

Pittsford Planning Commission Meeting

August 26, 2021

Board Members Present: Mark Winslow, Kevin Blow, Rick Conway, Mark Pape, Mike Norris, Robb Spensely, Chuck Charbonneau

Others Present: Jeff Biasuzzi, Donna Wilson

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01PM by Mark Winslow – Chair.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

A motion was made by Mark Pape and seconded by Robb Spensely to approve the agenda, as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Remove Item 5 – Kendall Hill Solar Presentation

3. Approval of Minutes

. June 24, 2021 – Planning Commission Meeting and Hearing

. July 15, 2021 – Planning Commission Hearing

A motion was made by Chuck Charbonneau and seconded by Kevin Blow to approve the minutes of the June 24th meeting and hearing and the July 15th hearing, as amended.

A correction to the last sentence in Item 2 of the July 15th minutes to read “the minimum set back to the center line of the travel lane of a town road has to be 30 feet”.

Mark Winslow noted that the first hearing was recessed due to lack of answers from the developer. The meeting minutes also include a recording of the first hearing.

The motion passed unanimously.

July 22, 2021 – Planning Commission Meeting

A motion was made by Kevin Blow and seconded by Mark Pape to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2021 meeting. **The motion passed with two abstentions – Mark Winslow and Chuck Charbonneau.**

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

5. Kendall Hill Solar Presentation #2 – Jake Clark

This item was postponed to a subsequent meeting.

6. Other New Business

Donna Wilson of the Regional Planning Commission reported the Casella Solar Project plan has no regional impact and everything is in conformance with the Regional Plan. The project has not started yet.

Mark Winslow reported Tom Markowski submitted his resignation due to other commitments. The Board has two alternates and Mr. Winslow has submitted a request for the Select Board to name Robb Spensely as a full member of the Planning Commission. Mr. Winslow extended the Committee's gratitude to Mr. Markowski for his work on the Planning Commission.

Mr. Winslow received a 45-day notice for a solar project on Adams Road from an out-of-state developer. It is a sizeable project, and the Planning Commission will receive more information on this project. The developer is planning to be at the next Planning Commission meeting. The developer has contacted the Town multiple times and the property in question is the former Don Nichols property. The Kendall Hill solar developer will also be at the next meeting as they did not have all the information available for this meeting.

Mr. Winslow reported he has had a conversation with Mike Norris about solar development due to his solar background and it is felt that the Planning Commission should consider creating a document that can be sent to a developer outlining what the Planning Commission would like to receive for proposed projects. There have been some very good developers that have all the information available. Piecemeal information on proposed projects can take a lot of the Planning Commission's time. A document of this type would have been helpful to the Kendall Hill developer. There was a couple of criteria noted in the Energy Guidance document for the Town, but it was not detailed. Mr. Winslow stated the Planning Commission should ask for party status if it is going to provide a letter of approval. Mike Norris suggested a complete plan should be provided for all projects. For larger projects, he is concerned with incomplete information being provided to the Planning Commission when they are asking for a letter of support. The developers have to go through the Planning Commission prior to going to the Select Board for their support. A one-page document will be drafted for the Planning Commission's approval. Donna Wilson suggested other towns might be interested in a document like this as the RRPC is getting many project requests. Rick Conway advised the Town does not have an energy plan, rather an energy guidance and he is concerned the Planning Commission does not exceed its statutory jurisdiction. All information goes to the PUC and regarding the Kendall Hill project, they did provide a PowerPoint presentation, but there was a miscommunication with the information received and he did not see anything that was out of the ordinary. Kevin Blow agreed a checklist would be helpful to give the developers to assure they are providing the information the Planning Commission would like to see. It was questioned whether land can be taken out of Current Use and Mike Norris advised that it can be. Jeff Biasuzzi stated there would be a fee to withdraw it and a "soft out" has only been used 3 times. If the State cannot fully fund the current use, the owners have the option to withdraw without a penalty. One can install a solar farm up to 2 or 4 acres without penalty for current use. Mr. Biasuzzi questioned the number of pages in an application and Mr. Norris advised a small site would have about 30 pages for a site less than one acre, for larger projects it can increase to up to 300 pages and for projects above 500kw it becomes

a multi-year process and involves impact studies. Mr. Norris noted when the solar developers ask for a joint letter of support, it is not an approval of the project. The municipalities can be silent and not write a letter or they can provide a joint letter between the Planning Commission and Select Board, and Regional Planning Commission. If they do not have a joint letter, their rate of return will not be as good. When they are asking for a letter, it means a lot to the developers. Mr. Norris stated the Planning Commission needs to review everything to protect the Town. Mr. Conway stated as long as the Planning Commission is statutorily able to provide a checklist, he is in favor of it. Mr. Norris will put together a rough draft for the Commission's review at the next meeting.

7. Old Business

Rick Conway reported that he spoke with Tom Markowski regarding the plaque for the Pittsford Mills bridge. Mr. Conway had agreed to help in providing the information he had concerning the historic right of way. Mr. Conway had not heard from Mr. Markowski and due to his resignation from the Committee, he requested another person to assist with this project. Mr. Markowski had provided the application form to Mr. Conway, and Mr. Conway will get in touch with him to determine if he has any additional information on this topic. Mr. Conway advised the State has a program for historical plaques. Donna Wilson offered to assist Mr. Conway with this project. Mark Winslow stated this project needs to be moved along as it has been an outstanding item for some time.

Rick Conway reported VTrans will be sending a representative to the next Select Board meeting to discuss the bridge at Pittsford Mills. They want to change the road configuration. The bridge was up for replacement and since the original plans, the plans changed the road configuration. Mr. Conway stated this is a historic area and VTrans was under the assumption that it was not in the village. Mr. Conway has responded to VTrans. They stated the green area is not historic and want to make an island where the trucks will have to make a right-hand turn going south from Route 7 to Route 3, rather than a straight through. Mr. Conway provided both the maps of the proposed plan prior to the current change and the new proposed plan ([See attachments one and two](#)). Mr. Conway had received a letter from the Planning Commission in December 2020 stating the new proposed change does not comply with criteria in the Town Plan that was sent to VTrans. This is a significant change and now two lanes of traffic that will have to be crossed and the historic green area will be lost. It will also create a lot of congestion in this area and for people that do not know where the access is, there will be confusion when entering the Mobil station. Mr. Conway noted the 2015 plan was a very good plan that included bike lanes and widening of the bridge. Mr. Conway noted VTrans indicated the current change is for safety and indicated that a lot has transpired since 2015. In 2015, there was reference that this area is historic and was listed on their highway maps as historic. A new group of people at VTrans made the current proposed change and submitted an Act 250 application. Next Wednesday at the Select Board meeting VTrans will be providing their presentation and Mr. Conway suggested representation from the Planning Commission would be helpful. Mr. Conway noted good headway has been made, but if the green island is removed there could be issues with trucks in the winter when the bridge may be icy. Chuck Charbonneau stated it looks like they have moved the entrance to Route 3 more north whereas now the cross over to Oxbow Road will not be direct. Jeff Biasuzzi stated one of the concerns is the

addition of guardrails and Mr. Conway noted that VTrans have indicated the guardrails will not be included now. Mike Norris stated a hard radius will be a difficult turn for large trucks and asked why the road is not left as is and just replace the bridge. Mr. Conway noted the Town does want a new bridge, and the 2015 plan was good. Mark Winslow encouraged the membership to attend to the Select Board meeting. Jeff Biasuzzi advised if there are 3 or more members of the Commission present but are not rendering a decision of the Planning Commission, those members can participate in another public forum on an individual basis or as representatives of the Planning Commission. Mark Winslow suggested it is more for information gathering and the members can attend as concerned citizens. Mr. Conway advised it would be important to obtain party status for Act 250 as a Planning Commission and confirmed with the membership the letter that had been provided in December still stands. It was noted there are structural issues with the bridge and the project needs to be done. Mr. Conway advised there had been three alternatives originally proposed and it was decided to replace the bridge.

8. Schedule Date/Agenda for Next Meeting

September 30, 2021 @ 7:00PM – Special Planning Commission Meeting

A motion was made by Rick Conway and seconded by Chuck Charbonneau to hold the September Planning Commission meeting on September 30th due to a scheduling conflict with the regular meeting date. **The motion passed unanimously.**

11. Adjournment

A motion was made by Kevin Blow and seconded by Robb Spensely to adjourn the meeting at 7:51PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary

Approved by,

The Pittsford Planning Commission