

PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Weymouth Town Hall
Council Chambers
October 5, 2015, Monday

Also Present:

James Clarke, Director of Planning
Eric Schneider, Principal Planner
Walter Flynn, Chair, Planning Board
Dave Chandler, Planning Board
Sandra Williams, Planning Board
Mary Akoury, Planning Board
B.D. Nayak, Planning Board

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Walter Flynn, Chairman of the Planning Board reconvened the Planning Board meeting.

15 106-Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance-Solar Photovoltaic Installations

A motion was made by Vice President Smart to open the public hearing on measures 15 106 and 15 107 and was seconded by Councilor Mathews. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

A motion was made by David Chandler to open the public hearing on measures 15 106 and was seconded by Mary Akoury.

Jim Clarke reviewed the presentation with Eric Schneider, Principal Planner. Adopting both measures will allow the town to complete application to be designated a Green Community to be eligible for grant funding. Mr. Schneider noted the changes which were made after the last subcommittee meeting. Definitions for small- and large-scale installations was added, restrictions for siting and codifying the language with the state. Part of the Green Community designation requires the adoption of solar requirement in at least one district. The original proposal was redrafted with the elimination of Open Space that included public parks, after concerns were brought forward at the Environmental and Ordinance Committee meeting. The redraft restricts the large-scale installation to the PIP district that includes the capped landfill in East Weymouth and an existing contractor yard off Liberty Street in South Weymouth. Existing practice will be codified regarding small-scale installations, which will continue to be treated as accessory uses and subject to those restrictions and with an added height restriction. At the request of the President, he reviewed the proposal line by line.

Councilor DiFazio asked if the proposed change precludes the town from adding other areas for large-scale installation in the future. Mr. Clarke responded that if there was a site that was appropriate, it could go through the zoning amendment process.

Councilor McDonald noted that by making the changes to move forward as a Green Community, it puts the town in a position to receive \$250,000 in initial grant funding in addition to be eligible to receive future funds.

Vice President Smart noted in 120-106.3 -1(f) he if asked installation would be performed by licensed electricians. The installer would pull the permit; he asked if they could consider adding additional language to be sure a contractor is not using a staff of unindentured apprentices (in violation of MA code). He asked if they could incorporate signage requirements for small-scale installation notifying emergency responders of the voltage. Additionally, Councilor Smart asked if the grant money could only be used on town-owned property installations. Mr. Clarke responded yes- the funding would be used for the town to reduce its operational costs.

Councilor Harrington asked if the ordinance changes allow for neighbors to share installations. Jeff Richards responded that accessory uses cannot be shared. He asked if an owner could subdivide for cogeneration. Mr. Richards responded no. Councilor Harrington asked if there have been any complaints on the aesthetics of the rooftop installations. Mr. Richards responded that they are allowed by right and there has not been any complaints.

Councilor Haugh thanked the administration for the proposal. She noted that the large-scale installation is a good consideration for the town; it won't depress values like a compressor station would. She noted that any change in the future should allow for industrial zoned sites; as there are several areas in North Weymouth that could support an installation.

Councilor Conlon suggested there should be fines for compensation for an owner's failure to remove an installation within a set timeframe after decommission. Mr. Schneider responded that that this is not covered in the proposal.

Councilor DiFazio asked about glare from an installation on the landfill site. Mr. Clarke responded that it would not be visible from Clinton Road or the trails.

President O'Connor thanked the committees and administration for the work. He is concerned that residents leasing solar panels from third party contracted vendors are getting reduced rate utility discounts and not realizing the tax credit benefit. Since municipalities are the largest landowners, the town has the perfect opportunity here to create a revenue stream. Solar is an emerging market and he would like further research on the feasibility of entering the market. Neighboring communities run power distribution and he does not want to overlook a potential revenue market.

Sandra Williams, Planning Board, noted their concerns about glare from small-scale installation being directed to a neighbor property, the lack of height limits for the large-scale ground scale installations and differentiation between electrical and heating solar panels and proper installers for each. Mr. Flynn noted that there are at least two array panels planned. In terms of aesthetics, they are all included and he feels it needs to be addressed in the language. B.D. Nayak added that the solar panels should be at least 6' off the ground so glare is not an issue to the public.

The following are the comments from the public:

Chris Primiano, 82 Rindge Street, noted the language does not specifically say photovoltaic solar. Mr. Clarke responded that it is restricted; the proposal is specific to this ordinance. He also asked why this wasn't done five years ago. Mr. Clarke responded that discussions have been ongoing.

Gus Perez, 16 Hewitt Road, asked if these changes affect what homeowners are currently doing. He noted he had the same concern as Councilor Conlon- he does not want to see vendors leaving Weymouth to incur the costs of removal and wording should be included in the language.

Rosalie Barrett, 112 Hinston Road, noted that the terms in the amendment read "open space"- she asked if public parks could become solar fields. Mr. Schneider responded that that language was removed.

Jim Clarke read into the record a letter from Paul Comerford, Director of Maintenance for the School Department:

"Please be advised that I have been working collaboratively with Mr. Bob O'Connor as we strive to have Weymouth designated as a "Green Community". My experience as the Facilities Director in Natick is that substantial state money and initiatives are available to "Green Communities" as a way to save money on our energy bills. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me."

Councilor DiFazio summarized the comments he asked to be addressed at the next committee meeting:

- a. Land-based height minimum
- b. Glare to neighbors
- c. No 10" maximum on large-scale units
- d. 150-day period requiring removal/applying fines
- e. differentiate heating vs. solar
- f. licensing issue

A motion was made by Vice President Smart to close the public hearing on measure 15 106, and was seconded by Councilor Mathews.

David Chandler noted that nothing has been added to address the penalty for abandonment before closing public hearing. It should be included in the language before the matter is voted. President O'Connor noted that the Council has not voted; there are additional changes to discuss. He suggested continuing the public hearing to October 13, 2014. Vice President Smart withdrew his motion and this was seconded by Councilor Mathews. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

A motion was made by Vice President Smart to continue the public hearing to October 13, 2015 and was seconded by Councilor Mathews. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

A motion was made by David Chandler to continue the Planning Board's Public Hearing until October 13, 2015 and was seconded by Sandra Williams. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Mr. Flynn adjourned the Planning Board meeting.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary.

Approved by Sandra Williams Date 1-19-2016