



William F. Martin
Mayor

City known as the Town of **GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**

PLANNING BOARD

Town Hall • 14 Court Square • Greenfield, MA 01301
Phone 413-772-1549 • Fax 413-772-1309
EricT@greenfield-ma.gov • www.greenfield-ma.gov

Members:
Twarog, Eric
Director, Planning & Dev.

Allen, Jim (2019)
Desorgher, Virginia (2019)
Moscaritolo, David (2020)
Pottern, Jamie (2018)
Roberts, Charles (2020)
Smith, Linda (2019)
Touloumtzis, George (2018)

GREENFIELD PLANNING BOARD Minutes of December 7, 2017

Department of Planning and Development 114 Main Street, Greenfield

The meeting was called to order by the Planning Board Chairperson at 7:02 p.m.

PB MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Smith, Chair; Virginia Desorgher; Jamie Pottern, Clerk; George Touloumtzis, Vice-chair; and Alternate Charles Roberts

ABSENT: David Moscaritolo and Alternate Jim Allen

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor William Martin, John Lunt, Assistant to the Mayor for Special Projects; Tony Wonseski, SVE Associate Civil Engineer, and three other residents of Silver Crest.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by Desorgher, and voted 4:0 to approve the meeting minutes of November 16, 2017.

Action Items:

- a. Planning Board recommendation on the request of the Silver Crest Condominium Association to the Town Council for the Town of Greenfield to accept Silver Crest Lane and Silver Crest Circle as public ways.

Chairwoman Smith noted that the Town Council will be voting to initiate this street request on the 21st of December and then there will be a 45-day period for feedback. The Planning Board discussed that they can make an official recommendation this evening or can wait until after the Town Council initiates the process.

Planning Board member Desorgher announced that she will be recusing herself from the vote, since she is a resident at Silver Crest.

Wonseski, who is both a SVE Associate Civil Engineer who helped design the Silver Crest development and a resident of Silver Crest, gave an update of the status of the Silver Crest Condominium Association, which was built 10 years ago. There are 21 lots in the subdivision. Tony



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shared information about the water, sewer, and drain facilities. They will be also the town to take over the maintenance of the road and the facilities that coincide with the road; and the Condo Association would maintain the facilities not in the road. There has been a binder (first course on the road) for 9 years and they will be putting on the finishing coat. The sidewalk was built this year, and the right of way has been monumented.

Wonseski has submitted a packet to the town, along with the request for numerous easements. Wonseski met with Nicolas Reitzel, the City Engineer, who will be reviewing past records to make sure utilities were installed properly. Reitzel wants a drainage easement and agreement, with clear responsibilities. The Association just received a certificate of compliance from the Conservation Commission

Silvercrest has been maintaining the road for 10 years with no complaints. Due to the economy, it has taken so long to build the homes, that they are just now requesting the Town to take it over. The new coat on the road will give it longevity.

PB members discussed that they would like to wait to provide a recommendation until all the documentation and information is available.

Statement: Given that we do not have the final documentation (e.g., the sewer agreement, and the drainage easement and agreement and given that we have the time to put it off until the December 21st meeting, we have decided to wait to make a formal recommendation until that time.

Discussion Items:

a. Proposed amendment to Section 200-7.15. Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations.

John Lunt shared concerns he has with the Town of Shutesbury Ground-Mounted Solar Bylaw example that was shared with the Board about mitigation, which he believes would curtail development instead of encourage it. He noted that the proposed area for large-scale solar in Greenfield is in the Planned Industrial area, which is meant for development, and he believes that using language like Shutesbury's would prevent industrial uses. He believes the requirements are too onerous. Mayor Martin expressed a similar concern that this language would prevent solar development in the Planned Industrial area.

Roberts shared that our language should be specifically targeted to the Planned Industrial area, which is already hard to develop in the conventional sense.

Smith asked about the character of the land and if it is all sloped, and Lunt confirmed that it is.



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Pottern asked why this land was historically set aside for development if it is not conducive to development. Martin and Lunt were unsure why this was done.

Smith asked about solar panels on poles and Lunt said it is possible to have poles of different heights ; solar inverters are mounted on the panels now so it is easier to put them on contoured land.

Desorgher asked about size of the Industrial Park land, which Lunt estimated to be approximately 180 acres.

Roberts proposed the idea that leaving the number open-ended-- anything over 10 acres is allowed with a Special Permit—will create the ability to work with unique piece of property.

Touloumtzis noted other towns have used a wide range of setbacks, and would like to see a larger setback area for larger solar development. He noted the language in our Zoning Bylaw for the Planned Industrial, which states that the purpose of the PI district is to promote park-like development of industry, while minimizing adverse environmental impacts.

Smith asked about solar incentives from the federal government. Lunt says that the federal government disallows small parcels to be aggregated for federal tax credits. The parcels in a project must be contiguous and need to comprise one project. These incentives currently exist.

Roberts noted that other towns don't appear to have a size threshold; so making anything above 10 acres with a special permit wouldn't be out of sync with other towns.

Desorgher shared an interest in expanding the threshold to promote solar development.

Lunt agrees with the Board that there should be **special permit on anything above 10 acres**, which would allow maximum control that is most important for the fast-changing nature of this kind of development. He does not think a kW or acreage threshold is needed.

Pottern expressed concern about a case where there could be 100 acres of land with a fence around it. No other kind of development creates this level of impenetrability to wildlife.

Roberts cited the Shutesbury example, and noted there may be some language in there that could be useful for the wildlife corridor questions that we could use during the special permit process.

Smith added that we want to have tools in our toolbox to be able to mitigate impacts to wildlife.



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Touloumtzis added that bumping up the setbacks could be a form of mitigation, and would like to see all setbacks be 100 feet for solar developments over 100 acres. Roberts suggested that 100' setback might not make sense for all properties.

Smith noted that we may need to address the confusing natures of what the “front” versus the “back” would be in terms of setbacks, since it may not be clear in this kind of development which is which.

Pottern expressed concern with having the size limit totally open-ended and leading developers astray. We could produce Guidelines that could guide potential developers...if we had some kind of document/guidelines of what needs to be considered. Best practice sheet.

Smith summarized what we as a Planning Board seem to have consensus on:

- Special Permit on anything over 10 acres in the Planned Industrial
- By-right continues in the Planned Industry for properties up to 10 acres
- All abutting properties will be required to be visually screened (through there was not yet consensus on setbacks)
- We want to develop Guidelines/Best Practices for Ground-Mounted Solar Development that could guide potential developers

It was noted that changing the By-Right rule in the General Industry Zone would impact our Green Cities designation as a city. We decided not to address the GI at this time.

There was a question about whether we can write guidelines into the Ordinance itself.

Touloumtzis wondered if there is an example of solar projects with a gap in the middle of the fencing.

Smith has found some studies in England looking at all kind of solar projects in different landscapes. She suggest we look into other examples before the next meeting.

We asked Lunt what the fencing protocols are for newer solar panels. It was unclear whether fencing is always used.

We discussed whether the Planning Board should initiate the Zoning Ordinance, and decided it would be best coming from us. We need to decide how best to get the word out to the other groups, and get feedback; in addition to a public hearing that will need to be held.

Linda noted that she will not be present at the first January meeting. We will place this as a discussion item for the next December meeting, and at the January meeting. We will all bring some research, and go through the ordinance. We will also revisit the Master Plan Land Use and Natural, Cultural, Historical Chapters, where wildlife corridors are addressed.



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Adjournment:

MOTION: Moved by Roberts, seconded by Touloumtzis, and voted 5:0 to adjourn the Planning Board meeting at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Pottern, Clerk
Greenfield Planning Board