

The Town of St. Albans
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Town Hall, 579 Lake Road
December 1st, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes

Present: S. Smith (Chair), B. Brigham (Vice Chair), M. McKennerney, B. Nihan

Staff Present: N. Neider, Planner

Public Present: Bob Fairbanks, Karen Drennen

CALL TO ORDER

S. Smith called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL PARK SOLAR PROJECT

William King, Director of Business Development for Alternative Energy Development, LLC reached out to Planner, N. Neider to discuss a proposed solar project to be located on a parcel on Rewes Drive owned by Tom Hungerford. W. King was hopeful the Planning Commission would review the project, offer a letter of support and voice any comments or concerns. N. Neider provided the PC with three maps to review. S. Smith wondered if a fence would be used to screen the solar panels. B. Brigham stated the project review sheet showed a fence. The PC discussed the layout of the proposed project and noticed the solar panels would not be visible from Main Street; they speculated the panels would be visible from the Army building located on Lower Newton and perhaps a few surrounding residences. The Planning Commission felt comfortable with the project and agreed to authorize Planner, N. Neider to write a letter of support to be returned to the Planning Commission for signature by Chair, S. Smith.

MOTION: M. McKennerney made a motion to authorize Planner, N. Neider to compose a letter of support for the proposed Industrial Park Solar Project with no conditions and to return the letter of support to the Planning Commission for signature. B. Nihan seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

PROPOSED GMP DIGESTER

Planner, N. Neider presented the PC with Green Mountain Power's pre-application notice for a proposed digester to be located on Dunsmore Road. The proposed parcel sits between two farms that GMP intends to contract with; the digester will be fueled by manure and food waste. The digester generates electricity using organic product (such as manure) and holding the product in an oxygen free environment. Bacteria and other organisms convert the materials into biogas (methane, carbon dioxide, ect). The biogas is collected and processed to remove contaminants and used to fuel an engine generator to produce electricity. The remaining product is used for bedding (dry product) and concentrated fertilizer (liquid product) which is injected into the ground as opposed to spread. Once the digester is running food waste will be transported in as well as farm waste from one other local farm. B. Brigham voiced concerns about spillage into the watershed emptying into the lake and wondered if there were protocols in place in the event of an emergency. Town resident, B. Fairbanks was concerned the injection process would take too long for farmers and would cost too much time and money. Town Planner, N. Neider was concerned that the proposed digester would hinder the cleaning process of Lake Champlain in St. Albans Bay by creating a more concentrated runoff. He advised the PC to contact the DEC to obtain their opinion on the process. B. Brigham advised there would be a meeting on December 8th, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. in the boardroom at Town Hall. The Planning Commission advised N. Neider to reach out to the specialist on the project to ask specific questions as N. Neider would not be able to attend the public meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

N. Neider provided the PC with literature on Required Agricultural Practices. The Planning Commission has the choice to regulate non-certified farming operations, as outlined in Act 64. The farms that fall into this category will be accepted as a use by right in all zones in the Town.

MINUTES

MOTION: B. Brigham made a motion to accept the minutes of the meeting dated October 29th, 2015. M. McKennerney seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: B. Nihan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. B. Brigham seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
AJ Johnson, Administrative Assistant

Sam Smith, Chair

Date

Brent Brigham, Vice Chair

Date

Bill Nihan

Date

Mike McKennerney

Date