

Plainfield Conservation Commission
Minutes of Meeting Held March 29, 2017

Meeting was held in Town Hall.

Commissioners present: Erik Burcroff, Jack Nelson, Alice Schertle, Judy Williams (Chair)
Others present: Kelley Fike, Project Engineer, SVE Associates; Anthony Wonseski, Senior Engineer, SVE Associates; Justin Kasunich, Construction Manager, Nexamp

Call to Order, Judy Williams, 7:05 P.M.

Plainfield Solar, LLC NOI

This was a continuation of the Public Hearing held on February 22, 2017 to review an NOI prepared by SVE Associates for applicant Plainfield Solar LLC of Boston, MA, a wholly owned subsidiary of Nexamp The project under review is a 2.67 MW ground-mounted solar photovoltaic facility on property located at 29 Union Street.

A site visit was made on Monday, March 13 by Jack Nelson, Judy Williams, Alice Schertle, Ed Stockman, Anthony Wonseski of SVE, and Ward Smith of Wendell Wetland Services. The group was joined by abutter David Kramer. A previous site visit on February 22 was inconclusive due to snow cover, causing the February 22 meeting to be continued.

Applicant answered questions from the Commission and offered further descriptions of the project and procedures to be followed during and after construction. A draft Order of Conditions was reviewed.

Applicant described the detailed inspection program in place for all similar projects, including required inspections following storms. The applicant will arrange an inspection by Ward Smith of the forested "North Array" prior to construction; a report on the inspection will be provided to the Commission. The Commission will do a pre-construction site visit with Construction Manager Justin Kasunich.

The Commission will be provided with reports from Ward Smith of on-site conditions, including the status of the wetland replication area, during the growing seasons of the two years following construction.

While panels to be used have been upgraded from 2.54 to 2.67 MW, applicant states that the number of panels and the area used for the arrays cannot be reduced while maintaining the economic viability of the project.

All hydrology calculations were done for 2, 10 and 100 year storms. Project design reflects an attempt to keep all water flow/runoff from going to one area. Engineering is intended to supply wetland areas with sufficient water while preventing inundation with too much water.

Commission asked specifically about the effect of project construction on abutters. Applicant states that runoff to abutting property will not increase from present conditions. The Storm Water Management Plan submitted by the applicant states that hydrology calculations indicate that the construction of the solar facility will decrease expected runoff from the property for 2, 10 and 100 year storms. The issue of view impact will be taken up by the ZBA and plans will include plantings to screen the view.

There was a discussion of the design and placement of the debris berm. The Commission considers the berm of critical importance in controlling water flow at the base of the steepest area. Stumps will not be used in construction of the berm. The Commission will require procedures involving construction, inspection and maintenance/repair of the berm as outlined in the Order of Conditions.

All vehicles will be cleaned prior to coming on site. The heaviest equipment will remain on site until completion.

A six-inch clearance is maintained under fencing for wildlife passage.

Conservation Commission members may inspect the site at any time during construction after informing the Construction Manager and checking in at the on-site trailer to obtain a hard hat if necessary. Commission will be kept informed of the construction schedule.

Applicant hopes to begin work in mid to late summer but cannot confirm a start date at this time. Approximate time from start to completion is 2 ½ to 4 months.

A complete list of the conditions set by the Conservation Commission to protect the interests of the Wetlands Protection Act will be included in WPA Form 5, Order of Conditions.

Judy Williams moved that the Conservation Commission approve the Notice of Intent submitted by Plainfield Solar LLC subject to the conditions set forth in the Wetlands Protection Act and the special conditions in the Order of Conditions.

The motion was seconded by Erik Burcroff.

The motion passed by unanimous vote of the members of the Commission.

WPA Form 5, Orders of Conditions, was signed by Judith Williams, Erik Burcroff, Jack Nelson and Alice Schertle.

Commission thanked the representatives of the applicant for a thorough presentation and for their willingness to cooperate fully with the Conservation Commission to address concerns of the residents of Plainfield and to protect the interests of the Wetland Protection Act.

Minutes of Conservation Commission meetings held 2/22/17 and 3/26/17 were accepted as corrected.

Non-Binding Carbon Fee and Dividend Resolution

Jack moved that the Commission endorse a non-binding resolution on the Town Warrant, formulated by the Citizens Climate Lobby, regarding implementation of a Carbon Fee and Dividend to address the issue of climate change.

Motion was seconded by Erik Burcroff.

The motion passed by unanimous vote of the members of the Commission.

Draft Priority Habitat Map

Commission reviewed a letter from the MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, regarding a draft Priority Habitat Map reflecting new biological information and regulatory and land use changes. The Division is requesting public comment on the status of areas impacted by proposals in the draft. The draft map is available for comment beginning April 3, 2017 at www.mass.gov/dfw/nhesp/map-comment. The comment period will end on June 3, 2017.

Adjourned, 8:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Schertle