

PLANNING BOARD - TOWN OF KNOX - ALBANY COUNTY

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

Established 1822

PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes: 8 December 2016

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

Meeting was called to order at 1936.

1. Minutes of the November 2016 meeting were reviewed and approved with one modification-- updating "say" to "stay".
2. The Board continued discussions with Jared Pantella of Labella Associates regarding the proposed 2-megawatt solar array.
 - a. Bob Price requested that Labella mail a package of a minimum of five, large-copy prints of the drawing. He asked that the drawing be magnified and limited to the specified area that he outlined on the map.
 - b. Labella Associates is still in the investigative phase following the wetland delineation and assessment by North Country Ecological. Pockets of federal wetlands were found in three areas on the proposed site and would impact placement of the array as well as the access road. Labella is drafting a new drawing, pushing the array to the northwest, away from the wetland areas. They are trying to keep the project to 2-megawatts but it may be less based on available space.
 - i. The Board suggested Labella consider the nationwide permit to cross wetlands when planning the layout.
 - ii. Two Board members, Tom Wolfe and Bob Price, walked the property and saw where the array would be located. Tom stated that this area was a reforestation project at one time; the balance of the site has been taken over by honeysuckle and buckthorn.
 - iii. Regarding preliminary review of any significant stream activity on or near the site, North Country looked and had to stop in two places because it was too dense.
 - c. The 20-24 ft. access road will need to be reconsidered given the wetlands. Labella is looking at other options including an access road on the other side of the boundary line that will cut through Guilderland.
 - i. The Board urged Labella to devise an environmentally and neighbor-sensitive alternative access road—one where wetland impact is minimized but skirted to reduce impact to neighbors.
 - d. Bob Price indicated that the negative space at the top of the drawing might not be a pipeline, as originally thought, but may be remnants of the Albany Schoharie Palatine plank road. The curator of Schoharie Museum may have a map to confirm. If it is confirmed to be the plank road, further discussion regarding conservation will be needed.
 - e. The Board inquired about agreements regarding the use of the electrical power. Labella stated that there is a buyer for one mega-watt; they are still looking for buyers for the remaining power.
 - f. The Board requested a copy of the preliminary CESIR document showing the status of the application to National Grid. Jared will reach out to Steve Longway and have documentation sent to Chairman Price.

- g. Labella Associates stated that Community 2.0 would be buying the land; there will be no lease agreement. The Board agreed that the sale would fall under the One-Cut rule. Labella offered to share the drafted purchase agreement for the Guilderland site.
- h. Labella Associates stated that they are not sure if low-glare panels will be used for the array as it will be based on how many can fit in the new space. Labella did confirm that the array will use auger-type supports for the array.
- i. Betty Ketcham and Bob Price will reach out to Debra Breitenbach to investigate the source of suspected slave burial sites near Buttermilk Falls.

Questions from the Audience

1. Lisa Cowan, of 1215 Berne Altamont Road, addressed the Board and stated that she is a private individual and the proposed array construction took her by surprise. She expressed concerns about the visual impact, the geometry and speed limit of Berne Altamont Road, the impact to natural resources related to clearing of trees and the long term viability of the project.
2. Robert Digser also addressed the Board. His home is located on the parcel adjoining the proposed array; it would be right alongside one of the options being considered for the access road. Tom Wolfe asked permission to walk his property line.
3. Labella Associates will need to contact neighbors when submitting their final proposal for approval. The Board urged Labella to consider contacting adjoining home owners regarding possible visual impact to neighbors soon as possible as a courtesy. Labella Associates agreed to make contact once the new concept has been drawn up.

Debra Nelson made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Brett Pulliam seconded the motion. There were 6 Yea and 0 Nay.

Meeting adjourned at 2050. Next meeting - Thursday, 12 January 2017 @ 1930.