

Readfield Planning Board

Meeting Minutes of November 14, 2023 - Unapproved

Planning Board Members Present: Paula Clark (Chair), Jack Comart, Don Witherill, Brandon Fike, Henry Clauson, Peter Bickerman

Excused: Bill Buck, John Mitchell

Others Attending: Chip Stephens (CEO), Anjelica Pittman (Board Secretary), Kara Moody (Stantec), Geoff Martin (Norwich Solar), John Cushing (Cushing Storage & Rentals, LLC)

Meeting called to order by Paula at 6:30 PM

Public Meeting:

Paula began the meeting with a briefing of the LUO Article 9 provisions for a Commercial Industrial District (CID) rezoning application and requirements. Paula also discussed the resulting process when a CID rezoning is approved by the Planning Board and further steps required to complete the rezoning.

Norwich Technologies / Readfield Main Street Solar LLC - Proposal to rezone to a Commercial Industrial District (CID) to allow the construction of the Main Street Solar Project, a distributed generation large scale solar energy system on the south side of Main Street (route 17). A CID, as required by Article 7, sec 4, 8 and defined in Article 9, requires structures with greater than 5000 square feet coverage to be located in a CID. The project parcel is proposed to contain greater than 5000 sq. ft. of Solar Panels coverage on 71.93 acres and the site will be on an open field portion of the project. The total fenced area will be 9.59 acres, the total project limits will be 17.51 acres and total impervious area of the project will be .25 acres. The address is on Main Street on Map 143 Lot 014 in the Rural District.

Representatives from Stantec and Norwich Solar gave an overview of their application and answered questions from the Planning Board. This included answering some questions and changes from the previous meeting. Kara stated that the power line from Main Street will be routed underground as requested by the board as well as other minor cosmetic changes. In the application, Kara touched on how this project would be in keeping with the Town of Readfield's recently updated Comprehensive Plan.

When asked why there will be more clearing on one side of the project site, Kara explained that it is to reduce shading from the trees over the solar panels along that side. While the representatives were not sure of the sites current use, it was previously a sludge site, and will be owned by Norwich (not leased). The total fenced area of the site is 9.5 acres, with about 17 total cleared acres, and 500 wooded feet from the clearing line to the nearest residence. The array is approximately 700ft from the wetlands, 100ft from the access road.

The board advised them to be wary of language around using local contractors during the building phase of the project unless they are certain that will be the case. Testing of the site soils showed no known prime farmland souls within the project area, but stated there is an option for agricultural flexibility if the rezoning allows.

Jack **motioned** to find the CID application complete, to schedule a Public Hearing, waive the site visit, and complete notification requirements, **seconded** by Don, **vote 6-0** in favor.

If anyone on the board does want to visit the site, Geoff will find out and let Chip know. Jack will write up the notice to people within 500feet of the project and send to Chip.

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Cushing Storage LLC - Proposal to rezone to a Commercial Industrial District (CID) to allow the construction of additional storage space on 866 Main Street (route 17). A CID, as required by Article 7, sec 4, 8 and defined in Article 9, requires structures with greater than 5000 square feet coverage to be located in a CID. The proposed project is to build two additional storage buildings, the first building will be approximately 100' x 20', and the other storage building will be approximately 100' x 50' the address is at 866 Main Street on Map 121 Lot 020 in the Village District

John attended and gave a summary of his application. The new buildings will be located at the back of the lot down an embankment where the lot levels out and is not visible from the road. He would not be adding anymore buildings in the future as these two would use up the remaining space on the lot. John keeps his storage prices competitive with the market and most of his renters are local, either from Readfield, Fayette or Wayne. There will be a 20ft buffer of trees between John's lot and 2 of the 3 abutters, he has a neighbor on either side and Camp KV owns the property behind. The side of the property by the railroad tracks will have a 10ft tree buffer, the neighbors trailer is 15-20ft from the old church building, which is about 400ft from the new buildings. The other neighbor's garage on the Maranacook side of John's property is approximately 300ft away. The new buildings will each be brown with a green roof to blend into the surroundings. John plans to use solar powered motion sensing lighting, but will not have electricity in the buildings. John checks on the property frequently and will continue to do so.

The board agreed that no site visit is needed but he may need to modify the size of the buildings later or add more buffers. John was in agreeance. The board also discussed that the CID rezoning would include all of the existing storage buildings on the lot (2 currently) as well as the proposed buildings, approximately 12,000ft total.

Motion made by Peter to find the application complete, to schedule a Public Hearing and complete Public Notice, **seconded** by Henry, **vote 6-0** in favor.

The Public Hearing for both CID rezoning applications will take place on December 12, 2023.

Other Business:

Minutes from October 10, 2023:

Edits to the minutes were suggested. Don **motioned** to approve the minutes as amended, **seconded** by Peter, **vote 4-0** in favor. Jack and Henry abstained from the vote as they were not present at that meeting.

Meeting of the Chairs:

Paula attended the Select Board's annual Meeting of the Chairs and gave the Planning Board a summary of the meeting. The Chairs meeting mainly focused on the Comprehensive Plan implementation, updating the Open Space Plan, and the Fairgrounds Working Group. The Select Board sent out a Comprehensive Plan matrix that highlights which pieces of the plan were assigned to each board, the Planning Boards piece is the largest.

LD2003:

Paula discussed the new legislation which takes effect in January 2024 and allows for secondary dwelling units on properties that already have single-family homes. Funding for ordinance revisions through the state were offered and the Town Manager already applied and was sent \$10k to help pay for ordinance planning and changes. Paula has found a consulting company, North Star Consulting, familiar with the LD2003 and would like to put out an RFQ, request for qualifications. The consulting company would review the current LUO and

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include changes relevant to LD2003 where applicable. Chip will send out information on LD2003 to board members. Paula will discuss with Eric the logistics of an RFQ in order to get a consultant in a timely manner.

Fairgrounds Working Group:

Don attended the November 2nd Fairgrounds Working Group Meeting, the primary focus of the meeting was finding a location to build a basketball court. The Facilities Committee at the school declined the two locations at the schools, which leaves the Fairgrounds for the location. The Group also discussed having a multisport court and not just a basketball court to support more activities. The Fairgrounds Working Group will meet again in two weeks.

Schedule:

Planning Board will not meet again until December 12 for the two CID rezoning applications Public Hearing. Paula will send a memo to Norwich to let them know of the Public Hearing date.

Meeting adjourned by Paula at 8:30 PM