

**Rochester Planning Board
Minutes of March 10, 2021**

Present: Arnold Johnson, Chairman
Gary Florindo, Vice Chairman
Bendrix Bailey, Clerk
Michael Murphy, Associate Clerk
Lee Carr
John DeMaggio

Absent: Chris Silveira

Steven Starrett, Town Planner
Tanya Ventura, Board Administrator
Marissa Perez-Dormitzer, Recording Secretary

The meeting convened via Zoom Meeting ID 834 2194 0590. Members joined in-person at the Town Hall Meeting Room. Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and stated the meeting was being recorded.

BOARD BUSINESS

Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of February 23, 2021 was made by Clerk Bailey and seconded by Member Carr. **The motion passed by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained (6-0-0).**

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Approval Not Required Application

William & Anita Milka, 246 & 268 New Bedford Road, Map 2, Lots 8 & 8B

A motion to approve a plan Approval Not Required for Map 2, Lots 8 & 8B prepared January 28, 2021 for Anita Milka was made by Clerk Bailey and seconded by Member Carr. **The motion passed by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained (6-0-0).**

PUBLIC HEARINGS

(Continued from February 23, 2021) A Large Scale Photovoltaic Installation Special Permit Application and Special Permit Application for Groundwater Protection, filed by Snipatuit Road Solar, LLC, Beals and Thomas, Inc., 144 Turnpike Road, Southborough, MA 01772 for property located at 0 Snipatuit Road, designated at Map 46 and 47, Lots 1, 4, 9, 9A, 26, and 27. The applicant proposes the construction of a ± 4.8 MW DC Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Array within the Residential/Agricultural District. The Property is also within the Mattapoisett River Valley Watershed and partially within the Groundwater Protection District and the Floodplain Overlay District. The property owners of record are Lisa Holden, Trustee, Rochester Realty Trust and Aquidneck Nominee Trust, ET AL, and Kevin J. and Cassandra A. Cassidy. The applicant's representative is Eric Las, Beals and Thomas, Inc., 144 Turnpike Road, Southborough, MA 01772.

Chairman Johnson stated the applicant requested a continuance to March 23, 2021 to allow time to respond to peer review comments.

Town Planner Starrett reported Beals and Thomas, Inc. submitted a letter dated March 1, 2021 in response to the first peer review letter. Chairman Johnson explained the applicant was seeking to not widen a part of the access road located in a wetland resource area. However, he stated the entire access road had to be 16 feet wide. Clerk Bailey asked if the Board should discuss the application

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since the applicant requested a continuance. Chairman Johnson responded that the applicant should have been present and noted they were not taking testimony. Town Planner Starrett explained that Beals and Thomas, Inc. had included pull offs in the narrower part of the access road to help direct traffic. Chairman Johnson mentioned that instead of replacing the 12-foot pipe with a 16-foot pipe under the road, they were going to add the pull offs. He noted they were making the access road wider with this plan. Town Planner Starrett referred Members to point 11 in the response letter regarding this issue. Chairman Johnson noted the Planning Board had final jurisdiction on the road. Clerk Bailey stated that a 16-foot wide road would not allow two trucks to pass and mentioned that was likely why they put in the pull off areas. In response to a question from Clerk Bailey, Chairman Johnson responded that the 16-foot width provides for safe access for the Fire Department. He added that the pipe underneath the road could not hold up the weight needed and would have to be replaced. Clerk Bailey asked why Beals and Thomas, Inc. were reluctant to widen to 16 feet and Chairman Johnson responded that they did not want to deal with the Conservation Commission. Chairman Johnson asked Town Planner Starrett to inform the applicant of the requirement to widen the entire access road to 16 feet.

A motion to continue to March 23, 2021 was made by Clerk Bailey and seconded by Member DeMaggio. **The motion passed by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained (6-0-0).**

***(Continued from February 23, 2021)* A Large-Scale Photovoltaic Installation Special Permit Application and Special Permit Application for Groundwater Protection, filed by Cushman Road Solar, LLC, P.O. Box 1340, Portsmouth, NH 03801 for property located at 0 Cushman Road, designated as Lot 11 on Rochester Assessors Map 33.** The applicant proposes the construction of a ± 3.9 MW DC Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Array within the Residential/Agricultural District. The property is also within the Mattapoissett River Valley Watershed, partially within the Groundwater Protection District, and the Floodplain Overlay District. The property owner of record is Lisa Holden, Trustee, P.O. Box 388, Rochester, MA 02770. The applicant's representative is Eric Las, Beals and Thomas, Inc., 144 Turnpike Road, Southborough, MA 01772.

Chairman Johnson stated the applicant requested to continue to March 23, 2021. However, he suggested continuing to the second meeting in April. Town Planner Starrett reported he spoke with Joe Harrison that day and he said they were considering altering the route of the access slightly. Chairman Johnson stated that access was important on this application and the solar field was not problematic.

A motion to continue to April 27, 2021 was made by Clerk Bailey and seconded by Member Carr. **The motion passed by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained (6-0-0).**

DISCUSSION

Chairman Johnson reported the project proponent for Rochester Crossroads had applied to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for approval of the property's sign sizes. He noted the Planning Board approved the location of the three signs. In reviewing the application to the ZBA, Chairman Johnson found the size of the sign at the main entrance on Route 28 was substantial and he asked for sitelines to make sure cars leaving the site would not be blocked. In addition, on the plans submitted to the ZBA the orientation of the sign was not what the Board approved.

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Phil Cordeiro of Allen & Major Associates, Inc. explained the change in the sign angle was a typographical error that was fixed on the ZBA plan. On the Planning Board plan, the sign had a slight angle while in the plans to the ZBA it was square.

Mr. Cordeiro shared his screen showing the plan submitted to the ZBA as well as multiple site line photos. He showed a plan with more detail on the signs that was requested by the ZBA. He noted they had updated the siteline analysis as requested by Chairman Johnson. Mr. Cordeiro reported they went to the site that Monday and took new photos at each sign location. He mentioned that each photo was taken 11 feet back from the gutter line of the intersecting roadway. They also took secondary photos 10 feet further back from that point and an additional 10 feet back. Mr. Cordeiro showed the series of photos for what they called the “Apartment sign”, the sign at the secondary entrance on Route 28, and the large sign at Route 58. He noted there was no visual impact to the sitelines. Town Planner Starrett asked about the impact of bringing up the elevation a few feet near the Apartment sign. Mr. Cordeiro stated there would still be a clear site line.

Vice Chairman Florindo noted it appeared that the three signs were at least a car and a half back from the road and there was plenty of view. Both himself and Chairman Johnson agreed there was not a problem with the sitelines. Chairman Johnson stated the Board would send a favorable response to the ZBA.

Mr. Cordeiro asked how the Board would like to handle the change in angle in the sign. Chairman Johnson responded that it could be adjusted on the as-built plan.

TOWN PLANNER UPDATES

Town Planner Starrett reported that construction on the Plumb Corner development was progressing on schedule. Mr. Motta had been on site with his first inspection.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 7:39 p.m. was made by Member DeMaggio and seconded by Associate Clerk Murphy. **The motion passed by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained (6-0-0).**

Marissa Perez-Dormitzer, Recording Secretary

Arnold Johnson, Chairman