TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Planning Board Meeting

May 25, 2022

ZOOM AND IN PERSON

MINUTES

6:00 PM

PRESENT: Chair Mike Bruno, Vice Chair Anthony Rodrigues, Martie Cook, Kim Koprowski, Kevin Roy, and Chris Jensen

Excused absence: Alecia Loveless

Chair Bruno opened the meeting at 6pm.

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

**AGENDA**

Town solar project.

Bethlehem Elementary School, ballfield, and the library.

Ted Vansant from Barrington power explained the project to the board. David Van Houten and Bruce Caplain were in attendance.

Ted Vasset barringtonpower

The goal of the Bethlehem Town Solar project is to offset municipal electric use with clean energy generated by a solar photovaultaic. (PV) system owned by the town that would stabilize and reduce costs.

The Bethlehem Energy Commission BEC has been working on this with the select board to develop this project over the past 18 to 24 months. The number of solar panels required to meet the town's demand is more than can fit on available roofs. So, the rest will be installed in a ground array. BEC spoke with the select board BES board, and library board for input on the best location. BES also advertised and conducted site visits to involve the public, and the select board also held several open meetings for public input on the project and on the site.

The site agreed upon after this process is adjacent to the Elm Street ball field north and east of the community garden.

The governmental nature of the project is that it will be owned by the town and administered by the select board for the benefit of all Bethlehem citizens. Initial financial analysis indicated that the project would more than pay for itself by redirecting the money the town is already paying for electricity during the project development, BEC and select board were able to attract grant funding to pay for most of the project, which will be completed without raising taxes and therefore providing significant savings to the town and the taxpayers over the projected life.

Chair Bruno explained that a full site plan is not required per RSA 674:54. Town owned property.

He asked about the ballfield having a fence around the solar array. Mr. Van Houten and Mr. Caplain said that there would be a protective barrier.

There is also a protective bond that needs to be implemented through the Select Board and required by RSA.

Martie Cook asked what the square footage of the area was. They didn't have that answer at the time. It is 150 by 80 feet.

Chair Bruno asks if it the town owns or is it a lease. Its town owned.

Anthony Rodrigues asked if the power was underground. Yes, there will be a trench from the school to the array. The board asked about a timeline. They estimate, end of July into September.

Kevin Roy asked about deliveries to the project. The parking lot is steep, and the grass gets very wet you can easily go off the edge. Mr. Van Houton and Mr. Caplain did not seem to think it would be a problem.

Mr. Bruno: the criteria have been met. Check with Select Board for the protective bond.

**Closed meeting for town solar project.**

**Next item on the agenda Presidential Mountain Resort updated recreation building plans.**

Mr. Eckman engineer for the project spoke. There is a 24 by 24 addition that has been added to the recreation building. Chair Bruno asked: its already been built? Yes, it has Eckman answered.

Two months out of the year, the synagogue will be in summer session.

Mike Bruno asked if there are standard utilities. Yes, answered by Mr. Eckman. Mr. Bruno asked about the Mitzvah that is planned for the basement. Mr. Eckman said that he did not know what it was. Mr. Bruno said that the plans explain that the electrical work will be done just like a pool installation. And it will be used for religious ceremonies. Mr. Eckman said the owner Mr. Rudich is a very private person and he would like this to be kept private.

Will this be open to the community? No. Mr. Eckman explained he didn't even know what the mitzvah was being used for.

*Mr. Jensen noted the almost 700-square feet addition to the rec building was almost if not completely finished without a building permit. Despite several requests from Fire Chief Jack Anderson, Mr. Rudich only applied for the building permit after the select board threatened Mr. Rudich with a cease-and-desist order, Mr. Jensen said.*

*Mr. Jensen asked Mr. Bruno about the issuance of building permits and whether a building permit must come after site-plan approval. Mr. Bruno said the issuance of building permits is up to the select board. But he said the traditional process is for the building permit to be issued after site-plan approval. Consultant Tara Bamford said: The building permit should always be last."*

The board was concerned about a buffer zone as the building are so close together. Mr. Eckman will investigate this. Martie Cook said she sees it to be too close to the buildings they might want to change some of the travel lanes.

Mr. Bruno reminded Eckman that all plans for any updating projects should come before the planning board first.

Commercial building permits will not be issued without planning board approval.

Mr. Bruno reminded Mr. Eckman that he also needs to submit a mylar to the planning office.

Please submit that as soon as possible.

The board asked if there anything else going on at PMR property?

Mr. Eckman said that were the restaurant was, there will be a stick-built structure on the exact same foundation. He does not agree with DOT regarding the driveway and parking area for the building. The board replied that everything that they have seen from DOT states that they will not be issuing a driveway permit. Mr. Eckman said again that he believes that a driveway permit will be issued.

Close PMR updated plans for recreation building.

**Tara Bamford site plan updates**

Tara also mentioned that building permits should always come last. All commercial properties should come before the planning board first.

The board went over the updated plans for site plan review. The board discussed what a minor site plan should be. There was a lengthy discussion about farmers markets that would allow out of state or even out of town growers. A possible permit process was discussed.

Closed SPR

Next meeting. June 8th.

Homework for everyone to look over the SPR suggestions.

Minutes 4-25-22

Anthony Rodrigues motion to approve minutes from 4-25-22. Chris Jensen second. 6-1. Passed Bruno abstained

Motion to adjourn Kim Koprowski. Anthony Rodriguez second all in favor adjourned.

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Respectfully submitted

Deb Bayley

Planning/Zoning Clerk