

**Town of Bennington
Planning Commission**

Monday, June 6, 2016

5:00 p.m.

Town of Bennington Fire Facility

126 River Street

Bennington, Vermont 05201

MINUTES

Members Present: Charles Copp, Barry Horst, Nick Lasoff, Ken Sweirad. Mike McDonnough

Also Present: Dan Monks, Joe Krawczyk, Rick Carroll, Derek Moretz, Pamela Corkey, Rob Sperber, Meghan Randall, Brad Wilson

Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

Review of revised plan for solar array proposed for parcel located east of North Bennington Road and west of Route 7A (behind Home Depot and Carbone Auto Dealerships): Brad Wilson presented the revised plan. Brad Wilson stated that the revised solar array will only be placed on the portion of the land located within the Industrial zoning district. He noted that the plan is very preliminary. He requested that the Planning Commission make a determination regarding whether or not the area is a “Preferred Area” for solar arrays as defined in the Town Plan, and he requested that the Planning Commission support a waiver of setbacks in certain areas that are not adjacent to residential properties. The Planning Commission discussed, at length, the revised plan and members of the public provided comment. Issues discussed included screening, particularly from the Publyk House, construction access, the need for a visual impact analysis, the possibility of the PSB allowing a combined access to the projects, and stormwater impacts. The Planning Commission will deliberate at its next meeting and provide written comments to the applicant.

Initial review of plan for solar array proposed for parcel owned by the Estate of Henry Randall located off of Murphy Road. Derek Moretz presented the plan. The Planning Commission discussed the proposal at length and the property owners presented their motivation for the project.

The Planning Commission noted that insufficient information was submitted for it to make a final determination regarding compliance with the Bennington Town Plan and the Bennington Screening of Solar Facilities Ordinance, but stated preliminary concerns described below. The Planning Commission understands that additional information will be provided to the Town when an application is submitted to the Public Service Board.

Additional information necessary for the Planning Commission to make a final determination regarding compliance include the following:

- # Identification on the project plans of all prime and statewide importance agricultural soils.
- # Screening plan for the project.
- # A narrative describing how the proposed project complies with the Bennington Town Plan and the Town's Screening of Solar Facilities Ordinance.

After a review of the information provided, the Planning Commission had the following concerns and observations:

- # The Town's Solar Ordinance requires that solar facilities be screened by a year round visual screen from public streets, scenic viewpoints and adjacent properties. It is unclear whether the existing hedgerows provide sufficient screening to meet this requirement. Visibility from Bennington College was noted as a specific concern. Additional plantings may be needed to comply with the Solar Ordinance.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

Daniel W. Monks
Planning Director