



WEARE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 10, 2023

PRESENT: Craig Francisco- Chairman, Bruce Fillmore- Vice Chairman, Frank Bolton, Pastor Bill Stockhaus, Dani-Jean Stuart

ABSENT: Jack Meany, Ray Menard- Alternate, Paul Gannon- Alternate, and Benjamin Knapp- Ex-Officio,

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR: Naomi L. Bolton

GUESTS: Andrew Morin and Megan Ulin

Chairman Francisco called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Conceptual Hearing: *Regenerative Roots Association (Agent: ReVision Energy, Inc. Attn: Megan Ulin) 791 Concord Stage Road; Tax Map 403-19.4; the owner is proposing a 120.96 kW DC ground-mounted solar PV system, with plan cultivation between the arrays in agrovoltaic method. The system is comprised of six arrays that are 13ft at their highest point. The array area will be surrounded by a six-foot agricultural fence.*

Megan Ulin with ReVision Energy said the proposed project is a community solar array at 791 Concord Stage Road. It will be a unique project because it is planned to be agrovoltaic which means that the solar is going to be co-located with crop production and regenerative roots will be undertaken with people who lease land to be farmed. The project proposed is about 120kW DC and is being funded by a grant from the NH Department of Energy. The grant provides community solar projects that benefit low-income residents. 85% of the power production comes that comes from the array is going to go to local town residents and about fifteen low-income members of this group and five without an income restriction. The remaining fifteen percent would benefit the regenerative roots association. Ms. Ulin said that they would need to bring power on-site with Eversource and bring in a new meter that would be dedicated to the solar array. The meter would record the generation from the solar array. It is expected to meet all the setback requirements. Andrew Morin said that low to moderate-income households will receive twenty thousand dollars of free power and will be directly off their utility bill with Eversource. Chair Francisco asked if it was 20,000 in total. Mr. Morin said approximately yes. Ms. Ulin said it would be six rows of panels that were thirteen feet high at the highest point. There will be a six-foot agricultural fence that surrounds the area. Chair Francisco asked what the agricultural fence would be. Ms. Ulin said it would be cedar posts with steel and four-by-four squares. Vice Chair Fillmore asked if the grant would be fully funding the array construction. Mr. Morin said it would fund about 70% and they have already attended a deposit to ReVision Energy for approximately 50% They are also seeking about \$50,000 more which multiple potential funders have expressed positivity for. Mr. Bolton asked if they knew the soil type of the field. Mr. Morin said they have not done a soil test yet. He does know the soil is very fertile. Mr. Bolton asked if the solar array took up about three-quarters of an acre. Ms. Ulin said it takes up about twenty-seven square feet approximately in

the fenced area. Mr. Bolton asked if there would be more units installed. Mr. Morin said that he could see potentially one more unit but it would depend on the Department of Energy. Mr. Bolton asked what the lifespan of the unit was. Ms. Ulin said about forty years but they have warranties that are twenty-five years. Vice Chair Fillmore said he believes it would need a variance because it is not allowed in the zone and it is commercial use. Ms. Ulin said most of the power will be going to residents. Ms. Ulin said some of the things she picked up on within the Zoning Ordinance are as follows the residential agricultural district does allow for more diverse use of the property. Regenerative Roots being a non-profit does do a lot of educational programming for the facilities which are permitted within the ordinance. Chair Francisco asked if the wetlands would be delineated. Ms. Ulin said yes. Chair Francisco asked if they would be doing anything other than putting up the six-foot solar array with farming in between them. Ms. Ulin said that is correct. Chair Francisco asked about the purpose of the well. Mr. Morin said it would be for the farm. Chair Francisco said there will be power being used to run the pump for the well. Mr. Morin said that is correct. Chair Francisco agrees with Vice Chair Fillmore that is a commercial use. Chair Francisco asked what the timeline was for the project. Ms. Ulin said they are looking to obtain all the approvals by March 1st per the grant. The Planning Board agreed they would need to go to the Zoning Board of Adjustments for a variance and then come back to the Planning Board for a Site Plan review.

Master Plan Amendments: Ms. Stuart said that they should still look at housing to move forward with grants. Chair Francisco said they need to get their master plan complete in order to focus on how they can move forward with housing. Pastor Bill said he still believes that they need to petition the Selectmen to find the funding for the Planning Board to move forward with the master plan update. He said they either need to present their case to the Selectmen and say they have attempted to get funding and yes there are requirements that the grant would be imposed upon the Planning Board. Based on their current master plan the recommendations that have been brought forth have been fulfilled and therefore were not imposed upon the Planning Board. Pastor Bill said that he would still speak about Dani's thoughts that the state may require but it will come down to the Planning Board to decide what the Planning Board agrees or does not agree upon. Ms. Stuart said if it is not in the form of legislation. Pastor Bill said no community survey result applies today. If the Planning Board were to go back to the population and demographic trends of chapter four none of the trends had panned out. Pastor Bill said they still need funds to even do the survey. The first master plan survey results were about 10% and that is not adequate to get a vision for what the community wants. Mr. Bolton said the Planning Board could come up with a community survey questionnaire. Ms. Stuart said the survey would need to be sent more than just by mail People are doing things electronically now. If they hired someone, they would have to look at the e-communications as well as the mail communications. TA Bolton said she could use survey monkey and posting it to the website and Facebook. Pastor Bill said they would then need to set a timeline for analyzing the results and then making the changes to the master plan. Pastor Bill said for the demographics portion he has used NH Employment Security and it gives you an extensive broad perspective of ages, types of employment budgets, and how many people work in town. Planning Board agreed the first step would be to create and post a survey. TA Bolton will look into survey monkey and get back to the Planning Board. They would like to send out postcards with the link or QR code and then post the survey on Facebook and the website.

Zoning Amendments: Mr. Bolton said the Planning Board needs to come up with something regarding Solar Arrays. Discussion ensued and the Planning Board would look into it. Vice Chair Fillmore suggested writing a letter to the Selectmen and requesting Town Council to send letters to short-term rentals to take down their listings per the Zoning Ordinance. Ms. Stuart asked how do they find the people and if it was a finable offense. Vice Chair Fillmore said yes it violates the ordinance and you can find them on VRBO, Airbnb, etc. Chair Francisco said they are single-family home which is allowed to be rented. Vice Chair Fillmore said it is a State Law that falls under Rooms and Meals and short-term rentals fall under that. Pastor Bill suggested increasing the square footage from 750 to 1000 for ADU's detached. The Planning Board talked about updating the wetlands and language to correct private roads.

98 **Being there was no further business to come before the Board, Pastor Bill Stockhaus made a motion**
99 **to adjourn, Frank Bolton seconded to adjourn at 8:16 pm. Passed 4-0-0**
100
101 **ADJOURNMENT**
102 A True Record.
103 *Kearsten O'Brien*
104 Kearsten O'Brien, Minute Taker