveway with a DOT permit requiring them to plant shrubs; that paved area and apron would be maintained. There would be infrequent access through a small corner of their driveway. A well on the west side, which the Drickeys have the deeded right to use, will be protected during construction.

Once the lease is terminated, the project enters the decommissioning phase and has to be decommissioned within six months.

In answer to a question about completion date, Chris Byers said it’s a four to six-month process. If they start in spring, they expect to finish in the fall.

Erik Amundsen was concerned about taking away agriculture for solar. Grant said nothing requires them to put farmland somewhere else. Boyle Associates said it’s not like we will see a solar project on every farm, as this project alone takes up what’s available at the local substation with less than a megawatt remaining, so it’s basically a first and last in the town.

REGULAR MEETING

1. Boyle Associates – Final Site Plan Review, Solar Farm – Map 8 Lot 46-1 and Map 9 Lot 2

Jerry led the board down the list of requirements, pausing for consensus along the way.

All agreed the project is in keeping with the Comprehensive Plan.

Decommissioning was discussed further. Jay said he had been reading about decommissioning bonds. It is on the land. We could certainly get Town Attorney Roger Therriault to chime in, as long as they give us proof that they have the bond.

Motion by: Glenn Taylor to approve with the aforementioned conditions (Site Plan Review), one being performance guarantee or bond provided.

2nd by: Dale Flint

6-0

Grant reminded there are four 24” x 36” plans to be signed by each Planning Board member. There was some discussion about exactly which plans they have; Boyle Associates will follow up with Grant tomorrow.

2. Accept minutes of December 10, 2020

Motion by: Dale Flint

2nd by: Michael Johnson

5-0-1 abstention (Laura Curtis)

3. Any other business by the board

Grant provided a quick recap of the Stephen Brooks/DEP lot redesignation. He said Mr. Brooks hired some people, and he is getting information to DEP. We expect to hear more in a couple of weeks.

4. Adjourn: 8:39 p.m.

Motion by: Glenn Taylor

2nd by: Michael Johnson

6-0

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abaldo
Secretary