



Town of Westminister

MASSACHUSETTS 01473
FROM THE OFFICE OF THE
PLANNING BOARD

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Jon Wyman, chairman

Marie N. Auger, vice chairman

Jill Normandin

Andrew Rice

Linda Wiest

Planning Board - January 9, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Meeting Room 222

Members present: M. Auger, Linda Wiest and Jill Normandin.

Staff: Town Planner Stephen Wallace

Additional Attendees: Tony Somers - SWCA Environmental Consultants, Kate Conway, Brian Szoc, and Andrew Kaski.

M. Auger, Vice Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:02PM.

The Board delayed approving the minutes from the Board's December 12, 2017 meeting because only two of the Board members in attendance tonight were at the December meeting and it takes a minimum of three members to approve meeting minutes.

The first order of business was an Approval Not Required (ANR) plan for the Westminister Golf Course at 51 Ellis Road. Surveyor Brian Szoc presented the plan, explaining that the Golf Course owners wanted to split off the northern portion of the property that is used by Borrego Solar as a ground-mounted solar farm. The Board voted unanimously (3 - 0) to endorse the plan.

The next order of business was hearing a presentation from Tony Somers of SWCA Environmental Consultants representing applicant Lake Street Development Partners LLC, regarding a submitted Site Plan to install a solar farm on property located at 180 State Road East, owned by Cresticon Incorporated (former TRW property). Mr. Somers explained that Lake Street wanted to install a solar installation in the rear of the property, in the range of 1.6 to 2 million Megawatts. The Town Planner noted that this was a contaminated site under active remediation. Mr. Somers noted that some of the solar panels would be ballasted, so they would be movable, while the panels outside of the contaminated area would be ground mounted. Town Planner noted that he has been waiting on a revised site plan for over two months. Mr. Somers replied that the applicant needs to finalize the site plan and associated submission materials and that they will be submitted when ready.

Mr. Somers also noted that the site would be accessed by the old right-of-way for Depot Road, which the Town currently uses as a bike path leading to Crocker Pond. The bike path would need to be relocated in order to have access to the planned solar field. The applicant and Mr. Somers have met twice with the Crocker Pond Committee to discuss relocating the bike path, but no agreement has been reached because the legal status of the old right-of-way needs to be researched. Town Counsel has said they could perform this research, but the work would be considerable and that the applicant should reimburse the Town for this work. Earlier in the week, the Town Planner gave the applicant the option of performing the legal research themselves or paying to have Town Counsel do the research. The applicant has yet to decide on

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which option to pursue. The Board voted unanimously (3 - 0) to continue the public hearing to the Board's next business meeting on February 13, 2018. Mr. Somers said that he would try to finalize and submit a revised site plan in time for the meeting, as well as push the applicant to decide on how they want to handle the legal research for the right-of-way.

Next on the agenda was a public hearing for a proposed Definitive Subdivision to create a new building lot with frontage on Community Way (formerly known as the driveway for the new senior center at 69 West Main Street). The project will split the 12.3 acre parcel in two, with the front lot containing the senior center and the rear lot to be used for an eventual senior housing project.

The land is in the Residential-I zoning district and is owned by the Town of Westminster. The plan was prepared by Whitman & Bingham Associates LLC, 510 Mechanic Street, Leominster. The property is located on the Assessor's Map 87, Lot 85.

The Town Planner explained the project, with subdivision approval being the last step for the Town to undertake before working with the MA Housing Partnership on preparing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to find an entity to build and manage as many as 50 senior apartments in the rear of the property. J. Normandin asked about buffers from Route 2 and nearby residential abutters and was told by the Town Planner that the matter of buffers would be addressed when the eventual developer submits a Site Plan for Planning Board review and approval. The matter before the Board tonight is simply dividing the parcel in two. The Board voted unanimously (3 - 0) to approve the subdivision.

Next up, the Town Planner discussed potential zoning changes for the Board to consider. The last phase of the Zoning Bylaw overhaul project is revising the Sign Bylaw and the Board will work on this throughout 2018. The Town Planner is currently working with Town Counsel to prepare an options memo regarding how to zone for recreational marijuana, and this options memo should be ready for the Board of Selectmen's consideration some time in February. The Town Planner brought up two minor changes that he thinks could be achieved at the May 2018 Annual Town Meeting. The first is rezoning the Aubuchon warehouse property from Commercial to Industrial; doing so would expand the number of reuse options now that Aubuchon is longer using the warehouse and is actively seeking new tenants. J. Normandin was concerned about potential truck traffic from any new use, but the Planner explained that this issue would be dealt with when the new user comes before the Planning Board for Site Plan review and approval. It was noted that Aubuchon has had trucks going in and out of the property for years without disruption to the surrounding neighborhood. The Board offered qualified support for this zoning change. Next up was establishing a minimum lot size and frontage requirements for the Village Center zoning district, as currently no such requirements exist as they were not included in the Village Center rezoning effort of 2016. The Board was supportive of this zoning change.

The meeting concluded with the Town Planner presenting the Planning Department work program for the 2018 calendar year. J. Normandin asked if the Planner could investigate architectural design standards for the Town's various commercial districts and the Planner said he would begin working on this. The matter of drafting a solar power bylaw was discussed, but the Planner does not want overpromise on the annual work program, so this matter will be revisited at a later date.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

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