

Belchertown Planning Board
Minutes – Tuesday – August 28, 2018



Members present: Michael Hofler, James Natle, Daniel Beaudette, Louis Faassen, Justin Rosiowski and Alice Knittel (alternate voting member)
Staff: Doug Albertson, Town Planner, Lynn Sikes, Minutes

Audience Present: Dave Albrecht, PE and Josh Farkes representing Borrego Solar Systems, Mark Spiro, Elizabeth Pols, Tom Spellman, Bob Ferenz, Noreen Tierney, Keith Ferenz, Kathleen Couture, Roger Couture, Tom Roberts, MaryAnn Roberts and Gail Gramarossa

7:00 pm –J. Natle, Chairman, opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and read the agenda into the record. There are two Public Hearings this evening regarding commercial solar photovoltaic installations; one is continued from the August 14, 2018 meeting.

7:00 pm - J. Natle opened the Public Hearing for a proposed commercial solar photovoltaic installation on Bardwell Street, Map 272, Lot 5, submitted by Borrego Solar Systems, Inc., 55 Technology Drive, Suite 102, Lowell, MA 01851, as it pertains to bylaw 145-28-Commercial solar photovoltaic installations and Site plan approval 145-27. J. Natle read the public hearing into the record. J. Natle informed the audience members of the public hearing process.

David Albrecht, PE for Borrego Solar Systems, Inc. was present and addressed the Board. Josh Farkes Project Mgr. was in attendance as well. They presented the plan and aerial map to the Board and went over the project. It is predominately a wide open parcel on 13.3 acres. It will be a 1.4 megawatt system. The racking system is a raised design with the lowest panel 8 feet off the ground up to 14 feet in height.

Items discussed were setbacks, wetlands on the parcel, access roads, fencing, dual use of the property, snow storage, grading and erosion control, tree placement of Maples to be put in near the abutting neighbor to the south, grading and erosion control and a small 12" culvert will be placed within the road. They will be filing with the EPA approximately 2-3 weeks before construction. They would like to remain in Chapter 61A status so that is being discussed with the assessor's office. They will meet with Conservation Commission on September 10, 2018.

The Borrego company name and address was discussed. There had been a discrepancy which has now been clarified. They will submit that clarification to the Planning Board

Tighe & Bond's letter of August 28, 2018 was reviewed and discussed. Item #2 within the letter will be clarified as the sentence simply ends. Item #4 and #6 will be done.

At this time the meeting was open to the Board for their input and questions.

The Board discussed the post and racking design, the panel design and their orientation. The battery system, fire protection and fencing were discussed. The fencing will be 7 feet tall with a 6-inch wildlife gap. There will be no barbed wire. The amount of voltage was questioned and if it is a high voltage system. They will confirm this and get the information to the Board.

The Operating and Maintenance manual was discussed along with snow storage. The plantings to be installed will be added to the O&M.

The applicants will place a temporary Flag, or something that would be visual, at the highest elevation point within the solar field so the Board could see what the height of the panels would be from different areas.

Mr. Boscher thanked both candidates and added he would defer to the planning board's preference, as did Mr. O'Connor.

Ms. Grammarossa asked if there is training for planning board members. Mr. Albertson explained the Citizen Planners' Training Collaborative, that there are courses covering many topics and an annual conference.

Mr. Boscher asked if alternate members are included in board discussions. Mr. Natle explained it's the board's practice to include even the alternates and associates fully in the discussions even though they may not vote on a topic.

Mr. Natle recommended Mr. Rosiensi for the position because he has been the alternate for special permits for two months. He hopes Ms. Knittel would accept appointment as the alternate in place of Mr. Rosiensi. Mr. Natle then moved to appoint Mr. Rosiensi as the planning board member to the next town election. Mr. Beaudette seconded. In discussion, Mr. Hofler stated that Ms. Knittel has a strong technical background and that he would vote for her. The board voted 3-1 to appoint Mr. Rosiensi. The selectmen then discussed the candidates. Ms. Aldrich asked Ms. Knittel if she would be interested in being the alternate voting member for special permits, to replace Mr. Rosiensi. Mr. O'Connor moved to support the planning board's vote to appoint Mr. Rosiensi to the planning board until the next election. The selectmen voted 4-0-1, with Mr. Archible abstaining.

Mr. Natle then explained the alternate position and asked Ms. Knittel if she would accept that. She indicated she would. Mr. Natle then moved to appoint Alice Knittel as the planning board's Alternate Voting Member for Special Permits through June 30, 2019. Mr. Faassen seconded. The vote was 4-0. Mr. O'Connor then moved for the selectmen to support the planning board's vote. The selectmen voted 5-0.

Mr. Hofler moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Faassen. 4-0 to adjourn.



James Natle



Daniel Beaudette



Michael Hofler



Louis Faassen

Justin Rosiensi