



Planning Board Meeting Minutes Thursday, August 20th at 7:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Benjamin Pendleton, Andrew Poland, Patricia Jennings (via Zoom)
Committee Members Absent: Andrea Perley, Jeff Eilenberg, 2 Alternate Positions (Still unknown)
Also Present: Jessica Westhaver, Joseph Rose, Jason Donovan (Facilities Manager for Bangor Savings), Jeff Read (Engineer from Sevee & Maher Engineers on behalf of Bangor Savings), Shannon Mahan, Nate Curtis (Midcoast Energy), Chris Byers (Boyle & Associates), Dale Knapp (Boyle & Associates), Paul Anderson, Kathleen Anderson, Lydia Crafts, Evan Houk (Lincoln County News)

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Benjamin Pendleton

New Business –

- **Building Expansion – Bangor Savings @ 2578 Bristol Rd (Previously DB & T) (Map 021 Lot 085):**
 - Joseph Rose presented to the board the application and plans from Bangor Savings. Jeff Read from Sevee & Mahar Engineers and Jason Donovan facilities Manager for Bangor Savings, were invited to the table to present their plan to the board.
 - Bangor Savings recently acquired Damariscotta Bank and Trust. Through review of the New Harbor branch location numerous issues were found with the current building:
 - Light coming in through holes in the shingles
 - No break room for employees
 - Small mechanical room
 - Shallow footings for foundation
 - Inadequate parking
 - The property has 1.5 acres of land.
 - Read acknowledged the planned improvements for the structure would be more than 50% of the current assessment, which tests the Land Use Ordinance. In order to comply with the LUO structures that have an improvement cost of over the 50% value of the structure must be made to comply with the 50 feet minimum setback from the road, or as much as practicable. Read also believed that while this is being discussed as a renovation/expansion, all 4 walls of the current structure would probably be coming down and need a full rebuild. Rose stated that in this situation where the construction cost exceeded the 50% value, there was no difference in remodel vs complete teardown.
 - Read with Rose's input, described to the board the limitations of moving the structure.
 - The land has a substantial lower continual degradation behind the building and would require extensive groundwork and fill.
 - The current septic system is closely located behind the building and moving the building would require a new septic. (The septic system is currently under review and they are not sure if it would need to be replaced)
 - Power to the building from the road is underground to the Northeast corner of the building. Moving the building would require substantial new wiring.

- Leaving the building in the current location and only expanding would significantly reduce cost. The entirety of the expansion would happen on the back side of the building and would not encroach on the road setback. The expansion would cover the following items:
 - Add an employee break room
 - Build a larger more functional mechanical room
 - Maintain and add a small bump out as current protocol for bank drive throughs.
 - Back parking lot would be added for additional parking. This area would not exceed the current gravel in place.
 - The ATM and night drop box would be temporarily relocated closer to the Southside Rd until it can be relocated in the completed building.
 - Construction on site work and the foundation will begin in the fall and continue through the winter, weather permitting.
 - The board discussed the project as allowing the remodel to happen in the current location vs requiring it to be moved out of the setback from the road. The cost would substantially increase the project to move it back, and this could jeopardize Bangor Savings in moving forward with the New Harbor location. The location is a community resource as the only bank located in Bristol.
 - **VOTE:** Pendleton made a motion to approve the building permit as presented (pending any major changes to the plan); Poland seconded. Approved 3-0.
- **Solar Farm Review – Question and Answer forum for Board Members**
 - The board was tasked by the Selectboard to review the current building fee schedule in regard to Solar Construction and any potential negative impact to the Town. The board invited Nate Curtis from Midcoast Solar, who has submitted an application for a community solar farm project, to hold and question and answer forum to have a better grasp on these projects. This would assist them in making the most informed recommendation to the Selectboard.
 - Curtis is the applicant for the project, and Chris Byers and Dale Knapp (Environmental Consultants from Boyle Associates) were present to answer questions. Rose informed the board the current application is planned for two parcels located on Bristol Tax Map 008-060 owned by Sterling Crooker Jr and 008-023-C owned by Tristan Pangilinan and Mercedes Borrromeo. This would be a project that residents could sign up for power supply. The way a project like this would work is the resident would continue to receive their power deliver through CMP, however, they would receive a credit for kWh's used which is offset by the solar power generation. Separate payment would be due to the solar generation company. The current project is a 3 megawatt system. There is a maximum capacity of 12 megawatts allowed on the Bristol CMP substation, limiting the number of farms that could potentially be constructed in the Town.
 - Byers and Knapp discussed the recent actions of the governor enacting legislation to encourage and help provide more access for Maine clean alternative energy projects. It is written in the law that solar power generated on these solar farms is required to stay in Maine, but not in the Town the power is generated. Maine Revenue Services is working on revising the recently adopted Renewable Energy Exemption law.
 - The board asked what type of environmental impacts there would be with a project of this type. Byers and Knapp answered with the following:
 - Clear cutting of trees and landscape at installation site. However, solar farms generate 6 times more energy benefits than the area of trees lost.

- DEP requires developers to maintain the land around the solar farms and care for the grass.
 - Construction is simple. Geo tech analysis is done to see how deep the footings need to go. No cement bases are used.
 - Trenching is done between each row of panels to maintain proper drainage.
 - Buffers will be in place between structure and road of current planned project.
 - No specific wildlife statistics are available, however the grading of the land under the structure is made in a way that animals can still access and live. A review of the current site has been done to verify there will little impact to the planned location.
- The board asked if there would be an impact on abutting landowners:
 - No significant research on this showing either a negative or positive impact.
 - There is little to no sound from the system (63 decibels) and cannot be heard from about 30 feet away.
- The board asked what type of agreement is in place with the landowner? Also if a decommissioning plan exists for projects of this nature.
 - There is a 20 year lease signed with the landowner with 5 year extensions up to 30 total years. A new 20 year lease is signed after this period.
 - If the land is sold, the solar company is required to be involved and the new owner assumes the remaining time on the lease.
 - The landowner receives revenue from the solar company for the use of the land.
 - A decommissioning plan is a part of the lease. Removing a solar farm is very simple and consists of breakdown of the panels and pulling the footings out of the ground. There is little impact to the land.
- The board asked the difference between “Community Buy-In” farms vs “Commercial” farms.
 - Community Billing – individuals’ signup for the use of the solar panels. They receive a credit on their bill for kWh used as if the solar panels were on their own home. Power is not directly received from the solar farm. There is a discount on the power and no signup fee.
 - Commercial – sold and generated specifically for large companies and billed as a net billing system.
- The board came back to the matter at hand, determining what appropriate action would be for a fee structure for solar farms. They asked Curtis what he has seen in different towns for fees, and he stated it is all over the place. Each town has a different method of determining how to charge the fee, what the fee is and whether they have an ordinance overseeing solar projects. Some towns charge by number of panels, some charge by square foot of panels, and some charge by the area of ground they cover. Byers stated he believed Bristol should do what is appropriate of the Town. Solar farms of this type are new in the State of Maine, with little precedent for fee structure. Rose informed the board Damariscotta and Nobleboro currently charge \$0.30 per sqft. Curtis stated there should not be a differentiation on our building fee schedule between commercial solar farms vs residential solar farms, because they are both essentially commercial.
- Public comments:
 - Lydia Crafts asked if there would be any implications on Public Utilities Commission. Byer and Knapp replied that no, there would not be. The current legislation is driving the law behind solar farms and making sure there are protections in place for consumers.
 - Paul Anderson asked if those who signup have a contract or terms and a project like this would be different from the issues run into with Electricity Maine. Byers stated there would be a one year commitment with no signup cost. The individual would agree to a rate for power, and at the end of that year could sign up again at current rate available at signup. There are new laws in place to protect consumers from penalties and over charging.

- Anderson also asked if the project is looking for financiers? Byers stated no, the project costs are all handled by the solar company and residents can enroll with no signup fee. There are no bonus periods and the entire program is regulated by the Public Utilities Commission. The program also has different options the consumer can choose from.
- Rose made the board aware that no fees have been collected on the permit application at this time. There is no current timeline for the project and they are willing to work with the Town of Bristol to make sure everyone is on the same page.
- The board decided to table the discussion on fees for solar farms until the next meeting, at which time they would decide on what recommendation to send to the Selectboard.

Old Business –

- **Subdivision Modification – Robin’s Ridge (Map 008 Lot 075-B-2C):**
 - Shannon Mahan was present on behalf of Robin Mahan. A new plan was presented showing Lot 4 of the subdivision as envisioned with the merger of a portion of the abutting property.
 - **VOTE:** Poland made a motion to approve the subdivision modification as presented; Pendleton seconded. Approved 3-0.

House Keeping –

- **Minute Approval –**
 - The board approved the minutes for the following meetings:

▪ 03/05/2020	▪ 07/16/2020
▪ 06/04/2020	▪ 08/06/2020
▪ 06/18/2020	

Next Meeting –

- Further Discussion of Solar Permitting Fees
- Alternate Positions

Pendleton made motion to adjourn the meeting, Poland seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:55PM. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 3rd, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Westhaver
Staff Liaison

PLANNING BOARD APPROVED: _____