GREENFIELD PLANNING BOARD
Minutes of September 19, 2019

John Zon Community Center
35 Pleasant Street, Greenfield

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Roberts, Chair; Virginia Desorgher, Vice-chair; Jamie Potttern, Clerk; George Touloumtzis; and Jim Allen

ABSENT: Alternate Amy McMahan

ALSO PRESENT: Eric Twarog, Director of Planning and Development; Bob Celuccio, Webb Engineering; Bruce Montague, Surner Heating Co.; Kris Pitney, PacifiCo Energy; Laura Lefebvre, TRC; Maria Firstenberg, Wetland Scientist, TRC; Tony Wonseski, SVE Associates; and Jim Wood, Facilities Manager for Valley Medical Group

CHAIRS STATEMENT: This meeting is being recorded. If any other persons present are doing the same you must notify the chairperson at this time. No one responded.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by Potttern, and voted 4:0:1 (Touloumtzis abstained) to approve the meeting minutes of September 5, 2019.

ZBA Recommendations:

a. Application of Montague City Road Terminals, LLC for property located at 34 Montague City Road (Assessor’s Tax Map 6, Lot 4) for a special permit pursuant to Sections 200-4.11C14), 200-8.3, and 200-8.4 of the Zoning Ordinance in order to allow the installation of a 30,000-gallon bulk propane storage tank at this location.

The following project proponents were present: Robert Coluccio, Webb Engineering; and Bruce Montague, Surner Heating Co. Mr. Coluccio explained the project to the Board. He stated that in 2014, the ZBA approved a special permit to allow for two (2) 30,000 propane tanks, mounded. At that time, a direct abutter was the railroad. This land was considered buildable dictating the placement of the proposed tanks. Since that time, MassDOT purchased the land which is now considered unbuildable. They would now like to proceed with one 30,000 above ground propane
tank. The tank would be placed on a new concrete pad that would replace existing asphalt so there would be no net increase in impervious surface. Touloumtzis inquired on why this is proposed to be an above ground tank as opposed to an underground tank. Mr. Coluccio responded that above ground tanks are just as safe as underground tanks but with less issues such as corrosion. Allen inquired on the life span of the tank. Mr. Coluccio responded that sealed pressure vessels can last up to 100 years.

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by Desorgher, and voted 5:0 to forward a positive recommendation to the ZBA on the application of Montague City Road Terminals, LLC for property located at 34 Montague City Road (Assessor’s Tax Map 6, Lot 4) for a special permit pursuant to Sections 200-4.11C14), 200-8.3, and 200-8.4 of the Zoning Ordinance in order to allow the installation of a 30,000-gallon bulk propane storage tank at this location.

Public Hearings:

a. 7:15 p.m.: Application of Pacifico Energy NA c/o Kris Pitney for property located at 1417 Bernardston Road (Assessor’s Tax Map R10, Lot 9) for a special permit pursuant to Sections 200-4.2(C18), 200-4.14, 200-7.15, 200-8.3, and 200-8.4 of the Zoning Ordinance in order to allow the installation of a large-scale, ground-mounted photovoltaic solar energy generating system with energy storage capacity at this location.

At a public meeting on Thursday, September 19, 2019 at 7:15 p.m., at the Department of Planning and Development, 20 Sanderson Street upstairs meeting area, the Greenfield Planning Board held a public hearing on the application of Pacifico Energy NA c/o Kris Pitney for property located at 1417 Bernardston Road (Assessor’s Tax Map R10, Lot 9) for a special permit pursuant to Sections 200-4.2(C18), 200-4.14, 200-7.15, 200-8.3, and 200-8.4 of the Zoning Ordinance in order to allow the installation of a large-scale, ground-mounted photovoltaic solar energy generating system with energy storage capacity at this location. Chairman Roberts explained the public hearing process to the Applicant. Members sitting were Charles Roberts, Chair; Virginia Desorgher, Vice-Chair; Jamie Pottern, Clerk; George Touloumtzis; and Jim Allen. The following project proponents were present: Kris Pitney, Pacifico Energy; Laura Lefebvre, TRC; and Maria Firstenberg, Wetland Scientist, TRC. Roberts read the public hearing notice into the record.

Mr. Pitney reviewed the history of Pacifico Energy with the Board. The subject property is currently owned by Kittredge Industries with Pacifico Energy having an option on the property. He stated that there are four (4) parcels making up the project area totaling about 71.6 acres. One parcel is in Greenfield and the remaining three parcels are in Bernardston. The parcel in Greenfield consists of approximately 22.2 acres, of which the Project will use only 5.76 acres. The total Project area is 15 acres with the remaining 9.24 acres in the Town of Bernardston. The proposed project includes an up to approximately 4.5 megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) ground-mounted PV solar facility with a 3-MW/6-megawatt hour (MWh) energy storage component. Mr. Pitney described the area of the proposed facility as one of both residential and commercial properties. He stated that the Project will
have a limited impact on municipal services but will result in a good tax benefit to the community. Construction of the facility will be the biggest impact to the neighborhood with limited impact after construction. Ms. Lefebvre of TRC further reviewed the Project with the Board. She stated that the solar panels will be less than 20 feet in height; they will be 15 feet in height. There will be minimal visual impact as a result of the Project. There will be a gated security chain link fence surrounding the entire Project area. There will be a 6-inch gap at the bottom of the fencing to allow for small animal movement. She stated that as a result of the Conservation Commission review and approval, there is a total of a half acre of mitigation area. All setback and screening requirements are met. Lot coverage for the Project is about 2 percent of the land area. Ms. Firstenberg of TRC reviewed the wetland resource areas of the Project with the Board. There will be no impact or disturbance to wetlands and some minor impacts to buffer areas. They are proposing a pollinator seed mix for the Project. There will be three (3) equipment pads for the portion of the Project in Greenfield. There will be very little grading required for this entire Project. A knox box will be available at the security gate for access for emergency services. Roberts inquired on the type of gate. Ms. Lefebvre responded that it will be a metal swing gate. The Board inquired on the required interconnection agreement with the electric utility company. Mr. Pitney responded that the interconnection feasibility study has been completed but a final interconnection agreement has not yet been signed. The Board inquired on the batteries for energy storage and if any spillage could occur from the batteries. Mr. Pitney responded that the batteries have been designed to minimize impacts from any potential spillage. The Board inquired on exterior lighting. Mr. Pitney responded that no exterior lighting is being proposed. Pottern inquired on whether any active farming takes place on the subject property. Ms. Lefebvre responded that there is no active farming but that there are prime farmland soils in the project area. The site has three (3) soil types of Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance. There is a small area in Greenfield containing Farmland of Statewide Importance that the access road goes over. Pottern inquired on tree cover over this soil type. Ms. Lefebvre responded that this is formerly logged land. The two soil types of Prime Farmland are entirely within Bernardston. The Board reviewed the location of these soil types on the plan. Pottern asked if these soils will be impacted as a result of the Project. Ms. Lefebvre of TRC responded no due to a robust erosion and sedimentation control plan as well as the fact that no soil will be removed from the site. The access road will remain a gravel road. Allen inquired on allowing grazing under the solar panels. Mr. Pitney responded that currently there are no state incentives for allowing grazing for solar projects but there are incentives for other agricultural uses. Allen inquired on stacking of panels. Mr. Pitney responded that this could technically be done but that it would not be financially feasible to do so for this project. Also, Greenfield’s Zoning Ordinance limits the height to 20 feet. Ms. Firstenberg reviewed stormwater management and erosion and sedimentation control for the Project. Roberts inquired on oversight of the Project by the Conservation Commission. Twarog responded that the Commission’s Agent would do the initial pre-construction meeting, the erosion and sedimentation controls inspection, as well as periodic inspections. Touloumtzis inquired on the extent of tree removal for the Project. Ms. Lefebvre responded that 2/3 of the area in Greenfield would have to be clear cut. Roberts inquired on the size of the 3 equipment pads. Ms. Lefebvre responded that each pad is about 740 square feet in size and each pad will have an infiltration trench to deal with runoff. Roberts inquired on dealing with any spillage. Mr. Pitney responded that the inverters contain about
1,500 gallons of oil. If any spillage occurs, any impacted soil would be removed from the site. He stated that the batteries for energy storage are lithium batteries with no liquids that could spill. Periodic inspections would take place. Off-site remote monitoring is the primary method for monitoring the Project. Touloumtzis inquired on how often the panels are cleaned. Mr. Pitney responded that the primary method of cleaning the panels is natural rainwater. Cleaning of the panels by other means is expensive and may damage the panels. Touloumtzis inquired on the method of installation of the panels. Mr. Pitney responded that the panels will be pile driven with no concrete slabs except for the areas of battery storage. Typically, they are driven 4-6 feet in the ground depending on soil types. Allen inquired on the construction time period for installation. Mr. Pitney responded about 1 ½ months but usually not done during winter months. Touloumtzis inquired on the surety bond for the Project. Mr. Pitney responded that typically they post the bond in year 15 of the project. He stated that the Town of Bernardston required a surety bond prior to construction. The Board discussed the surety bond.

Chairman Roberts opened the public input portion of the public hearing at 7:59 p.m. No public comment.

Chairman Roberts closed the public input portion of the public hearing at 8:00 p.m.

Roberts read review comments from the Zoning Board of Appeals which forwarded a positive recommendation to the Planning Board, the Engineering Superintendent (no comments or concerns), and the Department of Planning and Development.

**MOTION:** Moved by Pottern, seconded by Desorgher, and voted 5:0:0 to close the public hearing at 8:06 p.m.

**Board Discussion/Decision**

**Pacifico Energy NA c/o Kris Pitney for property located at 1417 Bernardston Road (Assessor’s Map R10, Lot 9)**

**Pottern** Stated that she appreciates the thought put into the Project in terms of considering wildlife and the ecology of the area.

**Roberts** Stated that the plan was well thought out and he supports it.

**Touloumtzis** Stated that he supports the Project and recommends the conditions in the memo of the Department of Planning and Development in addition to the type of panel installation due to noise concerns.

**Allen** Stated that he supports the project but that the contractors should decide the method of installation based on the geotechnical analysis.
Desorgher Stated that she supports the Project.

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by Pottern, and voted 5:0:0 to approve the application of Pacifico Energy NA c/o Kris Pitney for property located at 1417 Bernardston Road (Assessor’s Tax Map R10, Lot 9) for a special permit pursuant to Sections 200-4.2(C18), 200-4.14, 200-7.15, 200-8.3, and 200-8.4 of the Zoning Ordinance in order to allow the installation of a large-scale, ground-mounted photovoltaic solar energy generating system with energy storage capacity at this location with the following conditions:

1. Prior to the commencement of construction, the Applicant shall work with the Fire Department and the Police Department to ensure emergency vehicle access and security for the site at all times during construction and thereafter;
2. The Project shall be constructed and operated in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes, ordinances, bylaws, and regulations;
3. No material changes to the Project shall be permitted, once final approval is granted by the Planning Board without a new review and approval from the Planning Board;
4. The Applicant shall submit an “as-Built” plan to the Department of Planning and Development upon completion of construction;
5. Prior to construction, the Applicant shall post a surety as described in the Decommissioning Plan included in the special permit application materials to allow the City to complete removal if necessary; and
6. When the array has reached the end of its useful life or has been abandoned, it shall be removed. The owner shall physically remove the installation no more than 150 days after the date of discontinued operations. The owner or operator shall notify the Department of Planning and Development by certified mail of the proposed date of discontinued operations and plans for removal. Decommissioning shall consist of: physical removal of all large-scale, ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations, structures, equipment, security barriers, and transmission lines from the site; disposal of all solid and hazardous waste in accordance with local, state, and federal waste disposal regulations; and stabilization or re-vegetation of the site as necessary to minimize erosion.

Site Plan Review:

a. Site plan review for an additional forty (40) off-street parking spaces and associated improvements for the Valley Medical Group facility at 329 Conway Street.

The following project proponents were present: Tony Wonseski, SVE Associates; and Jim Wood, Facilities Manager for Valley Medical Group. Roberts disclosed that his company does business with Surner Heating Co. and asked if anyone has any objections to his participation for the ZBA
recommendation. No one objected. Mr. Wonseski reviewed the proposed plan with the Board. He showed the Board a site plan of the previous use as a nursing home with 98 off-street parking spaces with parking along Conway Street and Cedar Street. He stated that there are currently 125 off-street parking spaces at the existing facility with an additional 50 spaces being leased from the Franklin County Community Development Corporation. Current zoning codes require 211 off-street parking spaces for this facility. Mr. Wonseski reviewed the proposed locations of the additional 40 off-street parking spaces with the Board. The existing sign will remain where it is currently located. Only a little grading will be required for the project and existing drainage structures will handle stormwater runoff. He reviewed the proposed and existing landscaping and screening with the Board. He stated that any tree that needs to be removed will be replaced and that the existing shade trees will remain. There is an existing bicycle rack on site for the facility. He stated that there are currently 33 practitioners and 46 support staff working at the facility. Employees will park in the back of the facility leaving the front available for patients. Touloumtzis inquired on an ADA space for the back parking area. Mr. Wood responded that there is one existing ADA space at that location. Mr. Wonseski stated that they meet the ADA requirements with the addition of 40 spaces. Roberts read review comments from the Department of Public Works, Fire Prevention Officer (no comments or issues), and the Department of Planning and Development (no comments or issues). Mr. Wonseski stated that he did not see a copy of the review comments from the DPW and would have addressed their comments prior to this meeting. He stated that the proposed swale along Conway Street is not necessary.

MOTION: Moved by Pottern, seconded by Desorgher, and voted 5:0:0 to approve the site plan for an additional forty (40) off-street parking spaces and associated improvements for the Valley Medical Group facility at 329 Conway Street with the following conditions:

1) The tree identified on the submitted site plan to be replanted shall be replaced if it does not survive; and
2) The Applicant shall meet with the Engineering Superintendent to determine if the swale along Conway Street as recommended by the DPW is necessary. The Applicant shall obtain a final determination letter from the DPW and forward a copy to the Department of Planning and Development.

Action Items:

a. Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan approval for 391 Green River Road.

Twarog reviewed the ANR Plan with the Board.

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by Desorgher, and voted 5:0:0 to approve the Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan for 391 Green River Road.
MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by Pottern, and voted 5:0:0 to authorize the Chair to sign the Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan for 391 Green River Road on behalf of the full Board.

b. Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan approval for Parcel R41-16 on Wisdom Way.

Twarog reviewed the ANR Plan with the Board.

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by Allen, and voted 5:0:0 to approve the Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan for Parcel R41-16 on Wisdom Way.

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by Pottern, and voted 5:0:0 to authorize the Chair to sign the Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan for Parcel R41-16 on Wisdom Way on behalf of the full Board.

c. Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan approval for 887 Bernardston Road.

Twarog reviewed the ANR Plan with the Board.

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by Desorgher, and voted 5:0:0 to approve the Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan for 887 Bernardston Road.

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by Desorgher, and voted 5:0:0 to authorize the Chair to sign the Approval Not Required (ANR) Plan for 887 Bernardston Road on behalf of the full Board.

Board and Staff Reports:

Adjournment:

MOTION: Moved by Touloumtzis, seconded by Pottern and voted 5:0:0 to adjourn the Planning Board meeting at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Twarog, AICP
Director of Planning and Development