



Town of Knox Planning Board

Established 1822

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Minutes: March 14, 2023

Present: Garry Bunzey, Todd LaGrange, Pat Catchpole, Deb Nelson, Betty Ketcham, Zachery Martineau, alternate member Deirdre Keating

Also attending: Supervisor Russ Pokorny, Attorney Michelle Storm, Travis Rosencranse, Alec Gladd, Amy Lauterbach, Emily Griffith.

The meeting began at 7:30 PM with Garry Bunzey acting as chair. By roll call he established the presence of a quorum.

Garry informed the board that Ed Ackroyd has resigned his position as chairman and his seat on the planning board due to health reasons.

Garry Bunzey introduced a new board member, Pat Catchpole, as well as the new recording secretary Emily Griffith.

Todd made a motion to approve the February meeting minutes, Betty seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Travis Rosencranse (project manager) with Creighton Manning representing New Leaf Energy for the Reservoir Road Solar Project began his presentation. He stated New Leaf was not able to be in attendance. Alongside Travis was attorney Alec Gladd. Travis stated there is not much of an update with army corps and its executive department who will take lead on the final review.

Michelle Storm, attorney for the Town of Knox, stated the planning board could move forward with SEQRA and send the 30 day notice to residents regardless if there is an update with army corps or not. She stated that planning boards like to hire outside council to review the project or the application and advise the board on any concerns. Michelle offered her help with the SEQRA application, and Betty Ketcham agreed to begin working on it. Travis Rosencranse reminded the board that New Leaf had previously provided a draft letter to be taken into consideration of the board which would eventually be sent out to residents.

It was brought up that the board is in the process of developing a new solar law, and hiring consultants could help. Planning board members also agreed they would like an updated IPAC (Information for planning and consultation) for the endangered species where the solar development would be. Travis will get documentation for the Northern long eared bat.

Todd LaGrange made a motion to proceed forward with SEQRA with the planning board as lead agency. Zach seconded the motion, all were in favor.

Michelle stated the board needs to give a 5 day notice for a public hearing. Deb said May 9th or June 13th would be a good date to hold the public hearing. The planning board would like to have updated info on the wetlands before moving forward with conditional approval. The public hearing can be put out before the 30 days is up, and the letters sent out to residents need to be certified letters.

The town board is the responsible board to schedule a public hearing for the new law for the 6 month extension of the solar moratorium.

Michelle asked what the planning board members are hoping to achieve with the new Solar law. Members stated they want clearer rules and conditions. Michelle explained the new law would be a recommendation to the town board from the planning board and needs to be proposed by June. Michelle said she would provide comments back to the members in two weeks, which would be around April 1st 2024.

Deb Nelson stated they went through the process of updating the zoning regulations about 7 years ago. She emailed everyone on the board a copy of the Solar Checklist that has been developed and refined over the years. All board members mutually agreed Betty should be the one to draft the letters.

Michelle asked members if they expect any push back from the county as far as their new regulations. All board members stated no. Deb Nelson said they've been involved with their past solar projects, and they've never had any issues. Michelle stated we could ask the applicant if they would be willing to pay for an outside review of the project on the board's behalf. This is not currently in town regulations.

There was discussion of giving someone the Vice Chairman position, and all were in favor of having a Vice. Russ Pokorny stated the town board will be looking for recommendations from members as to "who you want your chair to be." This will also leave the board short a member. It was mutually agreed that they should keep an alternate, and they decided that these decisions would be discussed at the next planning board meeting.

Deb made a motion to adjourn, Todd seconded and all approved.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM

Respectfully submitted by Emily Griffith, Planning Board Secretary