



# **TOWN OF RANDOLPH, VERMONT**

**Zoning and Planning Office**

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## **MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, June 1, 2021**

Grant Camp/Hebard Hill Rd.

**Present:** Members: Matt Chin, Miles Hooper, Sonny Holt, Perry Armstrong, Michael Tragner, Camden Walters, and Paul Rea.

**Municipal Staff:** Josh Jerome

**Public Members:** Brendan Malley, Jenny Carter

**Mr. Holt called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:23 pm.**

1. **Public Comment** – There was no one from the public with general comments.
2. **Agenda Approved** – Miles made a motion to approve the agenda, Matt seconded and all voted in favor (7-0).
3. **Approval of Minutes** – Miles made a motion to approve the minutes of April 7th, Sonny seconded, all voted in favor, Paul abstained (6-0-1).

#### **4. New Business**

##### **a. Adoption of Bylaw Changes to §107, 314 and 506**

Mr. Holt said we discussed changes during the public hearing for changing the proposed language in §107 to read: “No land development, as defined by state statute in 24 VSA §4303, and no development as defined in these regulations, shall begin until a zoning permit has been issued, except as exempted under the Act and §108 [Exempt Land Development] if no permit will be required by these Regulations.” Mr. Holt made a motion to accept the changes, Mr. Armstrong seconded, and all voted in favor to the language change in §107 (7-0-0).

Mr. Chin made a motion to approve the proposed changes to §314 and §506, seconded by Mr. Walters, and all voted in favor (7-0-0).

##### **b. Norwich Technologies Preferred Siting Request**

Mr. Malley described the proposed 500kw solar array at being on the corner of Route 14 and Davis Rd. Mr. Rea disclosed that he represents the seller of the real estate and will need to recuse from any vote. Mr. Malley disclosed that he is a neighbor to the property also. Mr. Malley described the property as undeveloped that has been used for forestry and has had some logging done on it as recently as

2016. Mr. Malley described the map of the project and that the “blue box” on the map provides the potential perimeter of the project. Mr. Malley described this as the very first step in the process as the preferred siting letter would then go to the Selectboard, and then to the Regional Planning Commission and then the permitting process would start which includes preserving the rights of all stakeholders involved including abutters which will be notified and provided a package of the project. This is not an approval of the solar array, but an approval to continue the start of the permitting process.

Mr. Holt explained his site visit with Mr. Malley and described minimal to no visibility from the Town Road and neighboring properties. Reviewing the Town Plan, this site seems to meet the criteria of a preferred site. Mr. Malley said that GMP is upgrading lines along Route 14. Someone asked if there is deer habitat in the area, Mr. Malley said yes, and that is typically the focus of ANR during the permitting stage. Aerial photographs as far back as 1947 show it as being a deer yard, but recent logging has reduced the functionality of this parcel.

No bear habitat is mapped according to Mr. Malley. The array takes up about 3 acres and about 5-6 acres of total associated footprint when you include shade tree cuts, roads and fencing. Mr. Malley said you cannot see the array from Davis Rd. The trees between Davis Rd. and the array will be left due to site lines and slope. The existing log landing will be used to stage equipment. This is a 25-year design life array and may have to go into the area to cut possibly once in that time. They’ll go in once a year to brush hog.

This is permitted with fencing, but they will decide what to do as they get onto the site. They do about half with fencing and is about 8 feet tall.

Mr. Holt asked if there were any other comments and reiterated that the PC is not approving the solar array, but voting forward for the project to begin the permitting process. Someone asked what criteria is used to determine this. Mr. Rea suggested it is Act 248 that governs this and that the work on the Town Plan went through the two avenues the municipality could take, either identifying the preferred sites at that time, or have the PC review sites as they come up. The Town at the time chose to review projects as they come up.

Miles made a motion to designate the proposed solar array a preferred site, seconded by Michael and all voted in favor, Paul abstained (6-0-1).

## **5. Old Business**

### **a. Recognition of Michael Tragner**

Mr. Holt asked for a round of applause for all the work Michael has done over the years. Michael is moving to New Hampshire.

### **b. Planning Commission Members**

Mr. Holt asked if alternates on the PC would work. There was a belief that alternates

would not work out because much of the work is ongoing and having alternates would be challenging to get up to speed.

**At 8:23 pm, on a motion by Michael and seconded by Miles, the PC unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.**

Respectfully submitted: Joshua Jerome