

**TOWN OF JACKSON  
PLANNING BOARD MEETING  
January 2, 2024**

The Town of Jackson Planning Board met on January 2, 2024 at 6:30 pm at the Town of Jackson Town Hall. The following people were in attendance-

**Board Members:**

- Kelly Donahue
- Amy Maxwell
- Erik VandenBerg
- Mark Mahoney
- Steve Chuhta
- Irene Headwell
- Tim Thomas [entered at 6:35 pm]

**Others Present:**

- Lewis Steele

**DECEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup> MINUTES**

A **motion** was made by Mark Mahoney and seconded by Steve Chuhta to approve the December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 meeting minutes as written. Motion carried in favor 5-0 with Amy Maxwell abstaining.

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

Board member VandenBerg advised the Board that Supervisor Skellie will be speaking with a member of the community that may potentially join the Comprehensive Plan Committee. He would like to set a potential meeting date with other members for the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January at 6:30 pm. He will check with the Town Board if this date is agreeable with them.

**WIND/BATTERY STORAGE MORATORIUM**

At the request of Board member Chuhta, the Board added to the agenda a discussion on a potential moratorium on wind and/or battery storage energy sources while the board further researches and drafts a law to site them. Board members questioned if they would ask the Town Board to approve a moratorium on renewable energy or specifically battery or wind. Board member Mahoney stated he believes battery is more pressing at this time and may be considered more favorably by the Town Board. Board members expressed concern over the potential fire hazards that the local volunteer fire departments may need to address with battery storage. Chair

Donahue stated that each renewable energy source should be its own law, as each is different and require different concerns and siting. Board members agreed that a moratorium on commercial battery storage is needed to investigate the issue further and to draft a law in regards to siting these projects.

A **motion** was made by Steve Chuhta and seconded by Mark Mahoney to request the Town Board approve a 6-month moratorium, with possibility of extension, on commercial battery storage in the Town while the Planning Board researches and drafts a law to site such potential projects. Motion carried in favor 7-0.

### **NEXT STEPS FOR PLANNING BOARD**

Board members reviewed copies of the PB bylaws. Chair Donahue stated she would like to focus on renewable energy next, but is open to other suggestions. Board member Mahoney suggested the Board form a subcommittee to rewrite the bylaws. Board members agreed to take the copies of the bylaws home to review further. PB Clerk Dixson will reach out to County Planner Pamela Landi regarding information on town planning board bylaws. Chair Donahue said we will add this item to the February agenda.

At this time, Chair Donahue asked Board members if they had any other items of business to discuss. Board members stated they did not. Chair Donahue asked the Board if they would be open to allowing resident Lewis Steele to speak and share his concerns regarding the potential Norbut Solar project on Ackley Road. Board members agreed to this but advised the project is not yet in site plan review. Lewis Steele began by passing out letters he had drafted expressing his concerns to the Board members. He stated that he had read the December Planning Board minutes and disagreed with the Board's opinion that they could not reject the project. He stated that the Solar Law coincides with the Town's Site Plan Law, and the site plan process allows the Planning Board to disapprove projects if a number of conditions are not met. He stated that the visual impact of the project is important to the welfare of the Town and could be reason for denial of the application. Board member Mahoney asked Mr. Steele if he had other reasons of concern for the project besides from the viewshed. Lewis stated they would need to review the environmental impact statement for the project. Board member Mahoney asked if he is aware of any other cases in Towns where they had denied a USSEF based on viewshed. Mr. Steele stated he is not but it is a concern of what is important to the Town. Board member Headwell pointed out that visual impact is subjective. Board member Maxwell stated that part of the process will be reviewing everything in the application package and addressing the visual concerns. Chair Donahue stated that they hope to have a few public hearings and meetings with Norbut so that they can address these concerns with residents.

A **motion** was made by Amy Maxwell and seconded by Erik Vandenberg to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 pm.

Motion carried in favor 7-0.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, February 6, 2024 @ 6:30 pm

**Adjourned:** @ 7:12 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Molly Dixon, Town of Jackson