



SELECT BOARD Minutes

February 13, 2024

5:30pm – Regular Meeting

At Broadcast Studio &
Via Zoom & on YouTube

Resolution: We, the Raymond Select Board, recognize our individual and collective responsibilities as leaders and representatives of our community. To this end, we pledge to conduct ourselves in a manner befitting these roles and duties. We pledge and encourage others to "Be the Influence" and to recognize that decisions matter.

Select Board members in attendance: Joe Bruno – Chair, Rolf Olsen – Vice Chair, Teresa Sadak, Samuel Gifford, Derek Ray

Town Staff in attendance:

Nathan White – Public Works Director
Bruce Tupper – Fire Chief
Wayne Jones – Fire Inspector
John Facella – Fire Inspector
Edward Kranich – Planning Board Vice Chair
Sue Look – Town Manager & Town Clerk

1) **Call regular meeting to order** by Chair Bruno at 5:30pm

2) **Minutes of previous meetings**

a) January 9, 2024

Motion to approve as presented by Select Olsen. Seconded by Select Sadak.

Unanimously approved

3) **New Business**

a) Consideration of Renewing A La Mexicana's Liquor License – Jose Chavez, owner

Motion to approve conditioned upon successful completion of Fire Alarm System Inspection Maintenance Testing in April by Select Olsen. Seconded by Select Sadak

Unanimously approved

b) Consideration of Planning Board Appointment – Sue Look, Town Manager

The Planning Board voted at their January meeting to put forward Steven Clark.

Motion to appoint Steven Clark to the Planning Board with a term ending June 30, 2027 by Select Sadak. Seconded by Select Olsen & Ray.

Unanimously Approved

* Taken out of order

Steven Clerk was sworn in by Town Manager and Clerk Look.

c) Update of Raymond Village Library Gifts and Grants – Richard Dowe, Librarian

Library Director Dowe spoke to the new hours and the Town responding well to the change. Friends of Raymond Village Library have been very generous. They received new tables and chairs as well as new library cards and other supplies.

Partnering with Bridgton Public Library for tech classes

Applied for a \$10k grant to revamp the ramp and front entrance of the library.

Chair Bruno thanked him and told him how great of job he is doing.

d) * Update on Status of Proposed Solar Array and Citizen's Request for a Moratorium
– Alex Sirois, CEO

Letter from Laurie Wallace (who could not attend):

The town of Raymond has an opportunity to rethink and reinforce its current solar ordinance so that it is in line with the current and the proposed Comprehensive Plans.

In the January 26 issue of The Windham Eagle, an update was provided on the 2024 Comprehensive Plan. The article states “preliminary results show that residents love the sense of community, natural resources, and proximity to amenities. Citizens are concerned that too much development could pose a threat to the quality of life. Additional concerns raised were traffic on Route 302 and environmental impacts on water quality.”

The Planning Board is evaluating Allen Solar, the proposed solar farm sited on wetlands between Route 302 and Thomas Pond, bordering private residences. At the December Planning Board meeting, several members of the Board indicated that the current solar ordinance is not as robust as it should be. There is no specific language regarding protection of neighboring homes. In fact, there is no differentiation between a residential solar array and a commercial one.

This is a request for the town of Raymond to initiate a 180-day moratorium on commercial, for-profit solar farms, including the current proposal. This will allow the town to rework the existing solar ordinance so that it protects private residences from land use that will greatly diminish the experience of living on and near Raymond's lakes. There is precedence for a moratorium; among other small towns whose personalities are tied to their natural environment, Bridgton, Rangeley, and Phippsburg have each enacted moratoriums for commercial solar arrays, as have many others. Additionally, many small towns have developed significantly more complex ordinances, particularly in response to commercial solar arrays projects. Many are based on size of the project, such as Readfield, Hancock and Fryeburg. Moscow has banned commercial arrays completely.

Without requiring commercial solar array projects to abide by more stringent regulations, town officials risk violating its Comprehensive plan and failing to protect Raymond's character.

CEO Sirois and PB Vice Chair Kranich discussed some of the Allen Solar site plans. The plan has not yet been approved by the Planning Board. A moratorium could put the plan on hold until the ordinance could be amended.

Select Board Sadak discussed how the residents should be attending the Planning

* Taken out of order

Board meeting to discuss their concerns and that the Select Board isn't necessarily the correct path.

CEO Sirois mentioned the next PB meeting is a workshop on ordinances and the deficiencies in the solar ordinance will be addressed that could change the project scope for Allen Solar.

Select Sadak mentioned sending CEO Sirois the residents' emails with all the concerns.

Resident Jennifer Danzig asked for clarification on the process of changing the ordinance and what that means for the residents who object.

Chairman Bruno explained that there would be a Public Hearing and if they decided they needed a moratorium on the solar ordinance until the ordinance is re-written and voted on in June, they could do that.

Citizen Danzig also asked for clarification on a citizen initiative. Chairman Bruno indicated its best to have an attorney write an ordinance. Resident Danzig also asked what her landowner rights are regarding a neighbor changing her landscape with their project. Select Sadak clarified that the landowner who is asking for solar also has rights and Chairman Bruno encouraged her to get involved with the Planning Board. Resident Danzig indicated she was told at the December PB meeting that DEP would be involved and doing site walks and handing out cards to abutters and taking their feedback. Mrs. Danzig contacted DEP who told her none of that would be happening because it's a permit issued by rule.

Resident Dave Hall spoke to his interpretation of the current ordinance deficiencies and that they are a densely populated neighborhood. Chairman Bruno explained again that they are aware of the ordinance deficiencies, and it will be rewritten in March. If the PB needs a moratorium for more time, they will ask the Select Board.

Resident Jeffrey Messer commented that the PB should also be aware of incoming battery farms. Also commented that the report left out a tributary on his land that flows into Thomas Pond. Chairman Bruno indicated that they have concerns as well about the solar farm but are trying to follow the correct process.

Resident of Pulpit Rock Rd, Isabella (minor) – expressed concern of the solar farm and the chemicals they would need to spray for fire prevention being too close to her honeybees and the damage it could bring to the ecosystem. Requesting the consideration of a moratorium.

Resident Alissa Messer – wanted to reiterate that she is not against solar but wants it to be done in a responsible way. Wants to slow the process down and really investigate and tap into the minds of the future on how to get the ordinance right.

James Bass attorney from Augusta on behalf of Robert and Laurie Wallace and Steven and Jennifer Danzig – wanted to make the statement that he believes the Select Board should be involved in making the decision and re-writing the ordinance instead of pushing it back to the Planning Board. He thinks it is the Select Boards duty to oversee them. He also highly suggests the moratorium on the ordinance.

Resident Jeff Dooley- expressing his concern for Thomas Pond and the effects the solar farm could have.

CEO Sirois – requests that anyone who has a suggested amendment to the current ordinance to please send it to CEO@raymondmaine.org by Friday, February 16th.

Resident Hall spoke again about ideas he had. Chair Bruno asked him to email Code

* Taken out of order

Enforcement.

Atty Bass stood up again to ask that in the interim will the Planning Board still consider the current application for Allen Solar, or will they hold until changes are made. PB Chair Kranich indicated that he could not speak for the entire Board, but they know there is enough feedback that they need to consider before making any decisions.

Resident Wallace – mentioned that this lot was purchased as a woodlot. There is a lot that could affect the environment if there was a fire etc. Wants the board to consider the environmental impacts.

Chair Bruno thanked everyone for coming out and giving their feedback.

e) Consideration of Changes to the Fire Protection Ordinance – Bruce Tupper, Fire Chief

Proposed changes to allow 2-hour fire rated separation walls to delineate area calculations for whether a building requires sprinklers.

Chair Bruno asked Chief Tupper where we are in rewriting the sprinkler ordinances. Chief Tupper and Fire Inspector Jones indicated that they added alternative solutions for fire walls and water supply tanks instead of sprinklers.

Chair Bruno asked about the potential new PW building needing to be sprinkled and Chief Tupper indicated he could not answer that because it would need to through the barrier free process and review at the State Fire Marshal's Office. Other buildings that size have made it through the process without needed sprinklers. Inspector Jones indicated that building code is over 5000sf require sprinkler systems, so they are trying to break it down into compartments with rated walls. The modifications they made to the ordinance allow this alternative in all buildings including 1 and 2 family structures. Exterior covered porches are still included in the square footage. If they are uncovered, they are not included. 3 or more family units fall into a different category and will still need to be sprinkled.

Chair Bruno asked about Building Code vs. Fire Code. Inspector Jones indicated that anything within the Fire Inspector ordinance they would review and inspect, and anything building code related is CEO.

PW Director White expressed that even with the ordinance updates the potential new PW building would require a \$200,000 water tank.

Chair Bruno questioned why we are going above and beyond what the State Fire Marshal's office requires. Select Sadak said we are trying to do a one size fits all ordinance for all buildings. Chief Tupper indicated that the water supply is a problem because of our rural location.

PW Director White asked about the fire pond that is 2500 feet away and wondered if that would count as a water supply.

Fire Inspector Jones indicated that we could apply for a modification for the building requirements. It's not specifically written in the ordinance today, but it is in the fire code. Select Sadak commented that she thought that is what we were doing with this discussion.

Chair Bruno instructed Chief Tupper and Fire Inspector Jones to come back next month with a rewrite to the ordinance that matches State guidelines and verbiage specific to commercial buildings in a rural zone.

* Taken out of order

4) Public Comment

None

5) Selectman Comment

None

6) Town Manager's Report and Communications

a) Confirm Dates for Upcoming Regular Meetings

- March 12, 2024
- April 4, 2024

b) Upcoming Budget Schedule

- February 21 – Budget submitted to Select Board & Budget-Finance Committee
- February 28 – 6:30pm – 1st Dept Head Budget Review
- February 29 – 6:30pm – 2nd Dept Head Budget Review
- March 12 – 7:30pm – Budget-Finance Committee with Select Board Workshop (after the regular Select Board Meeting)
- March 25 – 5:30pm – Select Board Warrant Article Review & Recommendations
- April 2 – 6:30pm – Budget-Finance Committee Budget Article Review & Recommendations
- April 4 – 5:30pm – Select Board Final Warrant Approval
- June 11 – 7am-8pm – Secret Ballot Referendum Vote at JSMS

Select Ray asked Town Manager Look to remind the Department Heads to do a breakdown comparison in their budgets so they can see year over year increases.

Town Manager Look reminded of the State Primary election on March 5th

7) * Executive Session(s)

a) Discussion of Personnel Matter with Attorney – pursuant to 1 MRSA §405 (6)(e)

Motion to move to Executive Session by Select Sadak. Seconded by Select Olsen.

Motion to come out of Executive Session by Select Olsen. Second by Select Ray

Unanimously Approved

8) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:21 by Select Chair Bruno. Seconded by Select Sadak.

Unanimously approved

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa McConkey, TM Admin.

* Taken out of order