PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES, WEDNESDAY, April 24, 2019

The North Brookfield Planning Board held their meeting on Wednesday, April 24, 2019 at 7 PM at the Senior Center. Chair King called the meeting to order with members Jason Spangenberg, John Tripp, John Turner and alternate Jeff Smith in attendance. Michelle Petraitis was absent. Amy Yanover, Clerk took notes.

Chair King opened the meeting and called it to order. John Tripp made a motion to approve the minutes of March 20, 2019. Jason Spangenberg seconded the motion. Motion unanimously voted by all members.

John Murphy submitted a Form A application for plan approval with $75 fee, check #2021, for 7-13 Forest Street, Lot 1 with 31,074 square feet and frontage of 101.56’ and Lot 2 with 16,001 square feet and frontage of 100’. John Tripp made a motion to approve, Jason Spangenberg seconded and motion was unanimously voted.

Marie Laird submitted a Form A application for approval with $75 fee, check #3106, for 54 New Braintree Road to convey a parcel of land on the easterly side of New Braintree Road, Parcel 1 to be combined with abutting land of Kilborn to form a single undivided lot of 3.616 acres with frontage of 648.16’.   John Tripp made a motion to approve, Jason Spangenberg seconded and motion was unanimously voted.

Elizabeth Noonan submitted a Form B application for approval with $275 fee, check #2526, to subdivide Lot 1 of 16.785 acres at 25 Oakham Rd. with 592.11’ frontage to sell to a developer. Chair King advised Ms. Noonan to submit an electronic plot plan for engineer peer review. Per our subdivision regulations, we have 60 days to render a decision.

Greg Hering and Tetra Tech via letter, made a formal modification request for proposed access to the Brookfield Orchards/Gustafson solar project from Ward St. to Elm St. for grid interconnection. He stated the Ward St. access would be abandoned after the Elm St. access is completed. Topsoil will be taken from Elm St. to repair the roadway off Ward St. Greg Hering stated National Grid required seven poles. He stated the first 85’ of the road is not changing. John Tripp stated he would like to maximize the distance for the first pole to be 75+’ off the town road. Chair King requested that the planning board be notified by email when the pole staking is completed. Revised plans dated 4/23/2019. Letter attached.

John Tripp made a motion to approve the Brookfield Orchards/Gustafson solar project revised plans (revision 3) submitted and dated 4/23/19, for seven interconnection poles with the first being as far from the edge of the town road as possible. The access roadway surface will be substituting vegetation for 18’ of gravel. John Turner seconded and the motion was unanimously voted.  Greg Hering submitted letter with supplemental information dated 4/24/19 from Sean Reardon, Tetra Tech.

John Tripp made a motion to approve the Hanrahan family solar project, 97 Elm St., 5/7 Lane Ave. plans, revision date of 4/23/19 showing seven interconnection poles parallel to the railroad right of way with the requirement of eight 20’ softwood/pine trees to provide screening and height to be maintained at a height not to exceed 35’. Jason Spangenberg seconded and the motion was unanimously voted. Greg Hering submitted letter with supplemental information dated 4/24/19 from Sean Reardon, Tetra Tech. Letter is attached.

Prior to the two above solar project votes, the Board discussed all options and considered input from Mona Castonquay, abutter to the Hanrahan project. The Gustafson family was also present.

Greg Hering presented reclamation bond information in consideration of the Board’s need to establish a surety bond amount to fulfill condition #39 of the special permit decision for both the Brookfield Orchards/Gustafson and Hanrahan solar projects. John Turner submitted a hybrid proposal regarding using the Board’s new reclamation cash financial standards approved at the March meeting with a partial bond surety. Following discussion, it was the Board’s consensus that the two projects had been approved under the old financial surety requirements and that the projects were too far along in the sale process for new rules to be proposed/negotiated.

Jason Spangenberg made a motion that we agree to a reclamation surety bond of $392,842 that includes a 2.5% inflation rate escalator over twenty years for the Brookfield Orchards/Gustafson solar project. John Tripp seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor, one abstention. John Turner abstained.

Jason Spangenberg made a motion that we agree to a reclamation surety bond of $87,600 which includes a 2.5% inflation rate escalator over twenty years for the Hanrahan family solar project. John Tripp seconded the motion. The vote was four in favor, one abstention. John Turner abstained.

Chair King stated the need to notify presently approved solar project managers of our new financial surety policy. He will send email letter to the three affected project managers.

The mail included letters from the town of Oakham regarding decisions on five solar projects of various megawatts, notices of public hearings from the town of Spencer regarding proposed zoning amendments,  notice from the town of Brookfield regarding a solar hearing, notice from the town of West Brookfield regarding amending the zoning bylaw, a letter from the town of Palmer regarding Pittsfield to Boston rail service meeting,  a letter from Marie Laird regarding c.61A removal of 18.55 acres, a letter from Sean Monahan regarding removal c.61A of 4.6 acres, a budget update from the town accountant and invoices from Stonebridge Press and JH Engineering.

John Tripp made a motion to waive the right of first refusal on the property of Marie Laird of 9 Bell Road for 18.55 acres. Jason Spangenberg seconded. Motion unanimously voted by all members. Bill will send letter of decision to BOS.

John Turner made a motion to waive the right of first refusal on the property of Sean Monahan of 0 Bigelow Road for 4.698 acres. John Tripp seconded the motion. Motion unanimously voted by all members. Bill will send letter of decision to BOS.

Chair King stated he spoke to Dale Kiley regarding protocol for continuance of public hearings, specifically 55 West Brookfield Road. Chair King stated we need to re-notice the hearing and notify abutters when hearing continuance is requested by the applicant. He proposed we add 55 West Brookfield Road solar hearing continuance to every agenda until the board hears back from Jordan Energy.

Regarding hemp, Chair King stated he went to the Department of Agricultural Resources website and saw they encourage hemp cultivation. He stated under MGL, c.61A classification, hemp is not considered an agricultural crop and farmers could lose their c.61A status if they grow it. The Farm Bureau is looking into amending c.61A.

Chair King noted the next meeting will be 5/15/19. John Tripp made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 PM. Jason Spangenberg seconded the motion. Motion unanimously voted by all members.

Amy Yanover, Planning Board Clerk    (Minutes are 3 pages.)

Attendance – April 24, 2019 meeting of the North Brookfield Planning Board

Gloria Turner, 25 Ryan Road, North Brookfield, MA

Greg Hering, Solar Developer

Gary Bush, 87 West Brookfield Road, North Brookfield

Mona Castonguay, 79 Elm Street, North Brookfield

Cory Pearson, 25 Oakham Road, North Brookfield

Betsy (Elizabeth) Noonan, 25 Oakham Road, North Brookfield

Carl Gustafson, 20 Lane Avenue, North Brookfield

Mark Gustafson, 20 Lane Avenue, North Brookfield

Susan Gustafson, 20 Lane Avenue, North Brookfield

Carl Gustafson, Lincoln, ME