

# READFIELD PLANNING BOARD

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## Minutes of Wednesday, August 19, 2020

**Planning Board Members:** Paula Clark; Chair, Jack Comart; Vice Chair, William Buck, William Godfrey, Jan Gould and Don Witherill

**Others Attending:** Jaime Hanson (CEO), Kristin Parks (Board Secretary), Eric Dyer (Town Manager), Lori Dube (Agent on behalf of Glenn Dube), Henry Clauson, Carter McCann & Mike Atkinson (Syncarpha), Cole Peters (Power Engineers), Jerry Bley, Bruce Hunter, Dean Sciaraffa

*All votes will be done by roll call of the Planning Board due to meeting conditions.*

Meeting called to order at 6:33 pm by Paula Clark. Welcome to Jan Gould, newest Planning Board member.

### **New Application:**

1. Glenn Dube – 74 North Road & 80 North Road, Map 121/Lot 011 & 012
  - Lori Dube, Real Estate Agent in attendance (via ZOOM) on behalf of Glenn Dube. Seller would like to modify subdivision plan and even out the lots by moving the property side by side instead of having land behind 74 North Road that is part of 80 North Road. There is a time restraint as the property is to be closed on within the next few days. 74 North Rd undersized for standard lot for being a buildable lot. Unaware of any restrictions on either of the lots in the subdivision plan and if there is one to be referred to at all. Have had communication with two of the four abutters and they have signed off on approval. The title attorneys refuse title release until there it approval from the town.
  - Jaime (CEO) is unable to find a subdivision plan for these lots as a town approved subdivision. No deed references a subdivision and no folder reference either.
  - Paula states it doesn't need Planning Board approval as not part of a subdivision.
  - Jaime to write a letter stating that the properties are not a part of a town approved subdivision plan and to work with Lori to make sure Title Company will accept.

### **Old Applications:**

1. Syncarpha Solar LLC – 368 Main Street – Public Hearing
  - Paula gave a summary; April 29<sup>th</sup> application was received, may 13<sup>th</sup> informal introduction presentation – provided additional information s requested by Planning Board. Later in May consulted with Town Attorney – reviewed as essential service and to go through the correct process. Mid July – determined application complete with Public Hearing scheduled for tonight, August 19<sup>th</sup>. Tonight's public hearing is just for public comments – no decisions to be made.
  - Public Hearing open at 7:21 pm by Paula Clark:
    - Henry Clauson had a question on the process of where things are and if this is set in stone or if it can change.
    - Carter McCann of Syncarpha gave a brief introduction of the company/project. Project just less than 20 acres, safety in mind, fenced in, no harmful chemicals, and monitored remotely, low impact development.

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It will take about 4 to 6 months to complete the project. The Fire Department and Utility Company will get training on emergency shutdowns. Part of a community project where residents can save 10-12% on their utility bill each month. No wetlands will be disturbed.

- Cole Peters of Power Engineers went over the 2 sets of visual plans that have been included and the approved permits for the project. All have been submitted to the town along with the storm water and erosion control permits and plans.
- Henry Clauson, resident of Readfield asked to see the view from across the Plains Road/Church as it doesn't seem to show this in the visual plan. Applicants to get more visuals as requested.
- Cole Peters reviewed the criteria and questioner that was submitted. There will be a 7 foot chain linked fence and was asked if it could be seen from the road. The solar panels will go from East to West. A question was asked on the width of the solar arrays?
- Public Comments: Henry Clauson who lives on the Plains Road expressed his views on the solar projects and the location of the project and the visual impacts. He is not against solar but doesn't feel that this is the right location. He referred to the Open Space Plan and the public process. Asked the Planning Board to reach out to the public and make them more aware and educated. Feels it goes against the Open Space Plan. Wildlife habitat and the gateway to Readfield and that it is a historical area with the church and cemetery located right there. He stated that the comprehensive plan references to the visual appearance of the town when entering Readfield. Henry made a recommendation to the Planning Board to look seriously at this project and not having it at this location, having the LUO mention solar projects, have a Town Meeting on a project like this that affects the town, a different kind of fence, moved back further from the road, plant vegetation buffer and a traffic plan as it's a busy area and crest of the hill. He would love the town to pause on the project and look into other options and approaches.
- Jack referred to page 28 in the Open Space Plan and said that the property is mentioned. Agreed with vegetated buffers to distract views away from the visual aspects.
- Comments from Carter that the fence will be raised for smaller animals to get through and they are required to have a 7 foot, chain linked fence per state/federal laws. They are willing to work with other fencing ideas and rendering plan of project moved back further.
- Jerry Bley on behalf of the Conservation Commission spoke that they met on August 11<sup>th</sup> and went over comments that have been submitted along with recommendations.
- Jack asked if plating trees would help with the concerns that have arisen.
- Dean Sciaraffa is the owner of Highland Ridge Farm – he purchased the land in 2016 to keep the farm stand going and restores the buildings. The solar project makes the property financially stable. He gave his news on why the project is beneficial and stated that it is good clean electricity. His

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concerns with the trees are that they will shade the growing plots of some parts of the land.

- Bruce Hunter was present but had no comments, just wants to learn more.
- Henry feels COVID-19 is a big reason there is a low attendance.
- Paula spoke that all areas need to be complete and addressed before more going on. Set up deliberations meeting and what to do next and to continue the public hearing to next meeting.
- Kristin confirmed that all abutters were notified by certified mailing.
- September 9 will be continuation of public hearing and deliberative session. The additional renderings will be submitted; moving project farther back, additional plantings and views from the church/Plains Road.
- **Motion** made by Don Witherill to continue the public hearing on September 9, **second** by Jan Gould. **Vote** 6-0 in favor.

### **Administrative Items:**

- Written comments from public to be submitted to the Planning Board by end of week.
- Current public comments to be sent to Cole Peters and Planning Board members.
- Jaimie & Kristin to complete Public Hearing notices to KJ and abutters.
- Baudo to be added to September 9 agenda for completeness determination.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm by Paula Clark