



PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
TOWN OF FOSTER
Benjamin Eddy Building, 6 South Killingly Road
Foster RI 0225
Wednesday, August 16, 2017
7:00 p.m.

A. Call to Order

Mr. Carey called the Board to order at 7:07 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Board Members Present: Joseph Carey (Chair), Michael Carpenter, Richard Sparks, and Ronald Cervasio

Board Members Excused: Helen Hardy, Sergio Spaziano

Staff and Others Present: Cheryl Maynard (Planner) and Joanna Achille (Assistant Solicitor), Paul Allen, Karen Carlson, and Linda Ferri

C. Approval of Minutes

1) Mr. Cervasio moved, Mr. Carpenter seconded, to approve the minutes of June 21, 2017 as written. Motion passed 4-0.

D. Correspondence

None.

E. Board Member's Reports

1) Land Trust

Mr. Carpenter reported the Trust plans to clear the pond on Fran Grass's property and they are looking for assistance. Mr. Cervasio commented that he thinks the Land Trust has taken too much land off the tax rolls and asked that sentiment be conveyed to the Land Trust. Mr. Carpenter also said that the Trust continues to work on trails and create maps in an effort increase public use.

2) Conservation Commission

No report at this time.

F. Major Land Development

1) Update on Special Use Permit / Variance for Danielson Pike Solar, LLC. Ms. Maynard stated that the Zoning Board reviewed the Special Use Permit at their hearing in July. They approved the written decision at their August meeting so that step is now complete. It will be back on the Planning Board's agenda once the final checklist is complete. The applicant is still waiting on the required DEM approval.

G. Zoning

1) Continued Discussion regarding the Wind Turbine Ordinance.

Mr. Carey noted that Ms. Maynard had made a list of items for discussion and would like to focus first on discussion by the Board Members and then hear any comments/concerns from members of the public present at the meeting if they have a specific contribution to the topic at hand.

The Board began a discussion regarding noise levels. The Board reviewed suggestions from the the State guidelines regarding wind turbines, and discussed the pros and cons of various noise levels and receptor location where the noise level should be measured.

Mr. Carpenter suggested adopting the state standard, and discussed the challenges of alternative energy. Mr. Cervasio suggested using the 34 dB(A) 100 feet from the abutter's residences. Hannah Morini informed the Board that a 34 dB(A) would mean a turbine would need to be three miles from a residence, perhaps preventing any major turbine from being built in Foster.

Linda Ferri, of 6109 Flat River Road, Greene, RI was recognized by the Board and spoke about her experiences with noise living near the Coventry wind turbines. Ms. Ferri emphasized the importance of siting the large turbines, suggesting they are placed far from residences and on previously cleared land like landfills, parking lots or other areas where forest does not need to be clear cut. She informed the Board that the turbines in Coventry have altered the peaceful nature of her property including, and communicated her belief that the area wildlife has been driven away, including wolves and owls.

Karen Carlson, 422 Waterman Hill Road, Greene, RI was also recognized by the Board to discuss the noise and visual aspects of the Coventry wind turbines on property in the area of the turbines. Ms. Carlson indicated the noise and shadow flicker is damaging to the peaceful nature of her property and others, and if you stand under a wind turbine you may not hear it but a mile or so away is where the sound disturbances can surface.

Mr. Cervasio described the difficulties of property owners that want to stay on their land but are unable due to costs. Renewable energy uses on their property provides an acceptable use that would be cost effective and allow them to remain in Foster.

The Board agreed to keep the 34 dB(A) level at the property line in the draft ordinance for the time being. The Board addressed several proposed edits to sections of the draft ordinance under the major wind turbine section.

Item 13 *Security* was discussed regarding the fence height surrounding the perimeter of the turbine base/equipment pad area. A majority of the Board agreed fence height should be changed from 9 feet to 6 feet in height in the working draft ordinance. The condition that any tower climbing apparatus should be at least 12 feet off the ground and an anti-climb device shall be installed on the tower was supported by the Board but would probably be more relevant in the minor wind turbine section.

Item 15 *Signage*- The Board agreed to insert language stating the additional signage may be required to address any possible safety needs.

Item 16 *Lighting*- Dark Sky compliant lighting specifications, including downward facing lights should be included under this item.

Item 17 *Abandonment or Decommissioning*- Amend two typos.

Item 18 *Complaint Resolution*- Board was concerned about the Town's and Turbine Owner's responsibilities and abilities to address complaints legally. The Board asked Ms. Achille (town solicitor) and Ms. Maynard (town planner) to look into this issue more thoroughly.

Item 5 *Environmental Impact*- Could be separated into two items- (5) Environmental Impact and (6) Density to better define that only one turbine would be allowed per lot.

Item 7 *Shadow Flicker*- Amend to say "and shall not fall within 100 feet from an existing residential property." In addition, Mr. Cervasio requested that Ms. Maynard check and verify distance of shadow flicker requirement. He remembers a greater than 100 feet distance was recommended on the north side of the wind turbine.

An overlay district identifying possible siting options may be considered, but land use maps need to be updated and generated. Ms. Maynard will integrate the comments made into the working draft ordinance for a future Planning Board meeting, and continue to research wind turbine ordinances from towns with similar characteristics.

H. Comprehensive Plan Update

Ms. Maynard said review and comments are ongoing. Planning Department is currently reaching out to DPW, EMS, Police, Tax Assessor, Finance, Human Resources, school, etc. An in-house review of the draft provided by Mason & Assoc. continues. A meeting is planned for next week to look at in-house mapping capability we will move forward from there for completing them in-house or doing an RFP for maps for the Comprehensive Plan and town-wide GIS. I will be consulting the Town Council for guidance in September.

Mr. Sparks stated that his daughter is a GIS specialist and asked if there was interest in her helping. The response was positive.

Mr. Carey noted that Linda Tibbetts, Foster Land Trust, had some comments she wished to relay to the Planner.

I. Future Agenda Items

Mr. Carey stated at Mr. Cervasio's request that berms for screening purposes could be added as a topic for further discussion at an upcoming Planning Board meeting.

K. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn. All in favor.
Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Submitted by,

Joseph Carey, Chair