

TOWN OF FRANKLIN PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 5, 2023

Attendance: Komenda, Schlafer, Storey, Thompson. Town Board Rep. Jeff Taggart, Code Enforcement Officer Gregg Pitula
Absent/Excused: Howland, TPAS Advisor Kent Manuel.

Location: Franklin Town Garage Meeting Room

As there was some confusion regarding the attendance of Mongaup River Solar there was some discussion but the meeting did not officially begin until 7:45 PM

REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:45 PM

MINUTES

The minutes of the September 7, 2023 meeting were approved as read (Komenda, Thompson, msp).

Brian Brock, a member of the community, suggested that the following information be added regarding the proposed solar array: "According to their documents, what MRS would install on the concrete pad is a MW System (MegaWatt), which takes the power from the panels and converts it to the form needed to insert into the NYSEG system. Mostly it's two units, a DC to AC converter (aka inverter) and then a step-up transformer with the output voltage that of the medium voltage line, 12.5 kV. Some distance from the pad will be a DC disconnect switch upstream and an AC disconnect switch downstream. A 12.5 kV cable would run underground from pad to near the road some 1,300' away. From there it would go up a pole and then overhead along the road to tie into the NYSEG line a few hundred feet uphill, where it crosses Bissell Road.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Discussion/Initial Presentation: Mongaup River Solar

Location: Bissell Road. See minutes of September 7, 2023

The minutes of 9/7/2023 reflect that it was expected that Mongaup River Solar would be on the agenda for this meeting to present the application and begin the process for a solar project. When he did not receive an agenda, Code Enforcement Officer Gregg Pitula contact the County Planning Department. He was informed that Mongaup River Solar did not contact them about being on the agenda. Hence, he contacted Mongaup River Solar and was told that they had no intention to attend this meeting because the project may not proceed due to an issue with tree removal on the property.

Discussion included why the County wanted to conduct a 239 review since the project was not located on a County Road: 239 Review: NW boundary of parcel is along the county line. Array would come within 118' of this boundary. Also, the issue that the application listed the location as both R3 and R5. This is due to the project being 500 or more feet from the Town Road.

This project is currently tabled.

Solar Projects

After discussion regarding solar projects' potential environmental and safety concerns brought to the Planning Board's attention, Barbara Thompson made the motion that the following be brought before the Town Board for consideration and action at its next meeting: that a six month moratorium on future solar proposals be put into effect so that the Franklin Town Board and Planning Board can become better informed. The moratorium would be put in place to allow the town board, to develop zoning regulations for future projects. The motion was seconded by James Komenda and passed unanimously. Supervisor Jeff Taggart was charged with bringing a Resolution before the Town Board at its next meeting that there be a 6 month moratorium on future applications for commercial solar arrays. The Town Board needs to determine if a public hearing is required before enactment. Since the Mongaup River Solar currently still has an active

application, it would be exempt. It was noted that time is of the essence so that it can be accomplished prior to any future applications.

DISCUSSION ONLY:

Greg Pitula provided his past experience working with both solar and short term rental issues. He is currently working on creating a short term rental local law using the Hamden regs as well as from another municipality as samples. The draft will be submitted to the Town Attorney for review.

Escrow Accounts

Gregg also informed the Planning Board and Town Supervisor Taggart that It is possible for the Town to adopt a regulation regarding the requirement of escrow accounts whereby any applications for future projects can be required to establish and fund an escrow account from which the Town can draw to pay for consultant, legal and other (including engineering studies) costs.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.