

**Holliston Planning Board
Meeting Minutes of January 5, 2012**

In Attendance: Chairman Jack Donovan, Parashar Patel, Jonathan Loya, Geoffrey Zeamer and Warren Chamberlain.

Call to Order: The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room of Town Hall, 703 Washington Street.

General Business:

Approval of Minutes – 12/15/11

On a motion by Mr. Chamberlain, seconded by Mr. Loya, the minutes were approved as drafted on a vote of 3 – 0 – 2 (Messrs. Donovan and Zeamer abstained.).

FY13 Budget Proposal

The Board approved the departmental budget request of \$71,034 for FY13. The proposal includes Personnel Services - \$65,464.04, Purchase Services and \$569.96 Office Supplies. This amount meets the budget guideline recommended by the Finance Committee. The motion was made by Mr. Patel and seconded by Mr. Chamberlain with all in favor.

Acceptance Plan Endorsement – Indian Ridge Road South

The Board endorsed a plan entitled “Acceptance Plan Indian Ridge Road South (formerly James Road) ‘Clearview Estates II’ Sta. 0+00 to 10+51.55 Holliston, MA” prepared by GLM Engineering Consultants, Inc. (dated September 30, 2011). The plan is the result of roadway acceptance at the October 24, 2011 Special Town Meeting.

Zoning Articles for Annual Town Meeting

Draft amendments to the following sections were discussed: I-A Purpose and VI-E Special Permit Granting Authority. Several changes were suggested to the proposed VI-E text with regard to Special Permit criteria. Discussion was continued to January 19th. Additional amendments discussed in concept on December 15th will be discussed as well.

Continued Public Hearing: Common Driveway, 2016 Washington Street

The Chairman re-opened the public hearing at and noted receipt of a written request for continuance from the applicant's engineer. Mr. Chamberlain made a motion to continue the hearing until 7:00 p.m. on January 19, 2012 to establish a schedule for February review. Mr. Loya seconded with all in favor.

Continued Public Hearing: Planning Board Rules and Regulation Amendments

The Chairman re-opened the public hearing and the Board reviewed text changes to Form E Construction Cost Estimate and Administrative Rules of the Planning Board which were amended as a result of discussion on December 15th.

On a motion by Mr. Patel, seconded by Mr. Chamberlain with all in favor, the Board closed the public hearing. Mr. Patel then made a motion to approve all of the advertised amendments based on the additions to the Administrative Rules proposed by the Chairman discussed this evening. Mr. Zeamer seconded with all in favor.

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**Scenic Road and Shade Tree Act Public Hearing
Bullard Memorial Farm, Bullard Street**

The Chairman opened the hearing at 7:45 along with Tree Warden Mark Ahronian and noted that this is a joint hearing of the two authorities under the Massachusetts Scenic Road and Shade Tree Acts. He asked Mr. Loya to read the public hearing notice into the record for clarification. He indicated that while this hearing is specifically to address the proposed removal of 7 trees and alteration to a stone wall within the right-of-way of Bullard Street, additional information about the proposed development is warranted on an overview basis. He added that the agenda also includes site plan review which will be more technical in nature regarding the proposed use and that discussion will follow the public hearing.

Representing the applicants Renewable Energy Massachusetts, LLC (REM) were Brian Kopperl and Bob Knowles of REM as well as Larry Beals and Greg St. Louis of Beals Associates, Inc of Charlestown (Land Planners and Civil Engineers). Mr. Kopperl gave an overview of the proposed site, noting the proposed ground-mounted 2 mega-watt rated facility composed of approximately 7,500 panels is proposed for a 7-acre portion of a larger lot owned by the Bullard Memorial Farm Association (Farm). The area will be the subject of a lease agreement with an income stream provided to the Farm as well as a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) to the Town of Holliston. The Farm expects to subsidize 30% of their annual operating expenses as well as capital improvements through this income stream.

Mr. Kopperl continued that advantages include that the site is south-facing, it provides for interconnection to the grid at the site and the lease option provides the developer with financing options which include 30% of federal capital. The site will also include a “transfer station”, meters and conduit to convert and transfer the power generated to the NSTAR grid. An application was submitted to NSTAR in June 2010 but has not been acted upon. The amount of power expected to be generated is 2.5 million kilowatt hours per year or roughly 3% of the community’s annual consumption. The expected life of the facility is 30-35 years with interim upgrades of components and required “decommissioning” for future re-use of the site for the Farm.

Mr. Beals referred to a plan set entitled “Plans to Accompany an Administrative Site Plan Review for Solar Energy Facility at Bullard Farm, Bullard Street, Holliston, MA” dated November 8, 2011 as well as a series of enlarged photos and aerial photos of the locus and Bullard Street. He entered a memorandum addressing “sound analysis” dated January 5, 2012 into the record.

Mr. Beals described the proposed 7 Shade Trees to be removed – Norway maple, oaks and ash (Note: Later in the meeting, he was requested to double-check the species and confirm.). He noted that several invasive species including poison ivy, bittersweet and winged euonymus were present along the roadside and in the front property buffer and were in need of remedial action. Replacement trees (oaks and maples) of 4” caliper are planned at a 2:1 ratio.

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With regard to site access, there is an existing break in the stone wall in the wetland resources area and a smaller break near the center of the site. The applicant proposes to utilize the center of the site per the Conservation Commission's directive. The break is approximately 10' wide and can be widened to 12' – 14' for set-up and then closed back in. The applicant is proposing a black 6' chain link perimeter fence to be located inside the allowed building envelope.

Mr. Beals presented a series of photos showing the buffers and shadows on the site with the proposed screening. He noted that based on concerns expressed at the Conservation Commission hearing the inverters have been moved to the center of the site, approximately 340 feet from the northern abutter's side property line and 440 feet from the nearest residence. The inverter units will be set back from Bullard Street approximately 90 feet. The inverters that convert direct current (DC) to alternating current (AC) emit a 65 dBA sound level. This translates to 6.37 dBA at the northern abutter's side property line, 4 dBA the nearest residence, 19 dBA at the Bullard Street right-of-way and 17.6 at Bullard Street.

Mr. Ahronian noted that he had visited the site to post and inspect the trees as required under the Shade Tree Act. He noted that 5 of the 7 trees located within the right-of-way are very mature (approximately 100-years old) and have very large canopies. He added that 2 were in need of significant canopy pruning and that 1 has a significant healing scar from being hit by a vehicle. He concluded that none were condemnable and there is no apparent insect infestation or disease. He added that Bullard Street has lost 6 or 7 very large trees along an area closer to Central Street as a result of Tropical Storm Irene and the October snow storm of 2011.

Mr. Beals indicated that proposed screening includes white pines, white spruce and rhododendrons with oak and maple replacement trees to be located strategically. Annual pruning will be required to maintain maximum screening. Mr. Zeamer asked Mr. Ahronian about pruning the street trees which are approximately 75 feet high. Mr. Ahronian recommended pruning over a period of time to prevent shock to the tree(s). Mr. Beals confirmed that the front property line was located by survey. The plan or record was noted. The right-of-way width of Bullard Street remains unclear. Concerns were expressed about the use of white pines because they are top heavy and rhododendrons because of deer browse.

Requests were made to show detailed landscaping plans (especially the approximate 30' buffer), including the canopy and shadows of the shade trees and those overhanging the right-of-way.

The Chairman opened the floor to the public. Posing questions and concerns were: Thomas Gilbert of 105 Bullard Street, Peter MacDonald of 127 Mill Street (Sherborn), Ron Ober of the Holliston Sportsmen's Association, Stephen Geremia of 23 Hollis Street (Sherborn), Marty Lamb of 57 Wingate Road, Carol Khouri of 40 Bullard Street, Kristine Irving of 29 Winchester Drive, William Binnette of 28 Winchester Drive, Sandra George O'Neil of 110 Bullard Street, Bill Gabriel of 86 Winchester Drive, Allan Romelt of 92

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Winchester Drive, Brad MacLeod of 135 Bogastow Brook Road, Ellen George of 62 Persis Place, Donna Kramer of the Holliston Agricultural Commission, Ron West of 91 Bullard Street, Steven Salzer of 862 Central Street, Marti Boyles of 121 Bullard Street, Bronwen Bernier of 45 Bullard Street, John DeVecchio of 763 Winter Street, Robert Weidknecht of the Holliston Trails Committee, and Shahar Zeevi of 15 Bullard Street. Charles Thurlow of the Bullard Memorial Farm Association provided some details on the composition of the Association and the need for the proposal.

Correspondence was received from Thomas and Carol Gilbert of 105 Bullard Street, Brad MacLeod of 135 Bogastow Brook Road, Martha DeWolf of 125 Long Hill Road (West Brookfield), Donald and Virginia Bates of 124 Bullard Street, Mary Greendale of 57 Roy Avenue, Jayne and Shahar Zeevi of 15 Bullard Street et al, Dr. Sandra George O'Neil and timothy O'Neil of 110 Bullard Street et al, David & Marti Boyles of 121 Bullard Street, and Peter MacDonald of 127 Mill Street (Sherborn).

Several residents asked about the ultimate connection to Fiske Street and any additional trees and impacts that might occur as a result of the required upgrades to the existing power lines. In addition to the identified shade trees, it was noted that there are many immature trees along the same frontage that may be impacted and that will have impacts on the proposed facility over time as they fill in. Concerns for stump removal or grinding were raised as well as the impacts to stormwater management from removal of the trees as well as the internal "windrow". It was verified that no tree removal on-site is allowed under the Zoning By-Laws once an application is submitted per Section VII (5).

On a motion by Mr. Patel, seconded by Mr. Chamberlain, the Board voted unanimously to continue the public hearing until 7:15 p.m. on January 19th.

Administrative Site Plan Review: Bullard Farm Solar Facility

The Chairman opened the discussion by asking for more details on the proposal as required under the provisions of the Board's Regulations and the Zoning By-Laws (Section VII). He noted that a list of technical deficiencies had been identified by the members and the Board's consulting civil engineer, Westcott Site Services.

Messrs. Kopperl and Beals provided some details on proposed construction sequencing, sound analysis, and maintenance of the proposed facility. The panels and their construction were described as well as the wiring program of trenching conduit to the inverters. The panels are connected to a network of frames which are anchored into the ground with a metal auger. Off-site monitoring of individual panels and inverters was described with little anticipation of on-site work needed. Annual mowing and occasional repair were described. No snow removal is anticipated with the lower edge of the panel framework at 3 feet. The pre-fab metal panel inverter building is proposed to be on piers. No lighting or security system is proposed. A schematic of wiring from the inverter to power pole was requested.

Other more general concerns expressed by the members of the audience included the fundamental zoning allowances (i.e. MGL, c. 40A, s. 3 "exemption"), need for detailed

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plans for decommissioning, potential for a catastrophic event with air and water quality impacts, specifications of panel composition, inventory of archaeological resources and impacts to National Historic Register listing, limiting hours of construction and deliveries, need for peer review on sound analysis and inverter converter specifications, need for a hard look at the charity registration, purpose, and finances of the Farm

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 p.m. on a motion made and duly seconded. The next meeting was scheduled for 19th at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Sherman, Town Planner

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