

**TOWN OF JACKSON
PLANNING BOARD MEETING
March 5, 2024**

The Town of Jackson Planning Board met on March 5, 2024 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
- Amy Maxwell

Others Present:

- Lewis Steele
- Jamie Caligure
- Eric Strebel

Absent: Irene Headwell

FEBRUARY 6TH MINUTES

A **motion** was made by Mark Mahoney and seconded by Erik VandenBerg to approve the February 6th, 2024 meeting minutes as written. Motion carried in favor 4-0 with Amy Maxwell abstaining.

Chair Kelly Donahue opened the meeting at 6:30 pm and requested to add Jamie Caligure to the agenda. Board members agreed to this and Chair Donahue introduced Jamie as a resident of Jackson interested in filling the open position on the Planning Board. Jamie Caligure stated that he has been a resident of the Town along with his wife Tara and son for the past nine years. He works in a bakery in the Town of Salem and his wife works at Salem Central School, where his son also attends. He added that his interest in the open Board position stems from his desire to be more involved with his community.

At this time, Chair Donahue stated that the Board is aware of some confusion that has been raised online recently. She wanted to make clear that as of this date, the Town does not have an official site plan application from Norbut Solar for the potential solar facility on Ackley Road. Chair Donahue continued by saying that it is difficult for the Planning Board to answer questions when they do not know what the official application will contain. We have not heard from Norbut as they are still working with the County to gain clarification on a tax ID number issue. Chair Donahue added that the Local Law hearing that will take place at 1:00 on March 6th prior to the start of the Town Board meeting is for a moratorium on commercial battery energy storage

systems, which are solely for power storage and not distribution. This is not directly related to any solar matter.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

There was a meeting to discuss the Comprehensive Plan held at Town Hall on February 27th at 6:30 pm. Board member VandenBerg advised that Committee members discussed different concerns and challenges the Town faces as well as potential resolutions and ideas that could be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. Committee members will begin by reviewing the 2014 draft of the Comprehensive Plan and resurveying residents of the Town. Town Board members will officially appoint all 5 members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee at the March Town Board meeting. Board member VandenBerg plans to set the date for each Committee meeting on the last Tuesday of each month, pending availability of other members.

PLANNING BOARD BYLAWS

Chair Donahue stated that the working copy of the PB Bylaws is still being drafted up at this time. We will add review of the Bylaws to the April Planning Board agenda and make edits at that time.

COMMERCIAL BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS LAW UPDATE

At the February Town Board meeting, Town Board members set the date for the hearing on the Commercial Battery Energy Storage Systems Moratorium law for March 6th at 1:00 pm. Once the law gets approved and is filed with the Secretary of State, it will set the clock for the 6-month moratorium so that we can draft the CBESS law. Chair Donahue stated that the process of drafting the CBESS law will require research and drafting with the Town Attorney's assistance. Part of the process will be involving first responders and emergency services so that they are aware of any potential concerns with these storage systems and we can include safety measures within the law. Board members VandenBerg and Chuhta added that there should be information on training requirements and equipment needs included.

Board member VandenBerg questioned how many other towns currently have moratoriums on renewable energy? Chair Donahue stated that she was not sure, but Easton currently has 3 as they are working on wind, battery and solar laws. Resident Lewis Steele added that the Town should consider particulars of battery energy storage in every place we are reviewing, as each area is different and therefore regulates these facilities differently.

At this time, Chair Donahue invited Eric Strebel of Dionondehowa Wildlife Sanctuary and School to speak. Eric spoke to say he acknowledges and appreciates the update on the potential solar project on Ackley Road. He handed out materials to Board members expressing more of the Sanctuary's concerns with the potential project, which would border their property on Stanton Road if approved. He stated their objective is just to make the Town aware of their concerns going forward. Board member Mahoney stated that they should consider putting more pressure on the State level where the push for renewable energy is coming from. Resident Lewis Steele questioned this, as the Town has authority over all facilities with a nameplate capacity of under 25 MW that do not opt in to the 94-C process. Board member Mahoney clarified by saying local governments are operating under NYS which has been organizing a large-scale transition to renewable energy. We do have authority, but we have to assess each project carefully as it comes as we do not have the authority to ban USSEF's altogether.

Chair Donahue stated that there was a concern raised by resident Sharon Dunn via email about transfer of ownership responsibilities of solar facilities in the Town's Solar Law. She stated that while the Town is made aware of any changes by letter, this may not be made aware to emergency services when they need to contact the site owners. A sign posted outside of the facility site may help to resolve this concern. Chair Donahue said we can review the law going forward and see if this is a potential amendment that could be made.

A **motion** was made by Mark Mahoney and seconded by Steve Chuhta to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 pm.

Motion carried in favor 5-0.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 2nd, 2024 @ 6:30 pm

Adjourned: @ 7:02 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Molly Dixson, Town of Jackson