

**TOWN OF JACKSON
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
December 5, 2023**

The Town of Jackson Planning Board met on December 5, 2023 at 6:30 pm at the Town of Jackson Town Hall. The following people were in attendance-

Board Members:

- Kelly Donahue
- Erik VandenBerg
- Mark Mahoney
- Steve Chuhta
- Tim Thomas
- Irene Headwell

Others Present:

- Alex Milhonne

NOVEMBER 14TH MINUTES

A **motion** was made by Mark Mahoney and seconded by Erik VandenBerg to approve the November 14, 2023 meeting minutes as written. Motion carried in favor 5-0 with Irene Headwell abstaining.

NORBUT SOLAR FARMS UPDATE

Chair Donahue updated the Board members on a meeting held at the Town Hall to discuss logistics of application requirements between the Town Attorney and Norbut Solar's Attorney. The meeting was held to better get an understanding between the two parties on whether one singular application should be required as opposed to four. Chair Donahue, Planning Board member Mahoney, Supervisor Skellie, Town/Planning Board Clerk Molly Dixson and Norbut's Project Manager Victor Ciaccia were also in attendance. Chair Donahue stated that there are certain steps that need to be taken with the County before the project can proceed with the application. This is due to the requirement by the County that solar projects need to subdivide a property before receiving separate tax ID #'s from Real Property Tax Services. If this requirement is not in fact needed or regulated by law, it would save the Town from having to do a major subdivision for the project. Norbut Solar advised they will be checking with the County Attorney and Treasurer for clarification on the issue.

Board member Chuhta questioned if the Board could amend the Solar law if need be. Chair Donahue stated that we could, but all amendments would need to go through the same procedures as the original law, such as a public hearing and a subsequent vote by the Town Board. The Board would need to see if another moratorium on solar would be possible if amending the law. Chair Donahue continued to say that the Town Attorney feels we should not

move forward with the project until the issue with the subdivision is worked out with the County. Once the application comes through, the Planning Board can pass the application onto an outside engineering firm for reviewal.

At this time, resident Alex Milhonne of Hedges Road spoke to share a picture of the view from his property, which will be directly impacted by the proposed solar facility. He stated that he purchased the home and renovated it 25 years ago mainly because of the view. He questioned if this project would be approved. Board members all relayed to Mr. Milhonne that they have no authority to tell a solar company whether or not they can build in the Town. The purpose of site plan as well as the solar law is to try to protect the Town as much as possible when these projects come through. Board members agreed that an informational meeting with townspeople closer to the summertime would be helpful so that Norbut can answer any questions and concerns from residents.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Board member VandenBerg left messages with Supervisor Skellie to move forward on finding younger volunteers for the Comprehensive Plan Committee. Board members agreed to start the process for the Comprehensive Plan in January.

NEXT STEPS FOR PLANNING BOARD

Chair Donahue stated that she has reached out to other townships and entities about developing a renewable energies law. She stated that no other town in the County currently has one. Board members questioned if they should focus on a wind law, or a battery energy law next. Board member VandenBerg stated that there may be more of a need for a wind law at this time. Board member Chuhta questioned if renewable energy was something we could incorporate into our Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Donahue advised the Clerk to get copies of the Planning Board bylaws for the next meeting. Board members agreed to set a date at the January regular meeting to begin work on the Comprehensive Plan. Board member Donahue stated that she will send information on training seminars for the coming year to Board members via email, if they are interested.

A **motion** was made by Steve Chuhta and seconded by Mark Mahoney to adjourn the meeting at 7:22 pm.

Motion carried in favor 6-0.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 2, 2024 @ 6:30 pm

Adjourned: @ 7:22 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Molly Dixson, Town of Jackson