



Raymond Planning Board
 Raymond Broadcast Studio
 423 Webbs Mills Road
Minutes
HYBRID MEETING & WORKSHOP
Wednesday December 13, 2023
 7:00 PM

Present: Chair Robert O'Neill, Vice-Chair Edward Kranich, Greg Foster, Kevin Woodbrey, Mark Childs

Absent: Mike Richman

Staff: CEO Alex Sirois, Contract Town Planner Jim Seymour, Fire Inspector Wayne Jones and Recording Secretary/Administrative Assistant Sandy Fredricks

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll was called and a quorum was declared.

Bob read the usual opening statement into the record along with reading of the Agenda items.

Approval of Minutes:

Greg moved to approve Minutes of November 8, 2023 as written.

Ed seconded.

Any discussion? None.

All in favor? 5 yes/0 no/0 abstain

NEW BUSINESS

PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN REVIEW

Applicant	Allen Solar, LLC
Location	Map: 004 Lot: 68 & 68A Zone RR & LRR1 Roosevelt Trail
Description	Site Plan – 996 kWac Ground Mounted Solar Power Generation Facility

Greg moved to accept the Allen Solar application.

Ed seconded.

Any discussion? None.

All in favor? 5 yes/0 no/0 abstain

Jim gave a summation of the application stating the property is in an RR and LRR zone.

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Dave Fowler introduced himself and stated he is the applicant but will let Kirk do the presentation. He continued that he was there to answer any questions.

Kirk addressed the Board and stated that access to the project will be through the Raymond Marina. The solar panel area will be surrounded by a fence. There will be an access gate. They have included access to each of the soil filters for maintenance. There will be a small equipment pad located by the hammerhead and will include an inverter and transformer. He continued that they have added a fire lane, a 10,000-gallon fire cistern and it is connected to a dry standpipe system. Designed to minimize any impact on the resources. Additionally, DEP approval is required as well as an NRPA permit. Kirk explained this is a very small solar project, about one-quarter (1/4) the size of most solar developments.

Bob opened public comment.

Dave Hall, 32 Pulpit Rock Road addressed the Board stating he provided the Board with a photo of a stream located on his property that comes from the wetlands; the water goes down into Thomas Pond and Sebago Lake. His concerns are if there is fire suppression that it will contaminate their wells and the waterways. He stated he feels this is the wrong project for the land. He continued that the neighbors have met a few times and explained how the water travels from the wetlands.

Bob Wallace read a prepared statement of concerns. The watershed where this is located is listed as a watershed most at risk. He further stated this project seems to be changing the zone to Commercial or Industrial. Additionally, he stated that a Site Plan should stabilize and improve the area and shall not impact neighbors' properties. He also stated that the Board can ask for a Visual Assessment. He further stated that there was no discussion regarding glare from the panels. He cited a variety of Ordinance items he felt were relevant. He asked if there was a noise and light pollution study done; they are also concerned about electrical flares. He is concerned about wildlife.

Steve Danzig, 38 Pulpit Rock Road addressed the Board. He stated that solar farms belong in a large open space; this project is between residential homes. He read information from real estate expert's opinion on solar projects. He continued that this project is on uneven terrain, in the woods, 180' from homes with no way to conceal from their view. He read statistics he found regarding distances from solar projects to homes. He continued to speak of a game trail that the deer have now relocated through his yard. He continued to cite excerpts of research he found. He stated that he is very concerned about the property values declining. The Board inquired if they found anything in their research that did not lower property values.

Jennifer Danzig spoke of her extensive research and would like to address a few key issues. She is concerned about the location to homes and stated it is 180' from her home; concerned for the safety of people, wildlife and the environment. She further

stated that the Board needed to follow the Comprehensive Plan. Bob informed that the Board follows the Town Ordinances not the Comp Plan. The Comp Plan is a long-term plan which guides the establishment of ordinances. Jennifer continued that solar projects should be 1.2 miles from any home; she continued by outlining health issues, concerns about electromagnetic fields, danger to birds and causing solar fires. If chemicals are used to extinguish a fire, those would be an environmental problem. She further stated that the solar project creates noise and glare issues. Bob informed they are not clearing the buffer Jennifer also stated concerns about damages to televisions and other electronics, contamination and pollutants in the runoff, has concerns about the runoff because the terrain is choppy and water contamination doesn't stop when construction ends. Bob asked Mr. Wallace to return to the podium. He and Mr. Wallace discussed the various Ordinance items cited and how they apply to this project.

Bob closed public comment.

Bob stated this is not being built in an Industrial area, it is proposed to be built as an allowed use in the zone and it does not change the zoning. He continued that runoff is looked at by this Board and DEP. As Kirk stated, the water is treated before it leaves the property. Noise is a concern; buffer as presented by the applicant designates the requirements for construction. This Board cannot change whether a vernal pool is significant, but you can get an outside opinion. Jim pointed out that the only time a vernal pool can be assessed is in Spring. Jim also informed that 25% of the vernal pool buffer can be disturbed with a permit. That is handled through the DEP process.

Glare is a concern and visibility from properties is discussed among the Board.

Dave Fowler gave his background to the Board and public present. He stated there is no conclusive evidence of impact on people or environment. He has no information on impact either. Dave continued that he has never had a violation from DEP. He will let Kirk answer questions about DEP. He is also happy to talk about the type of cistern. He stated the fencing is supposed to be 6" from the ground, but he is happy to have it meet the ground to protect neighbors' pets.

Dave further stated that Wayne is the most thorough Fire Safety Officer in the State. Noise, the inverters don't create noise other than a humming as they adjust and this is at an acceptable level. He also wanted to inform everyone that the cutting that took place on the property was not him, it was the landowner, Scott Allen. Dave reverted to the fencing issue stating that putting fabric on the fence may help reduce the noise. He stated regarding the visual aspect, he can't totally hide it.

Bob addressed the question Mike had about the berm that could support a natural buffer. Dave asked Kirk if they are at the maximum for the vernal pool. Kirk stated they have a little room on it.

Ed stated that the public concern about safety is understood, however, they should have no concern for electrical hazards from this type of project.

Dave stated they are drilling pilons. They will be set by screw augers 8" – 12" deep.

Kevin stated his biggest concern is the visual buffer and asked if we can't suggest more of a berm with some conifer trees to reduce the visual impact. Jim stated going back to the Solar Ordinance, we can require more detail as to the visual impact. Jim reads from §300-10.6 O. (4) regarding buffers. He further stated, to Kevin's point, there are some deficits in the visual screening.

The Board next addressed the NRPA-PBR for the cutting of the canopy for the critical terrestrial habitat. Kirk advised they are filing a full Stormwater Permit Application. They have to meet the general standards which is treatment of 95% of the impervious area and 85% of the developed area. He continued that they also had to file with the Army Corp of Engineers. The solar panels themselves do not count as impervious. Kevin inquired since it is part of the Ordinance, could we vote to require a visual impact statement. The Board discussed the issue with no positive outcome. Dave stated he is open to compromise.

Bob had a discussion with Alex regarding the creation of the Solar Ordinance, did we anticipate that a project would go across a property line and he believed if we don't move toward increasing the buffer, we are putting a hardship on abutters. Alex advised we don't have a buffer requirement in the Solar Ordinance, but we do have a setback requirement. Jim stated we could have a different requirement for the residential zone.

Kirk stated early on he and Dave met with Alex and Jim. There is room to the West, outside of the Shoreland zone. He inquired if they could utilize part of the wetland to move away from the residences. He was informed that they could not use part of the wetland; that is a requirement the Board is unable to waive.

Jim stated they also need State and Federal permits and the Board typically doesn't move things forward without those approvals.

Wayne inquired if everyone received the most recent Memo. Bob asked for an explanation of the piping you want surrounding the property. Wayne explained they are using a dry standpipe system and how it works.

Bob addressed Dave stating he would like to give him some guidance going forward. He is very hesitant to speak for the Board, although the Board might be concerned about the buffer and increasing the buffer density. He continued he just doesn't want a higher fence, we want a natural buffer.

Dave stated they will be back after they get approvals from DEP and Army Corp on

Engineers. Bob stated it may behoove them to come back before then to be sure modifications don't change those applications.

Ed moved to table the Allen Solar application.

Mark seconded.

Any discussion? None.

All in favor? 5 yes/0 no/0 abstain

Ordinance Workshop:

Alex addressed the Board and stated the review will not take long. He gives a quick update as follow:

Tiny Homes: skip for now

Accessory Dwelling Units: would like to have the attorney go through and make sure we are still in compliance with this. He stated he spoke to the SLZ Officer for our part of the State. In SLZ you need double the land. He asked the State if they would be in support of 250' from the water, then you wouldn't need to have two (2) times the property and frontage. He continued he had our GIS company review lots in SLZ to see how many could have an accessory unit currently and how many would be permitted if they did not require twice the land. Today there are twenty (20) lots that meet the requirements; if changed, there would be around eighty (80) properties. He stated there is a lot of interest in this change. Also, we need to determine a size for Accessory Dwelling Units, we currently say 700 sq. ft. We have no definition in our Ordinance for "Living Space"; we should try to define that. He stated that living space should be floor space.

Alex stated we have two (2) more requests for consideration. Derek owns the lots directly across from the boat launch; it goes up to Main Street. What he is asking for is there are a few portions that are in LRR2 zone and he would like to move that back to 600' and change that back to Village zone. A few owners on that side of the street had asked for that map amendment to change that.

He spoke with the new owners of White Pines on 302 who would like the property considered Residential uses in the Commercial zone. They would like to use the property for multi-family Residential uses in a Commercial Zone. There would be a lot of things to review.

Also need to look at a density bonus for conservation cluster type developments if they are insistent to have affordable housing.

We will need to add a buffer requirement to the Solar Ordinance.

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Bob moved to adjourn.

Ed seconded.

Any discussion? None.

All in favor? 5 yes/0 no/0 abstain