

**I - Call to Order**

PC Members attending- Dennis Casey, Chair, Norm Cota, Jeff Keeney, Hugh Johnson, and Kelly Norris

Others present- Sam Carlson (Green Lantern Group), Dave Wetmore

7:00 PM –Dennis called the PC meeting to order. Dave took minutes.

**II- Adjustments/Minutes**

5/4/2017 minutes review- moved to end of meeting. Norm moved minutes as presented, 2nd by Jeff. Approved 4-yes and 0-no, Kelly abstained, Dennis signed.

**III- Visitors Business and Adjustments to agenda**

No visitors

**IV- PC Business**

**1. Sam Carlson representing Green Lantern Group-**

Dennis welcomed Sam and PC introduced themselves. Dennis invited Sam to speak.

Sam- acknowledged that he is here to represent Green Lantern Group from Waterbury. They are a net metered community solar business that seeks to develop 1-4 acre solar projects. They do not do small rooftop or individual systems. Most are between 150 and 500 kW. Green Lantern Group (GLG) works closely with towns, schools, college and large commercial businesses.

GLG approached the Starksboro Selectboard with interest in developing 150 kW solar array projects on 3 Town owned properties. They are the landfill site at the old Town Garage, expansion of the solar facility currently in place at the school and one at the gravel pit on a reclaimed site located northeast of the new Town Garage. Sam explained that the new State rules regarding net metered solar focus primarily on “preferred sites”. A “preferred site” typically is a brownfield, landfill or reclaimed gravel pit/quarry area, as required in Act 174. The school property would be a preferred site with SB and PC agreement.

PC noted that the Town does not own the School property yet and the gravel pit area that is mapped is presently under contract to neighbor Kerry Kurt. Sam acknowledges that the only site presently available is the landfill area, but he also understands that the pending sale to Ms. Kurt expires at the end of June. PC admitted there are issues with the pending sale to Kurt.

Sam- GLG has proposed 3- one acre 150kW solar arrays, one on each of the 3 properties. They are proposing a 20 year lease, each valued at \$3000/year through year 10 and \$3500/year through year 20. Additionally, each array will pay tax \$ to the Town. The Town would be allowed to purchase net metering credits at a 10% discount. Sam is seeking PC support for these projects.

Jeff- asked if more acres could be developed for solar. He expressed that these projects would assist Starksboro in reaching our 174 renewable energy goals. Sam is will to discuss increasing the project size. The limitation is the ability for the grid system to support the increase power. Currently a single phase power line can support a 150kW array. Anything above 150kW requires 3 phase, which is limited in Starksboro. Once a site control agreement is signed, GLG will seek an interconnect agreement from

Green Mountain Power. The interconnect agreement depends entirely on the condition of the power lines serving the area where the proposed solar array is sited.

Hugh- are you proposing trackers of fixed panels? They will be a fixed panel unit that sits 3-ft off ground and are 9-ft. high. GLG likes to keep their projects simple, no movement, less maintenance.

Norm- asked how these arrays work adjacent to blasting and quarrying projects? Norm expressed that the area being proposed is largely a ledge cropping and he feels that someday the Town may need to quarry stone for Town projects. Sam noted that dust would be an annoyance, flying rock and debris would be a real problem. Dave noted that this is a 20 year lease and that is a short timeframe as opposed to the long term effects of a sale to Ms. Kurt.

Sam- expressed that the advantage of all of these project locations is that they are not easily visible. The solar array on the landfill site would be ballasted system (weighted down with concrete blocks). The landfill site would require Agency of Natural Resources tracking to make sure the landfill cap is not compromised. Sam stated that the school site would be a preferred site providing the PC and SB sign an agreement. Sam felt that expanding the existing solar array at the school site could easily become a preferred site. The benefit to the site is that there is minimal soil disturbance and the site can easily revert back to agricultural use after 20 years.

Sam- explained the process. The 1<sup>st</sup> step is a “site control agreement”. Basically, GLG pays the Town \$500 for each site agreed upon for a 1 year right which allows GLG exclusive right to seek out potential purchasers, permitting and related development costs. The 2<sup>nd</sup> step is to formerly sign the 20 year agreement. It is not final until the 20 year agreement is signed. Typically the permitting process takes 4-6 months and requires ACT 248 approval from the Public Service Board. Permitting requires a 45 day notice to all neighboring properties.

Sam- is asking the PC to consider their proposal and to express that support or rejection to the SB.

PC- asked how the SB received his proposal. Sam felt it was generally positive. He felt that the benefits to the Town are positive, especially on areas that do not generate any money for the Town. He understands that there are unknowns regarding the school and gravel pit lands. GLG is interested in one or all but Sam shared that if only the landfill site was available GLG would amend their proposal by reducing the value of the lease.

PC- discussed that this proposal would help Starksboro meet their renewable energy goals while benefiting the Town. All three are proposed on areas that are not easily visible (screened and sited by natural land and vegetative features). PC will discuss and minutes will reflect any decision they make. Sam left at 8:00 PM. Sam asked if Dave will send him the minutes.

PC discussion related to GLG proposal-

Norm-expressed concern a solar array at the gravel pit would restrict the Towns ability to develop a quarry operation. He feels that a quarry will be needed in the future to assist in maintaining the Towns roads and since we already own the property it would be a logical site to quarry. Is there a chance that an array could be sited and allow blasting? PC agreed that the stone resources would be a valuable resource to the Town in the future. Dave noted that pursuant to the Zoning Regulations, no processing could be done within 500-ft of a boundary and a minimum 100-ft buffer is required from all boundaries. Blasting and quarrying would be a change of use and require Town and Act 250 approval.

PC- agreed that the GLG proposals would help Starksboro meet their renewable energy goals while providing the Town with a revenue stream on lands that have a very limited use. The goals outlined in Act 174 will likely become mandatory in the future.

PC- agreed that the gravel pit and school property is unknown and up in the air.

**Action- Acknowledging the obstacles that exist to developing any of the proposed arrays, Jeff moved to support the Selectboard's efforts to negotiate a contract with GLG for the siting of three 150 kW solar arrays as proposed and discussed here tonight, as the arrays;**

1. Will provide a solid start to achieving the renewable energy goals outlined in Act 174.
2. Are proposed to be sited on property that currently (landfill and gravel pit) has limited use and value.
3. Will be sited and screened to minimize impacts to the common viewsheds enjoyed by Starksboro residents.
4. Will provide a positive revenue stream to the Town for the next 20 years.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Hugh,

**Discussion-** Norm supports this motion but hopes the Selectboard will consider his comments/concerns mentioned above.

**Motion approved- 5-yes and 0-no**

## 2. Energy working group discussion-

Jeff- presented the names of those individuals whom have expressed interest in serving on the Town Plan energy working group. The list (12-13 names) includes those suggested by Digger Fasey and also those who responded to Jeff's FPF request. Ideally, six would be a good working group size. Jeff would like at least one other PC member to work with him. Dave suggested Dan Harris seemed to have a lot of interest. Jeff will contact Dan. Jeff proposed the following plan to get this group started.

- A. Reach out to those persons interested and provide copies of
  - a. Introduction to Act 174,
  - b. Energy Planning Standards for Municipalities, and
  - c. The ACRPC workshop outline
- B. Set a mutually agreeable time to meet.
- C. Work to review the data from ACRPC and the survey results
  - a. Plan w/ Brandy and participate in a renewable energy forum mid fall 2017
- D. Develop an achievable and realistic renewable energy plan and goals for PC to consider for inclusion in Town Plan.

## 3. Next steps-

- a. Brandy will attend June 15 meeting to discuss survey results and next steps
- b. Robert will attend June 15 meeting to discuss Conservation Commission contributions and Bio-finder
- c. PC asked Dave to contact Eric Hanson for a future meeting discussion on ground water mapping.

## V- Other

### Mail/Correspondence-

1. Huntington Town Plan amendments, hearing June 26, 2017

- 2. Link to survey results.

VLCT Spring Planning and Zoning Forum – June 14, 2017, Lake Morrey

**VI- Adjournment**

Hugh moved to adjourn at 9:15 PM, Norm 2nds. Motion to adjourn approved, 5- yes, 0-no.

DRAFT