

Winhall Planning Commission
Bondville, Vermont 05340
“Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, August 5, 2014”

PRESENT: Marcel Gisquet, Tony DeFrancesco, Lucia Wing, Jerry Driscoll, Pat Glabach, Thom McMahon

ABSENT: Mark Eichhorn

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Becky Coleman Smith, Josh Wiley, Audrey Campbell

CALL TO ORDER: Gisquet called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM at the Town Hall in Winhall.

APPROVAL OF PAST MEETING MINUTES:

After review, the Planning Commission approved the meeting minutes of July 15, 2014 as amended; *motion by DeFrancesco; seconded by Driscoll; unanimous.*

PUBLIC COMMENTS: (None)

SOLAR FARM: DISCUSSION:

Gisquet opened the discussion by giving background information relative to recent interest in developing a solar farm on a 20 acre site owned by Frank Pinto and Charles Kintzing. Gleason Hill Road (off Route 30) was the proposed access to the solar farm; discussion followed about individuals' right(s) to use the access. Gleason Hill had been thrown up by the Town in 1931. Gisquet reported he had contacted the Town attorney for his opinion relative to Winhall's position during the permit process; the attorney stated that generating electricity did not come under the jurisdiction of the Town but lay with the Vermont Public Service Board. The Town could apply for party status and the only Town document that had any relevance was the Winhall Town Plan which supported, where appropriate, renewable energy resources. The developer would have to notify the Town forty-five (45) days before they submitted their application to the Public Service Board. After notice, the Town could request the applicant to hold an informational hearing although they were not obligated to. The Agency of Natural Resources had limited jurisdiction. Josh Wiley, representing the proposed solar farm project, answered questions about the solar farm relative to its size, power & power storage; wildlife, local, snow, visual, and industrial impacts; improvements to Gleason Hill Road; frequency of traffic on Gleason Hill Road which was insignificant; and installing a gate to discourage traffic that should not be on the road. Other discussion included perimeter fencing; amount of power generated; income from the solar panels remaining in Vermont versus going out of state; net metering; and life span, technical aspects, and maintenance of the solar panels. The Planning Commission and members of the public in attendance generally supported the solar farm project, felt it was part of the future, and was more palatable than wind energy.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- 1) The Planning Commission would hold its “organizational meeting” at the next meeting scheduled for August 19, 2014.

- 2) The Planning Commission discussed the “open meeting law changes” effective July 1, 2014 and potential impacts on towns in Vermont.

ZONING DISTRICT CHANGES: CONTINUED:

Next the Planning Commission began discussion of the Dorset Zoning Ordinance re: Winhall zoning district changes. First they reviewed permitted uses in Dorset's A&RR districts; most of the permitted

uses also were part of the Winhall Zoning Ordinance; discussion followed about adding farm stands as a home occupation in Winhall. The WPC then reviewed conditional uses in the A&RR districts which included clubs, kennels, riding facilities, camps, tourist homes, golf courses, etc.; most of these also existed in the Winhall Zoning Regulations as conditional uses. The WPC also discussed how Dorset had organized its commercial and industrial districts tiers- CI-1 and CI-2 and uses within those districts; discussion followed relative to bulk fuel storage. The WPC liked the information on site plan reviews but overall felt the Dorset Zoning Ordinance did not add much in way of insight(s).

MAIL & CORRESPONDENCE:

Project Review Sheet:

The Planning Commission received a copy of a Project Review Sheet from the State to replace the existing Winhall Town Garage damaged by fire with a new 8 bay structure. No Act 250 permit was required; water and sewer permits previously existed.

As there was no other business, the Planning Commission adjourned the meeting.

Lucia Wing, Secretary,
Winhall Planning Commission

For the Planning Commission

Date