

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING DECEMBER 17, 2015

Chairman Hevy called the meeting to order in the Selectmen's office at 3:00 PM with Mrs. Walter also present. Mr. Smith was not present.

The Selectmen joined a conference call with Michael Hedges, Kevin Kelley and Sabin Rossi of Power Management to discuss potential solar projects for the Town of North Brookfield.

Everyone reviewed an outline of topics to be discussed that was prepared by Mr. Hevy. (Attachment #1)

Landfill

On the topic of the landfill, Mr. Hedges noted that he and Mrs. Walter toured the landfill on December 2nd with DEP. Because of some problems noted by DEP, and the time needed to correct those problems, Mr. Hedges does not consider the landfill to be a viable site at this time. Mrs. Walter said that the problems with the landfill cap are maintenance problems and are the responsibility of John Alphin and the Board of Health. Mr. Kelley stated that when the landfill comes into DEP compliance Power Management would be happy to issue a Phase 2 RFP for that site.

Police Station

Mr. Kelley said that there is no problem with a solar installation on the roof of the police station. In his opinion even though the overall benefit to the Town is minimal, it will be a nice little showpiece in the center of town. It will be a good public relations and educational move.

Water Department

Mr. Hevy noted that the Selectmen want to make sure that any installations at the Water Plant on Bell Road do not infringe upon the neighbors. Mr. Kelley said that his recommendation would be to keep the solar panels on the northern portion of the property. Mr. Hevy said that he would want to consult with Mr. Kennan and the Water Commissioners on this. Mr. Kelley said that there would be another site walk with everyone present before the bids are due to clarify what can be done there.

Everyone agreed that the 74 Oakham Road site is large enough to move the installation around if necessary. This will be a good site.

It was agreed that the Doane and Horse Pond sites at 75 Oakham Road should be eliminated.

School

Mr. Hevy noted that the School Department seems to be in favor of anything that can be done on the campus. Mr. Kelley noted that canopies over the parking lot are feasible. Mr. Hevy asked how much more the canopies cost vs. ground mounted panels, and Mr.

Kelley said they cost 20 – 30% more, and the overall lease revenue per megawatt will be less because of the increased cost to the investor. Mr. Kelley stated that covered parking could be an added benefit to the school. He recommended including it in the RFP and eliminating it later if necessary. Mrs. Walter said that she does not see any harm in putting this in the RFP; we need to maximize the benefit to the school.

Mrs. Walter reminded the gentlemen from Power Management that the Town is still interested in a solar project for the elementary school roof, but she understands that it is a big project that will require involvement from the state and other entities. Mr. Kelley said that this too, could be a good Phase 2 project.

Mr. Hevy noted that the school parking lot is an emergency life flight landing zone. He needs to get some input from the Fire Chief and EMS before making any decisions.

On the subject of a canopy over the playground, Mr. Kelley noted that the installation needs to cover parking spaces in order to be considered a parking canopy and be eligible for the state and federal tax incentives. He said it could hurt the revenue for the town.

Mr. Hevy also noted that the School Department is very interested in the educational component of these solar projects.

The group discussed the placement of solar panels in the wooded area near the baseball fields at the high school. Mr. Hevy said that it looks to him like an awfully large installation, and he wondered if the plans should be scaled back?

Mr. Kelley stated that every 5 acres of land yields 1 mW of solar; the value to the Town is \$900,000.00 over 20 years for each 5 acre site. He noted that the letter from the School Committee seems to indicate that they want as much solar as possible. He suggested leaving this open in the RFP and changing it later if needed.

Mrs. Walter said that in her opinion we should maximize as much as possible, if we run into problems we can scale down then. Mr. Kelley said that the RFP should identify the sites and let the vendors bid. We can work with the vendors later if necessary.

Mr. Hevy then asked Mr. Kelley his opinion of 98 Shore Road. This land-locked parcel is abutting an 18 mW project, and the developer wants to purchase the land from the town. He asked if leasing would be better? Mr. Kelley said that perhaps a developer would want to buy some other parcels to unlock this one. Mr. Rossi asked Mr. Hevy to send the information to them and they would take a look at it.

Mr. Hevy asked what will be the next steps in the process? Mr. Kelley said that he will finalize the RFP and get it out. Approximately 30 days after publishing in the Central Register bids will be due. Power Management will summarize all of the proposals received, and make recommendations on the best benefit to the Town. The Selectmen would then award a contract, and construction should be complete by the end of 2016.

Mr. Hevy asked about the lumber that will need to be removed from some of the sites, and Mr. Kelley stated that most of the developers will hire someone to clear the land, and that person usually keeps the lumber as part of their fee.

Mr. Kelley promised to send over the draft RFP soon.

There being no further business, at 3:45 PM Mrs. Walter moved, and Mr. Hevy seconded, a motion to adjourn. So voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Scott Burton
Administrative Assistant