

PLANNING BOARD - TOWN OF KNOX - ALBANY COUNTY

P.O. Box 56, Knox, N.Y. 12107

Established 1822

PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes: 10 March 2016

Present: Bob Price, Bob Gwin, Betty Ketcham, Tom Wolfe, Dan Driscoll, Brett Pulliam, Debra Nelson

- Meeting was called to order at 1931.

Approval of the draft minutes of the previous month's meeting.

- Minutes of the February 2016 meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved without modification.

Old Business

Bob Price queried the Board about interest in the CDRPC seminar scheduled for the 31st of March. All members with the exception of Deb and Brett will attend. Bob will register Tom Wolfe and Bob Gwin. Dan offered the use of his van for transportation.

Zoning Ordinance-Noise Amendment

Bob Price will submit the Noise amendment to the Town Board for review.

Zoning Ordinance-Lighting Amendment

Bob Gwin provided a copy of the Lighting amendment to the Board but will suspend further discussion until the Town Board meeting minutes are available.

Zoning Ordinance-Commercial Solar Array Amendment

Bob Gwin and Deb Nelson presented their work to-date. Bob presented a written transmittal for the Town Board to explain the objective and reasoning behind the amendment. Using the draft copy created by Tom Wolfe and training resources from the NY Sun consultants, Bob and Deb outlined their proposal for how commercial solar arrays could be handled in the Town. The current Zoning Ordinance only lists solar arrays as an accessory use; the new class of projects is not currently covered in the Zoning Ordinance and cannot be considered accessory use.

Initially, Bob and Deb proposed two sections: 1.) Small-scale projects permitted in Residential, Agricultural and/or Business districts (25-200, 000 watts) producing power for on-site use: 2.) Large-scale projects that generate power for off-site use would be permitted only in Agricultural Districts.

All commercial solar array projects would need to meet Density Control schedule guidelines in Article V, Section 52-Schedule Area and Bulk Regulations-Density Control. Commercial solar array projects will also need to be comply/be added to the following sections of the Zoning Ordinance (version 13, dated 14 Apr 2014):

- Article IV, Use Regulation and Use Tabulation, Section 43-Accessory Uses
 - Small-scale solar arrays: P P P N N P P P
- Article IV, Use Regulation and Use Tabulation, Section 44-Business Uses

- Large-scale solar arrays: A A A N N A A
- Article V, Section 50, (E): Business District and Permitted Businesses in Residential and Agricultural Districts – Special Regulations
- Article V, Section 50, (T): Solar Arrays
- Article VI, Section F, Site Plan Approval

Dan Driscoll discussed the need for a buffer area around the array both to prevent sun blockage and to protect the community from the visual impact. Bob Gwin cited the Density Control schedule as dictating a 100-ft buffer strip requirement. Bob Gwin mentioned that he discussed this initiative with Dan Sherman and New Scotland—smaller projects have gone through the process with little trouble. There is currently no precedent for larger scale projects. Tom Wolfe defended the inclusion of residential areas in the amendment, given that there are large lots within the residential boundaries that could fit the parameters.

Tom Wolfe made a motion to include residential districts in the Commercial Solar Array amendment, subject to site plan review. Brett Pulliam seconded the motion. There were 5 Yea, 1 Nay and one abstention.

The Board discussed increasing/capping allowable lot coverage. Deb Nelson questioned whether the Board would want to limit size of acreage.

Tom Wolfe made a motion that Bob's proposal be amended to read, "Planning Board may increase allowable lot coverage up to 50% as appropriate, based on site plan review". Brett Pulliam seconded the motion. There were 5 Yeas, 1 Nay and 1 abstention.

Deb Nelson made a motion that large-scale solar arrays do not exceed a 2-megawatt capacity. Bob Price urged the Board to consider acreage coverage parameters instead of wattage. There was no further discussion.

The Board supported Bob Gwin finalizing the transmittal for the Town Board and agreed that an environmental assessment will need to be completed for the Commercial Solar Array initiative.

Zoning Ordinance-Typo Corrections

Jenn Geckler will compile list of typos that can be added to upcoming amendment in time for the April 2016 meeting.

New Business

Abandonment

Bob Price asked the Board to consider alternative wording to what is currently written in Article V, Section 51, (L) regarding abandonment. The Board discussed increasing the timeframe from 180 days to 2 years, noting that timeframes may need to be designated by type of use including special use permit sites. Discussion was tabled until the April meeting.

With no further questions from the audience, Dan Driscoll made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Brett Pulliam seconded the motion. There were 7 Yea and 0 Nay.