

**TOWN OF CASTLETON
PLANNING COMMISSION
Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at 6:00pm
Castleton Town Hall
263 VT – 30
Bomoseen, VT 05732**

PRESENT: Janet Currie, Chair; Joe Bruno, Vice Chair; Robert Franzoni, Planning Commission member; Val Waldrun, Planning Commission member; Jonas Rosenthal, Zoning Administrator; Eliza LeBrun, Recording Secretary/Planning Commission alternate; Bill Wood.

ABSENT: Jon Pintello, Planning Commission member

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Ms. Currie called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Bruno made a motion to approve the agenda. Mrs. Waldrun seconded the motion.

Ms. Currie added Solar Array areas and the Enhanced Energy Plan to the evening's agenda under Discussions.

All were in favor and the motion passed.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Mr. Bruno made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2020 Planning Commission meeting. Mrs. Waldrun seconded the motion.

Mrs. Waldrun noted that her name was misspelled in the minutes of January 28, 2020.

All were in favor and the motion passed.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Rosenthal reiterated the need to have Public Information Meetings with the Residents of Castleton to discuss Enhanced Energy Plans. Mr. Rosenthal provided the Commission with examples of approved Enhanced Energy Plans from the Towns of Sudbury, Rutland and Brandon.

Mr. Franzoni asked about requiring performance bonds for solar array decommissioning.

Ms. Currie asked who the holder of the bond should be. Mr. Franzoni offered that the bond could be in the property owners name and not used until the solar array needs to be removed.

Rather than making the requirement for property owners to have security or performance bonds from their lessee (Solar Company) a separate Ordinance, Mr. Rosenthal recommended adding this to part of the criteria to allow a project to go forward.

Discussion was had over the need to make a security or performance bond requirement for solar an individual ordinance or an added criterion. At this time, unless a Solar project is going in on a Preferred

Site, the Town is not involved and has no say in the array location on private property, screening or decommissioning.

Mr. Bruno pointed out that in the Zoning Ordinances under Solar Panels, everything requires conditional use permits, so he recommended adding the requirement of the security/performance bond to that permit. Then the bond would follow the property, and the value of the property would not be affected in the case of a sale.

For clarification on whether this would be applied to private or public use the Commission agreed that it should be for separate structures for both and that the bond be in an appropriate amount based on the size of the array.

Mr. Rosenthal pointed out that in the Enhanced Energy Plan from Rutland, #6 under Solar Facility Siting Standards:

“Encourage small scale and appropriately sited development of renewable energy generation solar panels. Such encouragement should consider, but not be limited to the prevention of:

- A. Undue adverse visual impacts on adjacent properties, scenic corridors and Rutland Town view sheds;*
- B. Forest fragmentation, environmental degradation, and habitat disruption;*
- C. Impacts to sediment transport and aquatic organisms’ passage in streams;*
- D. Their use of land with prime agricultural soil.”*

Ms. Currie recommended adding on industrial land under letter D.

Mr. Rosenthal pointed out that in the Enhanced Energy Plan from Brandon, #12 under Siting of Solar Energy Facilities:

“Decommissioning. Solar project developers shall present a satisfactory decommissioning plan, bond, or both.”

The Commission agreed that they should remove the “or” and change it to plan and bond.

Mr. Rosenthal asked the Commission to go through and mark the pieces of each Enhanced Energy Plan for the Public Meeting.

Ms. Currie informed the Commission that she has spoken to John Fisk of Green Mountain Power and he has agreed to someone will be present at the March 10, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting. The Commission agreed that it was important to advertise this meeting as much as possible to get public interest and attendance. She noted it was important to have questions ready. Ms. Currie is planning to ask questions about substations.

Mrs. Waldrun asked if there was a way that the meeting could be set up on-line live so that those residents who could not be present. Mr. Franzoni recommended contacting Castleton University for assistance with this.

The next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting will be a Public Meeting to Discuss Solar Siting. Barbara Noyes-Pulling of Rutland Regional Planning Commission will be present.

Mr. Bruno asked if the solar array going in on the North side of Route 4 was still moving forward. At this time the Town is not a party to this as a Preferred Site Certificate is not required for this project. There was discussion on what could be done to encourage the property owner to meet with the Planning Commission to talk about screening and decommissioning.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Rosenthal would like to talk about sign ordinances and parking in Town.

Currently there is not a sign ordinance in the Town of Castleton. The Commission discussed the importance of a sign ordinance to regulate size, set back requirements and other issues. Mr. Rosenthal will bring 4 or 5 examples. Mr. Bruno thought that a previous Commission had reviewed some ordinances but did not find one that fit the Town of Castleton.

The Commission talked about parking concerns in downtown Castleton. It was noted that intersections have poor visibility due to cars parked in front of businesses and the Catholic Church. Vehicles are pulling into traffic as they cannot see oncoming traffic. The Commission would like to consult with Chief Mantello to discuss options.

ADJOURN

Mr. Bruno made a motion to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 6:51pm. Mrs. Waldrun seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted; Eliza LeBrun, Recording Secretary