



PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Type:.....**Regular Meeting**
Date:.....**Tuesday, February 7, 2017**
Time:.....**6:00 p.m.**
Place:.....**Municipal Building Community Room**
Address:.....**43 Bombardier Road Milton, VT 05468**
Contact:.....**(802) 893-1186**
Website:.....**www.miltonvt.org**

MEETING MINUTES

1 **1. CALL TO ORDER**

2 The Chair called the meeting to order at approximately 6:10 p.m.
3

4 **2. ATTENDANCE**

5 **Members Present:** Lori Donna, Chair; Julie Rutz, Vice-Chair; Tony Micklus, Clerk; Henry Bonges;
6 John Lindsay (arrived approximately 6:13).

7 **Members Absent:** John Lindsay.

8 **Staff Present:** Jacob Hemmerick, Planning Director; Donna Barlow Casey, Town Manager.

9 **Public Present:** Liam Niu and Zach Sadowsky of Sybac Solar Photovoltaics.
10

11 **3. AGENDA REVIEW**

12 Staff requested that Work Plan review be added to the Agenda, before Item 7(B).
13

14 **4. PUBLIC FORUM**

15 None.
16

17 **5. STAFF UPDATES**

18 Staff gave a quick update on recent department activity. Staff stated that the Selectboard approved
19 an extension of Interim Zoning, but only until June 30, 2017. This means the Planning Commission
20 (PC) will need to finalize everything a little bit earlier than anticipated, but the group agreed it was
21 feasible with extra meetings. Barlow Casey shared some staffing news. A discussion focusing on
22 the TIF fund rounded out the staff updates. Various PC members offered suggestions and ideas,
23 which were discussed.
24

25 **6. OFFICIAL NOTICES**

26 No official notices.
27

28 **7. BUSINESS**

29 **7(A). Review of Checkerberry Solar Park Section 248 Filing with Public Service Board**

30 Introductions were made between the board and Liam Niu and Zach Sadowsky, representatives for
31 Sybac Solar Photovoltaics (hereafter referred to as "Sybac representative" or "representative." Staff
32 shared Sybac Solar's Public Service Board application, and shared thoughts on the proposal.
33 Sadowsky and Niu then gave an introduction to their project.
34

35 The Sybac representative mentioned that the project was being brought forward through the
36 "standard offer" procedure, adding that the price being offered is the lowest price in the history of
37 their standard offerings. This should provide great benefit and value to the ratepayer system. He
38 stated the company does its best to be good neighbors and take concerns in to consideration. This is
39 one reason the company likes to site its projects in areas zoned for Industrial uses, even though they
40 feel their use has less impact, especially in terms of noise.
41

1 The Sybac representative acknowledged that there is significant vegetation on the property that
2 would require clearing, and that they do intend to buildout the majority of the parcel to reach the
3 desired 2.2 megawatt space, but that a vegetative buffer will be established and maintained in order
4 to mitigate the impact to neighbors. He added that even if the vegetative buffer means less sunlight
5 on the solar panels, it would be acceptable. He stated that clearing would likely be done during the
6 months of November/December, when the least harm to the natural area and its wildlife would
7 occur. He stated a preliminary environmental assessment had been done, and that there were no
8 major red flags such as bat or deer nesting sites.
9

10 Regarding the ravine, he stated that they are looking at options that will allow them to stay as far
11 away from that part of the parcel as possible. They will most likely have to move panels around,
12 and possibly increase the wattage of some panels in order to use less of them, to keep north of the
13 ravine. He also mentioned they would likely be using advanced erosion measures to prevent
14 erosion in the ravine.
15

16 Bonges asked about screening along Route 7, emphasizing the importance of this very visible stretch
17 of roadway. The Sybac representative stated the solar panels don't start until a couple hundred feet
18 back from Route 7. He added that from a technical perspective, Sybac is more concerned about the
19 eastern and western side of the parcel for clearing, and most neighbors are on the south. He stated
20 they can maintain the southerly tree line. Additionally, the panels are oriented at 25-30 degrees, and
21 with the company's standard 10-foot privacy fencing, it's unlikely that there will be a glare issue; in
22 fact the southerly neighbors may not even be able to see the panels at all. The company has a tool
23 that they use with airports - where glare is an obvious concern -- to test glare. The Sybac
24 representative stated they will prioritize this testing once Lindsay pointed out that they are within a
25 10-mile radius of the Burlington Airport. [Milton also contains one, private air strip northwest of
26 this site.]
27

28 Donna asked if they plan to clear vegetation to the property line and then erect the fence; the Sybac
29 representative answered no and clarified that they plan to clear within the panel locations and
30 footprint, and that a vegetative buffer would be left up outside the fence.
31

32 Bonges inquired about decommissioning. The representatives replied that the Public Service Board
33 has specific requirements for decommissioning this type of site that will be met.
34

35 Lindsay asked if Sybac had any plans for a possible second use below the solar panels, for example:
36 planting rare native species, or pasturing animals (such as goats). The representatives stated they
37 were open to it, but haven't done it in the past. They added that, being a solar company, they are
38 obviously concerned with sustainability and are therefore open to the possibility.
39

40 Bonges asked if the energy would be sold to Green Mountain Power (GMP). The Sybac
41 representative replied that Vermont Electric Power Producers, Inc. (VEPPI) administers the
42 Standard Offering program, and ultimately about 80% of the power would likely be purchased by
43 GMP.
44

45 Donna inquired about the project's timeline. The representative stated that permitting alone could
46 take place over the remainder of 2017. Their Certificate of Public Good (CPG) could potentially be
47 awarded at the end of 2017. Once the CPG is obtained, clearing could begin, with construction
48 following in spring of 2018.
49

1 Bonges asked if workers would be brought in from out of state; the representatives replied that some
2 management would need to be brought in, but local labor would be utilized. They also hope to have
3 a local team on hand for repairs and ongoing maintenance as needed.
4

5 Discussion about access roads and connectivity commenced. The representatives stated that they
6 are open to looking at the feasibility of moving their proposed curb cut (for alignment with Forbes
7 Road) and potentially paving their access road and reserving space for a ROW between the platted
8 road on the adjoining lot to the north (approved as part of an industrial subdivision with a direct
9 connection to the subject lot) and Forbes Road. Hemmerick distributed a copy of the recorded
10 subdivision plat.
11

12 The group thanked the Sybac representatives for traveling to Vermont and the meeting concluded.
13

14 *Next Steps: Staff will draft a letter to the Public Service Board, providing comments based on the night's*
15 *discussion. The group identified their top three concerns: access, screening, and a secondary use.*
16

17 **7(B) Work Plan Review**

18 The Commissioners discussed various possible weekend meeting dates, and agreed on the following
19 plan:

- 20 • 2/21/17 Regular Meeting
- 21 • 2/25/17 Special Saturday meeting from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
- 22 • 2/28/17 Regular meeting
- 23 • 3/11/17 reserved for a Special meeting date, if needed.

24
25 **7(C). Unified Regulations: Section III**

26 TABLED by unanimous consent due to weather.
27

28 **8. MINUTES**

29 **8(A). January 3, 2016 and January 17, 2017**

30 TABLED by unanimous consent due to weather.
31

32 **9. ADJOURNMENT**

33 MOTION by Micklus to adjourn at approximately 7:40 p.m.; SECOND by Bonges. Unanimously
34 APPROVED.
35

36 Minutes approved by the Commission this _____ day of _____, 2016.
37

38
39 _____
40 Lori Donna, Chair

/kt

41 Draft filed with the Town Clerk this 10th day of February, 2017.
42

43 Filed with the Town Clerk this _____ day of _____, 2017.