



Roxann Wedegartner
Mayor

City of GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

City Hall • 14 Court Square • Greenfield, MA 01301
Phone 413-772-1549 • Fax 413-772-1309
eric.twarog@greenfield-ma.gov • www.greenfield-ma.gov

Members:
Twarog, Eric
Director, Planning & Dev.

Chichester, David (2024)
Kinney, Charles (2025)
McMahan, Amy (2024)
Roberts, Charles (2023)
Touloumtzis, George (2024)

GREENFIELD PLANNING BOARD

Minutes of June 15, 2023

6:00 p.m.

John Zon Community Center, 35 Pleasant Street

Chairperson Roberts called the Planning Board meeting open at 6:00 p.m.

CHAIRS STATEMENT: This meeting is not being recorded. If any persons present are recording the meeting you must notify the chairperson at this time. No one responded.

PB MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Roberts, Chairperson; George Touloumtzis, Vice-chair; David Chichester; Amy McMahan, Alternate; and Charles Kinney, Alternate

PB MEMBERS ABSENT: David Chichester

ALSO PRESENT: Allison Gage, Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Chairman Roberts elevated Amy McMahan and Charles Kinney as full voting members.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by McMahan, and voted 4:0:0 to approve the meeting minutes of May 9, 2023.

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by McMahan, and voted 4:0:0 to approve the meeting minutes of June 1, 2023.

Public Hearings:

- a. **6:00 p.m.:** Application of BWC Mill Brook, LLC for property located at 1245 Bernardston Road (Assessor's Tax Map R11, Lot 97), which is located in the General Commercial (GC) and Rural Residential (RC) Zoning Districts, for a special permit pursuant to Sections 200-4.2(C18); 200-4.9(C26); 200-4.14 (E2); 200-7.15; 200-8.3; and 200-8.4 of the Zoning Ordinance, in order to allow the construction of a large-scale, ground-mounted solar photovoltaic and associated battery energy storage system within a Zone 3 Water Supply Protection District at this location.

At a public meeting on Thursday, June 15, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., the Greenfield Planning Board held a public hearing on the application of BWC Mill Brook, LLC for property located at 1245 Bernardston Road



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(Assessor’s Tax Map R11, Lot 97), which is located in the General Commercial (GC) and Rural Residential (RC) Zoning Districts, for a special permit pursuant to Sections 200-4.2(C18); 200-4.9(C26); 200-4.14 (E2); 200-7.15; 200-8.3; and 200-8.4 of the Zoning Ordinance, in order to allow the construction of a large-scale, ground-mounted solar photovoltaic and associated battery energy storage system within a Zone 3 Water Supply Protection District at this location. Chairperson Roberts explained the public hearing process to the Applicants. Roberts read the public notice into the record. Members of the Board sitting were Charles Roberts, Chairperson; George Touloumtzis, Vice-Chair, Amy McMahan; and Charles Kinney. The following project proponents were present: Aaron Simms of Bluewave Energy and Robert Bukowski of Bohler Engineering. Chairperson Roberts explained to the Applicants that approving a special permit requires a supermajority of the Planning Board which is four (4) members. He asked the Applicants if they want to proceed with 4 Planning Board members. The Applicants responded yes.

- Roberts Introduced the Board members and asked the Applicants to present the project to the Board.
- Bukowski Presented the project to the Board. He stated that the project is a 1.9 MW solar photovoltaic system with battery storage. The battery storage portion of the project is a requirement under the state’s solar incentive program. There will be a seven (7) foot high fence around the array. The project area is 9.4 acres in size. There will be 4,300 panels. There is approximately 800 feet of forest between the array and the nearest abutters.
- Roberts Inquired on the safety controls for the battery storage.
- Simms Responded that the batteries will be placed on a concrete slab. He stated that they do not know yet what type of battery system they will be using as the technology is constantly changing. The battery systems that they have used in the past are sealed in a steel container. He stated that in terms of hazardous materials being released into the environment, that the transformer is more of a concern as it contain more oil. They could close the pad for the transformer by installing a chamber under it for any release from the transformer. This could be a condition of approval.
- Roberts Inquired on any fire suppression system for the battery system.
- Simms Responded that the technology for a fire suppression system for the batteries hasn’t yet been developed. There is an alarm system for the batteries that will notify Bluewave Energy in the event of a fire. They then contact the local fire department.
- Roberts Inquired on the size of the battery system.
- Simms Responded that the typical battery storage system is a 30’ x 40’ steel container.



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- Touloumtzis Inquired about the access drive off of Village Green.
- Bukowski Responded that there will be an access drive off of Village Green. He pointed out the location of the access drive to the Board.
- Touloumtzis Asked about the extent of tree clearing for the project and the type of seed once cleared.
- Simms Responded that the array area is 9.4 acres in size which will be the area of cleared trees. He stated that the Conservation Commission issued an Order of Conditions for the project specifying the type of seed mix to use which will be a native seed mix.
- Touloumtzis Inquired about monitoring the seeding after construction.
- Simms Responded that they have submitted an Operations and Maintenance plan for the project. He stated that they would likely visit the site a couple of times during the summer and once or twice in the winter months.
- McMahan Asked about how many projects they have done in Massachusetts.
- Simms Responded that they have done about 150 megawatts over the last ten years but have only recently started to own their projects. They now have five arrays that they own with about 20 MW of power.
- Touloumtzis Inquired about any MassDOT Access Permit.
- Bukowski Responded that based on preliminary conversations with MassDOT, that an Access Permit will be required.
- Touloumtzis Inquired on the orientation of the solar panels.
- Simms Responded that the system will be a single axis tracking system that follows the sun, generally from east to west.
- Touloumtzis Inquired on the type of vehicles that will be used for maintenance.
- Simms Responded that maintenance will only be a couple of times per year and that sprinter vans or equivalent will be used for maintenance.
- Roberts Inquired on the site selection process for the selected property.
- Simms Responded that the site selection process is along one. It can take between 6-9 years to develop a site. Their relationship with this land owner started in 2017. There are many



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factors in choosing a site but the key site selection criterion is access to utility connections which this site does have.

Touloumtzis Asked about the fence setbacks.

Bukowski Responded that the array itself is a minimum of 50 feet from property lines. The fencing is set back a minimum of 7 feet as per the Greenfield Zoning Ordinance. Any fence taller than 6 feet in height has to be set back a minimum distance of the height of the fence. Some of the fencing is set back farther than 7 feet.

Kinney Inquired on the life of the project.

Simms Responded 20-35 years. The PILOT Agreement would typically be for 20 years.

Touloumtzis Inquired on the proposed stormwater detention basins.

Bukowski Responded that they are proposing two basins. He explained the purpose of the basins and reviewed their locations with the Board. He stated that during construction, erosion and sedimentation controls will be installed.

Touloumtzis Inquired on snow removal during winter months.

Simms Responded that they generally do not clear snow from solar panels. The snow typically melts off fairly quickly. Also, the snow would likely slide off the panels given the angle of the panels in the morning.

McMahan Inquired about the cost of the project.

Simms Responded 5-6 million dollars.

Chairperson Roberts opened up the public hearing for public comment at 6:40 p.m.

Richard Roth, 319 Log Plain Road, Greenfield

Expressed concerns about leakage from the battery storage system as well as visibility of the array.

Amanda Menier, 271 Log Plain Road, Greenfield

She stated that she currently works from home and inquired about the construction phase of the project. She expressed concerns about the tree clearing.

Faye Ferris, 329 Log Plain Road, Greenfield

Asked about peer review for the project. Director Twarog responded that peer review for this project has not been requested. She asked about the Regional Portfolio Standards (RPS) and Renewable Energy



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Credits (RECs). Mr. Simms stated that they will not be receiving any RECs. She suggested that an engineer hired by the City should determine the bond for any decommissioning of the project.

Maxine Sokoloski, 283 Log Plain Road, Greenfield

Asked what benefit the City of Greenfield is getting by allowing this project to move forward. Mr. Simms responded that the City will benefit through a PILOT agreement. She inquired on how the panels will move. Mr. Simms responded that there will be a piston system to rotate the panels. The power generated by the solar array may power the pistons or a 2nd electrical service will be established for the pistons.

Faith Ferris, 329 Log Plain Road, Greenfield

Expressed concerns about decreasing property values. Asked if there are any health hazards as a result of the project. Mr. Simms responded no.

Robert Ferris, 329 Log Plain Road, Greenfield

Expressed concerns about wildlife in the area. He asked about the limit of tree clearing. Mr. Bukowski responded that the limit of the tree clearing area will be approximately ¼ of a mile from the nearest abutters.

Larry Houle, 1207 Bernardston Road, Greenfield

Asked for confirmation on the location of the solar array. Mr. Bukowski pointed out the area on the plan.

Eugene Darmanchev, 1101 Bernardston Road, Greenfield

Inquired on how many homes would be powered by the new solar array.

Chairperson Roberts closed the public hearing for public comment at 7:07 p.m.

MOTION: Moved by McMahan, seconded by Kinney, and voted 4:0:0 to close the public hearing at 7:09 p.m.

Board Discussion/Decision

BWC Mill Brook, LLC for property located at 1245 Bernardston Road (Assessor's Tax Map R11, Lot 97)

The Board discussed the bond/financial surety for any decommissioning of the array.

Simms Stated that the typical amount for a bond for solar projects on capped landfills is \$90,000 per megawatt and \$50,000 per megawatt for standard arrays.

Roberts Stated that he supports the project but is philosophically torn in terms of the benefits of the array vs. the loss of carbon sequestration as a result of the clearing of the trees.



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- Touloumtzis Stated that he supports the project.
- Kinney Stated that he supports the project.
- McMahan Stated that she supports the project. She stated that 5-6 million dollars is a significant investment in the City.

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by Roberts, and voted 4:0:0 to approve the application of BWC Mill Brook, LLC for property located at 1245 Bernardston Road (Assessor’s Tax Map R11, Lot 97), which is located in the General Commercial (GC) and Rural Residential (RC) Zoning Districts, for a special permit pursuant to Sections 200-4.2(C18); 200-4.9(C26); 200-4.14 (E2); 200-7.15; 200-8.3; and 200-8.4 of the Zoning Ordinance, in order to allow the construction of a large-scale, ground-mounted solar photovoltaic and associated battery energy storage system within a Zone 3 Water Supply Protection District at this location with the following conditions:

1. The Applicant shall execute a Performance Bond to cover the cost of removal in the event that the City must remove the installation and remediate the site and present it to the Planning Board for approval;
2. The Applicant shall enter into a PILOT Agreement with the City prior to operation of the facility and present it to the Planning Board for approval;
3. The Applicant shall enclose the transformer pad so that any spillage will be contained;
4. The Applicant shall submit a copy of the complete building permit application packet to include the specs for the chosen battery storage system to the Planning Board;
5. The Applicant shall adhere to the Order of Conditions issued by the Conservation Commission;
6. The Applicant shall search for an economically feasible fire suppression system for the battery storage system.

Discussion Items:

- a. Further Discussion with the FRCOG on the proposed amendments to the Open Space/Cluster Development Ordinance.

Allison Gage from the FRCOG reviewed the proposed amendments with the Board. The Board asked Director Twarog for his input on two highlighted sections of the ordinance. Director Twarog stated that he supports including the proposed language for a Conservation Analysis in the amendments which is modeled from the Town of Shelburne’s subdivision regulations. He stated that there is a form and process for minor amendments to an approved subdivision, but not one for major amendments. The Board reached consensus to include the language for the Conservation Analysis as



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well as changing the word major to minor under Section M(2). Ms. Gage stated that she will finalize the proposed amendments and forward them to the Board for consideration.

Action Items:

a. Review of the Proposed Screening Plan for 347 Wells Street.

Eugene Darmanchev presented the proposed screening to the Board. He stated that he has learned from the DPW how to manage dust on the site. He now uses calcium chloride pellets for dust control which works great. The Board discussed the proposed screening plan and reached consensus to allow the proposed blocks and fencing for the screening. The Board discussed the proposed location of the screening. Concern was expressed about whether a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals would be required to allow the proposed fencing. Consensus was reached that a special permit would not be required for the following reasons:

- It is responsive to the neighbors concerns relative to the trucking firm business;
- It is consistent with both the Planning Board's site plan approval conditions;
- It is consistent with the Zoning Board of Appeals special permit approval for the eight foot fence;
- It does not set a precedent in terms of the fencing regulations.

MOTION: Moved by Roberts, seconded by Touloumtzis, and voted 4:0:0 to approve the screening plan for 347 Wells Street as submitted.

b. Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan Endorsement for a lot at Assessor's Tax Map R41, Lot 30 submitted by Eversource Energy.

The Board reviewed the ANR Plan.

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by Kinney, and voted 4:0:0 to endorse the Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan for a lot at Assessor's Tax Map R41, Lot 30 submitted by Eversource Energy.

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by McMahan, and voted 3:0:1 (Roberts abstained) to authorize the Chairperson to endorse the Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan for a lot at Assessor's Tax Map R41, Lot 30 submitted by Eversource Energy on behalf of the full Board.

Next Meeting

August 3, 2023 at 6:00 PM at the John Zon Community Center at 35 Pleasant Street.



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Adjournment:

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by Roberts, and voted 4:0:0 to adjourn the Planning Board meeting at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Twarog, AICP
Director, Department of Planning and Development