

FARMINGTON PLANNING BOARD
153 Farmington Falls Road
July 12, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.
Minutes

Planning Board members present: Clayton King, Lloyd Smith, Craig Jordan, Gloria McGraw, Jeff Wright, and Judith Murphy.

Alternate members present: None.

Members unable to attend: Mike Otley and Michael MacNeil.

Others present: Code Enforcement Officer, Steve Kaiser; Code Assistant, Kate Foster; Dana Valleau and Jessica Murray from TRC, representing Farmington Solar; applicant Gary Snow; applicant Bill Greenlaw, representing RSU 9.

Mr. King opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

1. Designate alternate members, if needed

No designation needed.

2. Review minutes of June 14, 2021, June 22, 2021, Site-Walk notes June 22, 2021

Ms. Murphy made a motion to accept the minutes of June 14, 2021, June 22, 2021, and Site-Walk notes of June 22, 2021 as written.

Mr. King seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative
Motion carried.

3. Election of Officers

Mr. Smith made a motion to nominate Mr. King as Chairman.

Ms. Murphy seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative
Motion carried.

Ms. Murphy made a motion to nominate Mr. Smith as Vice Chairman/Secretary.

Mr. Wright seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative
Motion carried.

4. Snow Lot Split
Gary & Kathryn Snow
109 Harris Lane / R4-40-1
Split existing lot within subdivision

Mr. King introduced the application.

Mr. Smith made a motion to accept the lot split as proposed.

Mr. King seconded the motion.

Gary Snow introduced himself as the applicant and stated he and his wife Kathryn would like to break off a lot for their daughter as a gift. He added that it will be a little over 50,000 SF where the minimum is 50,000 SF.

Mr. King verified with Mr. Kaiser the minimum lot size requirements and frontage requirements.

Mr. King stated the lot seemed to be an odd shape.

Mr. Snow replied he is looking to add a couple of sheds onto his property, and where he wants to put them is the reason it is shaped differently as he didn't want to put them on her land.

Ms. Murphy said she didn't have any objections as long as it follows all rules and regulations.

Mrs. McGraw asked where the driveway was going to be or if their daughter was going to share a driveway with them.

Mr. Snow said his daughter would have her own driveway off Harris Lane which the Snow's own half of and Adrian Harris owns the other half.

Mrs. McGraw asked if the road is wide enough for emergency vehicles.

Mr. Kaiser said the Town doesn't regulate private road widths and there is minimum traffic on Harris Lane. He added that Cindy Gelinis and Chief Terry Bell have been notified of the split for E911 addressing.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative

Motion carried.

5. 21-SR-12
RSU 9 / Bill Greenlaw
129 Seamon Road / R4-33
3 bay garage and work shelter

Mr. King introduced the application.

Mrs. McGraw made a motion to accept the application as complete.

Ms. Murphy seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative

Motion carried.

Bill Greenlaw introduced himself as the applicant representing the RSU 9 district. He said he has proposed to have a 30' x 60' building constructed with three bays and be used for year-round storage including equipment during the winter. He said it is being funded by a grant and they hope to start construction on it in August after receiving approval from DEP and the Planning Board. Mr. Greenlaw added that there will not be any water or electricity in the building.

Mr. King asked if they were going to be storing any gas in the building.

Mr. Greenlaw said no, there would only be the gas in any equipment stored there.

Mr. Jordan repeats Fire Rescue Captain Tim Hardy's comment in his Letter of Review that states "If the use of this building is for storage only it meets the requirements of the Code. If the use changes or will be used for student occupancy the plans will need to be reviewed again" and verified with Mr. Greenlaw that it is going to be used for storage only at this time.

Mr. Wright asked about having no power or lighting in the building.

Mr. Greenlaw answered by saying they are planning on relying on natural lighting and will have the bay doors open as much as possible.

Ms. Murphy asked if there was a future plan to have the building used by students.

Mr. Greenlaw said they have looked into a 5-10 year plan but at this time they are only planning on using it as storage and shelter for equipment during the winter.

Mr. King asked who the builders were going to be.

Mr. Greenlaw stated Foster Tech is going to be doing the construction.

Mr. Wright made a motion to approve the application as presented.

Mrs. McGraw seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative

Motion carried.

**6. 18-SR-11, 18-SS-09, 19-SR-17, 19-SS-09
Farmington Solar & Switchyard
Along Farmington Falls Road / Route 2/27
Minor modifications to the applications**

Mr. King introduced the agenda item.

Ms. Murphy made a motion to accept the proposed modifications for discussion.
Mr. King seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative
Motion carried.

Mr. Valleau of TRC, the representative for Farmington Solar and the Switchyard, gave the Board an overview of the modifications mainly being stormwater drainage changes affecting less than 1% of the plans. He added that during construction they have encountered drainage issues that are now being addressed.

- Plan Sheet 306 & 307: roadside ditching, analysis of culvert sizing and addition of a cross-culvert.
- Plan 309: roadside ditching and cross-culverts.

Ms. Murphy asked if this was because of all the recent rains.

Ms. Murray, environmental inspector on the project, stated no, this is from the winter and spring runoff.

Mr. Valleau added that DEP noticed that the corrective work has held up really well to the recent rains.

Mr. Smith asked if this was standard with projects this size to have all these minor amendments.

Mr. Valleau replied yes, the permits give them the flexibility for these changes and added that you don't know what is going to happen until the trees are cut. He then continued with the plan changes.

- 311: ditching, drainage and addition of a culvert.
- 312: roadside ditching, middle ditch to intercept water, temporary erosion control measures to slow runoff until vegetation is established.

Ms. Murphy asked if the runoff is to go under the bales or erosion socks.

Mr. Valleau said the erosion socks and bales are only temporary for during construction and once the vegetation comes up they will be removed.

Mr. King asked if they have been grinding the stumps to make mulch for the project.

Mr. Valleau said yes and asked Ms. Murray about the supply.

Ms. Murray said they are getting down there but they are mixing it with other stuff to help it go further.

Mr. Valleau continued with the modifications.

- 314/316: roadside ditching, rip rap, good grass to catch rain.
- 313/320: NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service) asked to not plant screen trees in treatment area, and request from Erik Johnson to remove buffer trees from the east side of the farm.

Mr. Kaiser stated the Maine Historical Preservation Committee (MHPC) also said they didn't want the trees behind the farmhouses as it blocked their traditional views of the hills.

Mr. Valteau said they are leaving it to the Town and the State to sort out and see what the Planning Board thinks.

Ms. Murphy said she's getting used to the sight of the panels when driving by.

Mr. King asked about the size of the buffer trees and if they would really block the view.

Mr. Valteau said they are supposed to block the view when they become full-sized trees.

Mr. King said he would like to see the buffers stay.

Mr. Kaiser the NRCS has to be respected as they've provided financing to the Yorks with management plans and stipulations.

Mrs. McGraw stated she is vehemently opposed to reducing any screening - which they stressed having when the Board approved the project.

Mr. King said he didn't understand why they can't have them by the road instead of behind the farmhouses.

Mr. Jordan stated screening was a big part in gaining public acceptance of the project, and now that it's almost finished they want to get rid of all the trees. He added that if it was up to the residents, there would need to be a good reason not to have the buffers.

Mr. King asked if NextEra was aware of any of the NRCS agreements or any of the other buffer changes.

Mr. Valteau replied no, the Yorks didn't disclose these until everything was approved and started.

Mr. Smith stated the buffers are needed and they should keep as many as possible, even though the more you drive by it the more you get used to it - and the screening could end up affecting the efficiency of the panels.

Mr. Wright stated he stood at Mosher's Seafood across from the project and felt no matter how tall the trees are, you will still be able to see the panels. He added the Board should honor the NRCS agreement.

Ms. Murphy asked what the total percentage was of buffers that are being removed.

Mr. Valleau replied he isn't sure of the percentage but it is a significant proportion.

Ms. Murphy asked if he thought it was at least 50%.

Mr. Valleau said not quite but he will find out.

Mr. Kaiser added that the Stanwood Park buffer is not affected and is significant.

Mrs. McGraw said it is more about the principal of it - buffers should be added not deleted from this project.

Mr. King asked what would happen if the NRCS agreement isn't honored.

Mr. Valleau said he would have to go back to the farm and see what they need to do but isn't sure exactly what the process would be.

Mr. Jordan asked if all the trees in that area would need to be removed in order to satisfy the NRCS or would removing the 7-8 trees on the west end behind the manure pit be adequate.

Mr. Kaiser suggested compensating that removal by adding the same length of screen trees behind the church on the east side and making that screen longer.

Mrs. McGraw wondered why there weren't any buffers proposed for behind the church in the first place.

Mr. Jordan believes it is a good idea to swap and relocate for this buffer - but doesn't see a need to add more.

Mr. King said NextEra and TRC have been great to work with and asked - if the Board didn't make a decision at this meeting would it affect the progress of the project.

Mr. Valleau replied no, the planting of the buffers is at the very end of the project. He added they will do whatever the Board decides and modify the plans after finding out the details of the NRCS agreement.

Mr. King made a motion to table the review of the project modifications.

Mrs. McGraw seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative

Motion carried.

Mr. Smith asked if the project is on schedule.

Mr. Valleau replied yes.

Mr. Smith asked if the Board could have a tour of the site once it is complete.

Mr. Valleau said yes, of course, and added that NextEra would like to do that.

7. Other Business

The Board discussed Town Manager, Richard Davis' retirement.

Code Enforcement Updates:

- Alternate member Linda Brown has decided not to renew her membership.
- Building construction has significantly increased so far in 2021.

There being no further discussion or updates Mr. King called for a motion.

Mr. Jordan made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Ms. Murphy seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kate Foster.

Planning Board

Date