

Pittsford Planning Commission Meeting

November 18, 2021

Board Members Present: Rick Conway, Mark Pape, Robb Spensely, Chuck Charbonneau, Donna Wilson

Others Present: Jeff Biasuzzi, Betsy Morgan

1. Call to order

A motion was made by Chuck Charbonneau and seconded by Mark Pape to authorize Rick Conway as Acting Chair of this evening's meeting in Mark Winslow's absence. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Donna Wilson, Alternate, served as an active member to make quorum.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Rick Conway.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

A motion was made by Chuck Charbonneau and seconded by Mark Pape to approve the agenda. **The motion passed unanimously.**

3. Approval of Minutes

. October 28, 2021 – Planning Commission Meeting

A motion was made by Robb Spensely and seconded by Mark Pape to approve the minutes of the October 28th meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

5. Solar Check List

This item is being drafted by Mike Norris.

A motion was made by Chuck Charbonneau and seconded by Mark Pape to postpone this agenda item to a subsequent meeting until Mr. Norris is present. **The motion passed unanimously.**

6. County Planning Commission Update

Donna Wilson attended a webinar through the Regional Planning Commission that discussed a computer program that provided information about the wildlife corridor. It was advised that this should be part of a town plan and many towns are incorporating this information into their plans. The computer program provided information about the existing habitat blocks that a town may want to preserve. Jeff Biasuzzi advised that the habitats are a priority. Rick Conway asked if they are government-owned lands or private property and Mr. Biasuzzi advised they could include private property. Chuck Charbonneau stated there could not be any north/south fences that may impede animals from crossing from Maine to New York. This was a contentious issue previously with many landowners and there should be a lot of discussion with landowners who may be affected by this. Rick Conway stated there is a lot of land in the nature conservatory and Dan Adams also did one near Gorham Bridge. Chuck Charbonneau thought the blocks in this area are well covered. The wildlife corridor is to keep the paths open for a west to east path, but they also want habitat areas in addition to that. Mr. Biasuzzi stated the habitat is supposed to be large enough for the animals to pass. This is in the town plan but there is no regulatory punch unless the town passes zoning regulations. It can be put in the town plan as a required element of the town plan and the key is interpreting the plan and translating it into a regulatory program. Ms. Wilson will check out the computer program that is through ANR. Robb Spensely would like to see where the areas are. Mr. Biasuzzi advised the State is well mapped and it is on the National Resource Atlas.

7. New Business

There was no discussion held.

8. Old Business

Betsy Morgan was present to discuss the solar project on the Cyr property. Rick Conway reported the Select Board had a meeting about this project. Donna Wilson was concerned the solar developers did not have to pay the education taxes and advised the State imposes a UCT that goes into the Education Fund at the State level. Jeff Biasuzzi stated the question is if the tax is fixed at the beginning of the project and Mr. Conway thought that was the case unless there is a change in the tax rate. Ms. Wilson attended the Select Board meeting and provided information from that meeting to the Commission members. Ms. Morgan thought the solar plan had not been approved at the last meeting and would be discussed at this meeting and was present regarding the trail network relating to this project. Chuck Charbonneau advised the Planning Commission was going to get more information to clarify the project due to the recent changes with the property being for sale. Ms. Morgan asked if the developer buys the property if they are going to stay with the 17 acres. Mr. Conway stated they were asking for the project that was submitted and if they wanted an addition they would have to refile for a change. Ms. Morgan talked with Butch Shaw about

the project from the point of view of Section 248, Title 30. She noted the PUC reviews the project for approval of the Certificate of Public Goods. ANR provides the PUC information regarding impacts on natural resources and environment. Mr. Shaw had advised there is not a concrete Pittsford Enhanced Energy Plan that could be used in the process. Ms. Morgan noted that many towns are putting in an Enhanced Energy Plan. Rick Conway advised Pittsford decided not to go with an Enhanced Energy Plan previously as it would have required submission to the State for approval. There was a preferred solar site map developed and the RRPC had their Energy Plan approved and the maps were worked in cooperation with the RRPC. The Planning Commission did adopt an Energy Guidance document and Mike Norris has been working on a Solar Checklist document. The Planning Commission can request party status and if anything changes on the project, the Planning Commission must be notified and can weigh in, but the PUC has the final say and is one of the reasons why there was not a formal Energy Plan developed. Robb Spensely stated the Planning Commissions' ability to approve is quite meaningful and the solar developer's receipt of the Certificate of Public Goods is dependent on receiving the letter of approval from the Town. Chuck Charbonneau stated without the letter of support, the solar developers do not get as much money from the investors and in many places, they will not invest without the letter of support. Mr. Conway stated if someone wants to put in a project and is economically viable, it is good to have the letter of support. Ms. Morgan stated if the letter of support is provided, it should be noted that the Pittsford Trail Network is part of the State's trail system and is a very large recreational area. The Pittsford Trail Network is a member of the Vermont Trail System through ANR. Mr. Charbonneau stated some of this trail system is on private land and if there is someone who purchases it that wants the solar project, the landowner could hinder the use of the trails if there is an objection to the project. Mark Pape had addressed the question about the trail system with the solar developer and they had indicated that they had no intention of stopping the use of the trail whether they purchase it or not. The Town does not have a say about how private property is used. If the Town forces the landowner to decide to have the solar project or not, the landowner could stop the use of the trail as well. Ms. Morgan requested if a letter of support is provided that the trail program is emphasized. Jeff Biasuzzi stated there is substantial deference that can be gained with having an Enhanced Energy Plan, which is the main benefit of an Enhanced Plan. It was noted the Planning Commission has not agreed to providing a letter at this point.

. Schedule Date/Agenda for Next Meeting

December 16, 2021 @ 7:00PM – Planning Commission Special Meeting (In Person)

9. Adjournment

A motion was made by Chuck Charbonneau and seconded by Robb Spensely to adjourn the meeting at 7:35PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary

Approved by,

The Pittsford Planning Commission