

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD MEETING OF APRIL 1, 2019
AT THE JESSE SMITH LIBRARY, 100 TINKHAM LANE, HARRISVILLE
SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m., Jeffrey Partington, Chairman, presiding.

Members Present: Jeffrey Partington, Leo Felice, Michael Lupis, Bruce Ferreira, Dov Pick, Steve Foy, Robert Woods, and Christopher Desjardins.

Other Present: Joseph Raymond, Building/Zoning Official, Ray Goff, Planning Director and Christine Langlois, Deputy Planner.

II. ATTENDANCE REVIEW:

Mr. Partington acknowledged that all members were present.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the Planning Board meeting of March 4, 2019 were read. *A motion to accept the minutes, as presented, was made by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. Foy and carried unanimously.*

IV. CORRESPONDENCE: none.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

Pascoag Village – Fernwood Development, George Eddy Drive, Pascoag; Map 210, Lot 23: *Request for Release of Construction Bond and Setting of Maintenance Bond; Recommendation to the Town Council on Acceptance of George Eddy Drive; (cont'd from the January 7th and February 4th agendas):* Chairman Partington noted receipt of a letter from Adler Brothers requesting release of the roadway construction bond held for Fernwood Estates along with a memo from Jeff McCormack, DPW Director, advising of his inspection of the completion of George Eddy Drive. He said that the Board must now set a maintenance bond amount, which will carry for one-year to cover any damages during lot development. The proposed amount for the maintenance bond would be \$32,042 which represents 5% of the previous construction bond. *A motion was made by Mr. Ferreira to release the bond currently held by the Town for the construction of George Eddy Drive and to approve a maintenance bond amount of \$32,042 to cover a one-year period after roadway acceptance. The motion received a second from Mr. Foy and carried unanimously by the Board.*

Chairman Partington also noted that the Board should consider rendering a recommendation to the Town Council on the acceptance of George Eddy Drive. *A motion was then made by Mr. Ferreira to forward a recommendation to the Town Council for the acceptance of George Eddy Drive into the Town's roadway system. The motion received a second from Mr. Foy and carried unanimously by the Board.*

Having received a request for a change in the agenda, *a motion was made from the Chair to move the order of review for the first two items under New Business. The motion received a second from Mr. Ferreira and carried unanimously by the Board.*

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

Montigny Enterprises, Inc. & Hexagon Energy, LLC, Victory Highway, Burrillville; Map 113, Lot 12: *Pre-application Major Land Development Plan Review*: In attendance to represent both applications for Hexagon Energy was Buzz Becker, Development Manager for Hexagon Energy LLC. Mr. Becker told the Board the property is a 22-acre parcel that lies between Victory Highway and Route 102 within the Village Commercial (VC) zoning district and the Village Planner Development overlay. The 1 Mw solar array project will cover approximately four (4) acres in keeping with the Town's Zoning Ordinance requirement of 20% lot coverage. The array will be located in the north-northwest corner of the property, in an area that is mostly flat and tucked away from abutting neighbors on the south side. The point of interconnection would be on Route 102 through the adjacent Going Green Realty parcel, which is closest to the three-phase line on Route 102. This location would eliminate the need to clear the vegetation in the access area of Victory Highway. He noted that in keeping in mind the environment, they conducted research using URI's Natural Plant Guide to utilize natural pollinators and they plan on using these pollinators underneath the solar array as they grow to a maximum height of only three feet. He also made note of a small area of wetlands located on the property, adding that the array would be kept more than 100 feet away. They plan on retaining the services of biologist Scott Rabideau (of Natural Resource Services) to properly delineate the wetlands location and receive confirmation from RIDEM. He further explained that normally with other solar arrays, the land is leased from the owner of the property. Mr. Montigny has said that he wants to sell the property so they will be acquiring the entire parcel. With that in mind, because it is in the VC district, he suggested the possibilities for other economic endeavors on the parcel. He told the Board that they have already submitted an interconnection request to National Grid thru the online portal to check out capacity in the area. They intend to submit a request for the project into National Grid by this summer. Once the certificate is received the working project must be done within 24 months. Construction should probably be completed within six months.

In terms of process, Mr. Goff explained that the project is considered a commercial scale development, which would fall in the category of Major Land Development project and would require a Special Use Permit from the Zoning Board. At the Master plan stage, the Planning Board would have to approve the plan then proceed to the Preliminary plan stage and offer a favorable advisory to the Zoning Board on the granting of the Special Use Permit. The Zoning Board would render their decision and then a Final plan would be submitted. He suggested combining the Master and Preliminary plan submission together. He pointed out several other site considerations such as the wetlands located on the north side of the property which would require a wetlands determination, an interconnect issue with access through an adjacent property in regards to a "timing" issue, and the access way during construction.

One board member asked whether the applicant had considered enlarging the solar array as there appeared to be ample room for a larger solar array as they will be possession of the entire property. It was noted that if this was considered, a variance would be needed from the Zoning Board along with the Special Use Permit. A discussion ensued regarding the expansion suggestion.

The Chairman then asked for any further comments regarding the application other than expansion. The issue of buffers and screening was brought up. Mr. Becker said that they will provide some form type of screening approximately 200 – 250 feet from the northern neighbors.

A view shed analysis will be conducted as part of the process. Based on the analysis, if the Board feels there should be some augmentation to the proposal, they would be willing to add some of type of trees, etc. He was asked how many "panels" are proposed for the system, or what type of grid? Mr. Becker said that the panels would be meter-by-meter and as to the exact number, it would be based upon the wattage, which will be between 340 – 360 watts. Somewhere around the 2,400 panel range.

As there were no further questions or comments, the discussion continued on to the next item.

Going Green Realty, LLC & Hexagon Energy, LLC, Victory Highway, Burrillville; Map 113, Lot 11: *Pre-application Major Land Development Plan Review:* Mr. Becker told the Board that this adjacent property comprises 10 acres of which they are proposing a solar carport project on two (2) acres or 20% lot coverage with similar output to the previously discussed project. There would be about 14' to 15' clearance above the trucks that would be parked under the carport, which is designed to withstand winds up to 140 miles per hour and snow loads at 40 pounds per square foot. He noted that the property formerly contained a junk yard that was cleaned up and currently houses a pool supply business with associated activities. He pointed out that in discussions with the Planning staff, it was noted that the current business and any other activity on the property would be subject to a total land development project review. Mr. Goff added that he had met with the owner approximately 6-8 months ago regarding her filing a development plan and provided paperwork to submit an application; however, nothing in regards to that process has been initiated to date. Mr. Becker also told the Board that because the Rhode Island Public Utility Commission had decided not to implement solar carports this year, this project would not be developed as quickly as the previously discussed Montigny project. Enrollment and construction may begin sometime next April.

There were several questions and concerns from Board members, such as screening from abutters, meeting the current height restriction for solar arrays, drainage issues from the carport, and entry access off Route 102. Mr. Becker thanked the Board for their comments and guidance.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS:

Report from Administrative Officer:

The Board reviewed the report from the Administrative Officer for the month of March regarding Certificates of Completeness that were issued, incomplete submissions and endorsed plans.

Review/Discuss Proposed Subdivision Checklists: The consensus of the Board was that the checklists were well prepared and did not have any further changes to offer. Mr. Goff told them that because they are part of the Subdivision & Land Development Regulations, the revised checklists will not be used until the Board addresses other updates and changes to the Regulations and follow the process for acceptance (notice-public hearing-acceptance).

Chairman Partington informed the Board that Mr. Tremblay had recently submitted his resignation from the Planning Board. He asked the Planning staff to prepare a letter of appreciation for Mr. Tremblay's service on the Board as well as for his valuable expertise in regards to conservation and insight into forestry management.

Having nothing further, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Pick at 8:04 p.m. The motion received a second from Mr. Ferreira and carried unanimously by the Board.

Recorded by: M. Christine Langlois
M. Christine Langlois, Deputy Planner