

Norton Planning Board Minutes of Meeting
For
December 2, 2014

Call to Order

The December 2, 2014, meeting of the Norton Planning Board, held in the first floor Selectmen's Conference Room, was called to order at 7:15 P.M., by Mr. David Miller, Vice-Chairman. Members Present: Mr. David Miller, Vice-Chair; Mr. Edward T. Beatty, Jr.; Mr. Patrick Daly; and Mr. Joseph Fernandes. Absent: Mrs. Joanne Haracz, Chairman and Mr. Scott Nichols. Also present was Mr. Charles Gabriel, Town Planner.

Report of the Planning Board

Approval of Minutes

There were no Minutes reviewed/approved.

Report of the Town Planner

Mr. Gabriel noted Mr. Pasqualino is starting work again on Route 123 (storage facility) and the Town's engineer visited the site.

Diocese, Fall River, MA

Attorney for Diocese of Fall River was present and referenced plan drawn by “Rim Engineering Co., Inc., Mansfield, MA ,revised October 15, 2014 - Owner and Applicant: Roman Catholic Bishop of Fall River”.

Attorney noted the Town clerk indicated verbally there were no appeals filed.

Mr. Gabriel said both lots have frontage.

Attorney said variances were obtained already.

There were no comments or questions from audience when asked by Mr. Miller.

MOTION was made by Mr. Beatty to approve plan drawn by Rim Engineering Co., Inc., Mansfield, MA, revised October 15, 2014, Owner and Applicant: Roman Catholic Bishop of Fall River, 4 Corporation Sole, 450 Highland Avenue, Fall River, MA 02720. Second by Mr. Fernandes. Vote: Unanimous. MOTION CARRIES.

Norton Solar Farm-“Sunfield Solar”

Plan displayed to Planning Board: “Sunfield Solar – Norton Solar Farm - 1.3 mw solar Facility, 0, 20, & 36 Clapp Street, Norton, MA”

Mr. Brett Chapman of Sunfield Solar was present and stated he addressed previous concerns with project. A Powerpoint presentation was presented to Planning Board.

VHB engineer described proposed solar farm: “Proposed Solar Farm, Norton, MA” and displayed an aerial exhibit: “Site Plan Exhibit”. He said this plan will be engineered to everyone’s satisfaction.

Mr. Miller asked who defines abutters?

Mr. Chapman responded they use the certified list.

Resident of 37 Clapp Street, Bruce Cummings, thanked the Planning Board and residents. He noted Mr. Chapman had previously mentioned there were sites in the communities of Palmer and Hubbardston, Massachusetts. He took info over last seven days and had photographs of these sites. The Hubbardston project is not visible.

Mr. Chapman stated he objected to those photographs as it was absolutely not related to this project.

Mr. Chapman said this project is totally different than previous projects.

Mr. Cummings said Dept. of Energy in March 2012 encouraged commercial and industrial space for these projects before putting in a residential area. He was here this evening to bring facts/info.

Mr. Cummings said he is an advocate for clean energy and provided Mr. Miller the documentation for the file.

Mr. Cummings said he would like to volunteer his time to help the Planning Board/Town. From his own property he will see the panels of this solar farm. His neighbor, Mr. Alves, took his house off the real estate market as he was receiving offers much below expectations.

Mr. Cummings said to improve this project, the footprint would need to be reduced to improve screening and visual issues. If he did not see this project he would be in favor of it.

Resident of 14 Clapp Street had many concerns and brought some photographs also. She noted there was one project in New Bedford and it produced a glare and distributed photographs. She was concerned she will see it from her house. The trees would need to be much higher than the ones they are currently proposing. Her children will also be playing back there in that location. She felt they were not addressing the elevations. She stated Mr. Chapman called abutters "terrorists" at their last meeting with him. She was offended and insulted. She said they are being bullied and she believed this company is not honest. Wheaton said previously they would have a 5-10% reduction in savings, however, it was noted in newspaper their savings would be 30%. She believed they were rushing this project through for tax benefits. She is also concerned about the high voltage. This is not about "green"; it is about "greed". If they really want it to be "green" they would shrink it.

Mr. Chapman stated he has listened to the residents multiple times and has spent a lot of money and "bent over backwards" for residents.

Resident of 14 Clapp Street stated they don't discuss elevations; he personally took some elevations and encouraged Planning Board to do the same. He used three sources including "Draft Logic-Google Maps". He said any type of plantings will not be effective. Elevations were discussed.

Engineer said the trees being proposed are 6'-7' height and some 8'-12' with mature height being at 20'.

Mr. Chapman stated he had photo simulations he would like to present (Powerpoint presentation of photo simulations were provided to Planning Board).

Mr. Daley asked what the cost would be of a 20' tree?

Mr. Chapman responded it would cost 4 times as much and spending \$1M on trees would not be feasible.

Mr. Chapman said this would be their final attempt, so would prefer to get a vote this evening if possible. They have gone as far as they can go.

Mr. Miller said he was not comfortable closing Public Hearing without the Chairman, Mrs. Haracz, reviewing this meeting. It would also need a five member affirmative vote.

Mr. Miller said it appears they have made great strides in addressing many concerns and at the ground-level standpoint it makes sense. The concern of seeing out a second floor window, in his mind, is a misperception of what is able to be seen.

Mr. Chapman said "from ground" is his obligation. From a second floor window, this project will be seen.

Mr. Daley said Mr. Chapman would be able to find out elevations of first floor.

A resident of 32 Clapp Street said they were surrounded by this project and the proposed tree height won't hide it. He has been trying to sell his house and was receiving very low offers. He said the Town of Holliston said "no" to a similar project. This does not belong in a residential neighborhood; putting dormitories at that site would be fine.

Zoning was discussed.

Resident of 32 Clapp Street said an industrial power plant does not belong in the center of Norton. This belongs in an industrial area, open space, a landfill, etc.

Resident of 39 Clapp Street stated he was raised in Norton and recently purchased his house and if he knew a solar panel farm was going to be built he would not have purchased it. He is planning on having children and this farm is a concern. He was asking for Planning Board's consideration.

Mr. Miller asked for clarification on Conservation Commission request that fence be lifted off ground?

The engineer replied yes, that was a request by Conservation Commission to lift fence off ground six inches.

Mr. Chapman said they will get Planning Board a revised set of plans delineating everything.

After discussion, Mr. Chapman said if residents would like to assist with the elevation issue, they can take photos from the second floor and one photo from first floor. He said the residents should have their email information.

Mr. Miller said he will not be at the next meeting of December 16.

Mr. Chapman said they will get the plans to the Planning Board electronically.

Members of audience said it would be helpful if the VHB engineer could come out and evaluate from the second floor.

Mr. Fernandes encouraged Mr. Chapman to consider raising the height of some critical path trees.

MOTION was made by Mr. Burgess to continue this Hearing to Dec. 16, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. Second by Mr. Daly. Vote: Unanimous. MOTION CARRIES.

Report of Planning Board:

It was noted the storage facility on Route 123 appears to be progressing along well.

Planning Board Business and Policies

The next scheduled Planning Board meetings for 2015 to be January 6 and 20; and February 3 and 17.

Bills and Warrants

MOTION was made by Mr. Beatty to approve Bills and Warrants in the amount of \$1820.27. Second by Mr. Daly. Vote: Unanimous. MOTION CARRIES.

Site Plan Approval – Norton Water Dept.

Two engineers of Weston & Sampson were present.

Presented was: "Preliminary Plan 11/7/14".

Mr. James Pearson, Project Engineer of Wesson and Sampson, explained. They are clearing of 2 ½ acres and pipeline to be built. It will be a 16" pipe coming out from plant. There will be two tanks (60,000 gallons each). Discussion ensued.

There will be no odor from manganese. Screening was discussed. The fence will be 6' in height.

Mr. Gabriel asked if abutters were aware of this?

It was noted through Conservation Commission, abutters should have been notified.

They have had two meetings with Conservation Commission thus far. The next meeting with them will be December 15, 2014.

Mr. Gabriel said there appears to be some ambiguity whether a special permit was needed and he decided no special permit necessary, but when he saw how close to abutters' property this was, he rethought this decision. He assumed Conservation Commission will notify all abutters as necessary because there is that ambiguity and because they are clearing a lot of land.

It was noted this plant is being placed at the furthest point.

It was noted floor drains onsite to go into onsite septic system.

It was noted there will be four chemicals on site.

MOTION was made by Mr. Burgess to approve Site Plan for Water Treatment Plant on Plain Street, Norton, MA. Second by Mr. Beatty. Vote: Unanimous. MOTION CARRIES.

Adjournment

MOTION was made by Mr. Beatty to Adjourn at 9:33 P.M. Second by Mr. Burgess. Vote: Unanimous. MOTION CARRIES.

Respectfully Submitted:

Janet A. Sweeney
Planning Board – Recording Secretary

Minutes Approved by Committee on: _____
(Date)

Signature:

Chairman: _____

Documents Reviewed/Distributed at Planning Board Meeting of December 2, 2014

Plan drawn by “Rim Engineering Co., Inc., Mansfield, MA , revised October 15, 2014 - Owner and Applicant: Roman Catholic Bishop of Fall River”

Plans Presented: “Sunfield Solar – Norton Solar Farm - 1.3 mw solar Facility, 0, 20, & 36 Clapp Street, Norton, MA”; “Aerial Site Plan Exhibit”; and “Proposed Solar Farm, Norton, MA”

Powerpoint Presentation: “Sunfield Solar – Norton Solar Farm” and Powerpoint presentation of photo simulations

Site Plan Approval – Norton Water Dept “Preliminary Plan 11/7/14”