

# **Readfield Planning Board**

## **Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2023 - Approved**

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

**Excused:** John Mitchell

**Others Attending:** Chip Stephens (CEO), Anjelica Pittman (Board Secretary), John Cushing, Kara Moody, Martha Staskus, Kartika Wright

### **Meeting called to order by Paula at 6:30 PM**

#### **Public Hearing:**

**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 commercial, industrial or infrastructure activities 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**

Paula gave a review of the application thus far and opened the Public Hearing. Kara Moody and Martha Staskus summarized their application to the board including consultants they use, the solar project array details, site details, environmental details and their reason for rezoning. They also discussed interest in agricultural uses on the property and that they may like to incorporate that into their building permit if needed. If the rezoning goes through, it will apply to the entire lot, not just the solar array area.

Henry asked the applicants if they could provide examples of how their project would benefit the residents of the Town of Readfield. Both Kara and Martha gave examples such as the solar being a clean renewable source of energy, there are no emissions or hazardous materials produced and no demand on town services. They stated that the solar array is a form of conservation due to the fact that the panels are not permanent and will be removed when decommissioned. The town will also receive taxes on the land from the project, and the electricity from the solar array will go into the CMP system for the state of Maine. Once the array is online, people can sign up for the Net Energy billing.

There has been a lack of public comment on this application to this point. With that in mind Paula suggested the Board leave the record open until 5PM December 21, 2023 to provide opportunity for public comment. Any comments received will be sent to Martha and Kara so they have a chance to respond to comments at the January 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Board will deliberate their decision on this application at the January 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, and consider a recommendation to the Select Board for their regularly scheduled meeting January 22, 2024.

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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.**

Paula gave a review of the application thus far and opened the Public Hearing. John Cushing appeared and presented an overview of his application. John would like to build two storage buildings in addition to the storage units he already rents out on his property. One building will be 100' x 50' and the other will be 100' x 20'. The larger of the two buildings will be used to store larger items like boats and vehicles, any lighting will be solar, and if the buffer of trees already in existence on the parcel is not wide enough John is open to minimizing the size of the proposed buildings or consolidates them to one building. Since the last meeting John has been considering heating the larger of the two buildings, in which case would require electricity to it, but the powerlines would run underground. The storage units will be open/accessible 24/7, John does not see a lot of traffic as it stands now, however he is open to adding a gate if needed. John keeps a close eye on the property.

Kartika Wright, an abutter to the property attended the Hearing and stated that she appreciates the responsible use of the lot and color of the more recently built storage unit John recently constructed as the color scheme he used blends in well to the natural surroundings. Kartika said that John looks ahead as needed and she had no qualms with his current application.

Paula suggested following the same course of plan as the previous application with Norwich. The Board agreed.

## Old Business

Paula addressed previous Board discussion about incorporation of State Legislation LD2003 and consulting services. Paula, Jack and Eric Dyer met via Zoom with a consultant from Northstar Planning prior to signing a contract with them. The Northstar planning consultant will attend the January 9<sup>th</sup> Planning Board meeting to meet the Board and discuss LUO revisions needed to comply with LD2003. The consultant will put together a package a week before the meeting for the Boards review. Northstar will give an overview of LD2003 and will address both mandatory and optional items to consider at that time. Chip will recirculate the LD2003 information he has to members of the Board. The Planning Board will meet at 6PM for the January 9<sup>th</sup> meeting to allow for both CID applications and discussion with the Northstar consultant.

## **Approve Minutes from November 14, 2023**

The Board made a couple of minor edits to the minutes. Henry **motioned** to approve the minutes as amended, Peter **seconded**, **vote 7-0** in favor.

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Adjourn

Meeting adjourned by Paula at PM