

Belchertown Planning Board
Minutes – Tuesday – May 22, 2018



Members present: James Natle, Daniel Beaudette, Sierra Pelletier, Lou Faassen and Eric Wojtowicz (alternate for special permits)

Staff: Doug Albertson, Town Planner, and Lynn Sikes, Minutes

Absent: Michael Hofler, Chair

Present: Matthew Parlon, Lexi Barlow representing Blue Wave Solar; Chris Ryan of Meridian Associates and Leasa Roberts

7:00 pm – M. Hofler is absent this evening therefore Dan Beaudette, Vice Chair, opened the meeting welcomed everyone and read the agenda into the record.

Beaudette welcomed Lou Faassen back as a board member. Lou served 8 years previously on our board and has just been elected for a five year term.

7:00 pm – D. Beaudette began by stating we will be having an informal discussion with Blue Wave Solar this evening. As we have a bylaw on commercial solar photovoltaic installations and there is no application filed this will be informational only.

Matthew Parlon with Lexi Barlow, representing Blue Wave Solar, along with Chris Ryan of Meridian Associates, addressed the board. This is a proposed commercial solar project to be located on Gulf Road, Map 215, Lots 4 and 21, owned by W.D. Cows, Inc. It is a 5 megawatt system. Currently, in comparison with other solar fields in town, this would be the largest. A map was presented and reviewed of where the project would be situated on the site. Storm water and swales were shown and discussed. It will have a gravel access road of approximately 20' in width. Streams on the site were discussed. Grading and the steepness of the site were looked at. Grading within the array would have to be completed in areas. Drainage patterns were looked at and how the deforesting of the area would be affected due to this. Wildlife and its displacement were discussed. The site will be fully enclosed with fencing for security and protection. It would be placed 6 inches off the ground resulting in a 7 ½ foot fence. This would require a waiver as the Town allows a maximum of 6 feet in height. Soil testing has been completed. There will be no impervious surface installed. The interconnection would be off Gulf Road.

Questions from the Board included the removal of the site from Chapter 61. Roll back taxes would need to be paid. MEPA would become involved with the clearing of anything more than 25 acres. Discussion ensued regarding environmental standards and how they would be addressed along with storm water standards. Any conditions Conservation Commission requires would need to be met. Endangered species was briefly discussed including the long eared bats and their breeding season. The Board asked if Blue Solar would submit a list of other towns where they have done installations. They will do this. If the Board would like to do a site visit to any of these locations, Blue Solar would meet them at those sites so they would have access to the interior. For this site they do not know how many residential houses it could affect. It was suggested that having conversations with abutters to address any of their concerns might be a good approach. This project is subordinate subject to a special permit and the applicant must address §145-69.

The Board mentioned erosion control and stabilization. With sunlight blocking the undergrowth, which would result in it dying off, there would be more erosion in the future. They indicated temporary sediment basins will be installed along with erosion controls going up the hillside. There is a concern with the aquifer area also. How is the stream affected?

Combining the lots into one with an ANR would be their decision to do, not by any suggestion within a preliminary meeting.

The Board indicated to Blue Solar to pay attention to the financial security item within the special permit. This will be discussed in detail. This should be thoroughly detailed within the application.

The applicants are working on their application for Conservation and the Planning Board and are hoping to submit those in June.

They thanked the Board for their time and left the meeting at 7:44 pm

D. Beaudette – We have received Eric Wojtowicz' letter of resignation as the Alternate Voting Member for Special Permits. The board thanked him for his participation with the Planning Board. He has other roles within town and was doing this simultaneously. Eric's effort, insight, and care are what makes the planning board work. Eric thanked the board and stated he has learned much. The camaraderie this Board brings each and every week is amazing.

D. Beaudette - We have a guest at our meeting this evening who has indicated interest in the Alternate Voting Member for Special Permits position. Leasa Roberts addressed the board. She works at the University of Massachusetts in the Development Office and is also a Realtor. She is very interested in the Board and how it works along with the amount of building going on in town. She cited the solar project discussed this evening as an example of things that raise questions: Where does the wildlife go and how will this project affect home values? The Board discussed the position and what it entails..

June 15 is the deadline for applications for the Alternate Voting Member for Special Permits position. The term begins July 1, 2018. The Board thanked Ms. Roberts for coming this evening.

Minutes of May 8, 2018. Motion: J. Natle to accept the minutes of May 8, 2018 as written. **Second:** S. Pelletier No Discussion **Vote** 3-0-1 (Lou Faassen abstained as he was not a member then.)

Members Reports:

- Eric Wojtowicz – I will not be at the next meetings. Thank you again. It has truly been a privilege. The Board thanked him as well.
- D. Beaudette – We will reorganize the Board at our next meeting.


Town Planner Report:

- The Trail project is moving along. We have raised approximately 10% of our matching amount of \$28,000 so far. Team Jessica has joined our efforts and has sent out a mass mailing for donations. They did such a great job on the Jessica's playground and I am very happy for their involvement. This is an entire community effort.
- We have a few solar projects that are being worked on for submission.


- Hickory Hills has rescheduled to our next meeting. We will see what their engineers say regarding the sidewalks and find a way to make this work.
- Harris Way should be just about complete. Universal has granted a 20 foot easement where the drainage should go. Barring anything else, this will be completed. As-builts need to be submitted.
- J. Hayward gravel pit on Allen Street. The permit has now expired. The last time we addressed this, Mr. Hayward was to provide a memo from our tax collector, and to resolve matters with the conservation commission. We received the tax collector's note that Mr. Hayward and the collector have an agreement. He is under an enforcement order with the Conservation Commission due to a wash out that occurred during a previous rainstorm. We can ask the Building Inspector to issue an order of Cease and Desist.
- RAMA Development Common Drive public hearing is scheduled for our June 26, 2018 meeting.

MOTION: J. Natle to adjourn at 8:11 pm. **SECOND:** S. Pelletier **VOTE:** 4-0-0

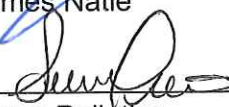
Meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm



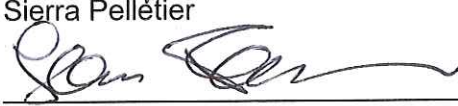
Daniel Beaudette – Acting Chair



James Natle



Sierra Pelletier



Louis Faassen



OFFICE OF
PLANNING BOARD

Town Of Belchertown

P.O. Box 964
Belchertown, Massachusetts 01007

SIGN IN SHEET - MEETING OF

Tuesday May 22, 2018

PLEASE ENTER YOUR NAME, TITLE AND ADDRESS ----
THANK YOU !

BlueWave Solar - Matt Parlon and Lexi Barlow - Boston, MA

Meridian Associates - Chris Ryan

Rosea Roberts

Matt Parlon

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