

*Approved by ZBA on August 17, 2017.*

## **TOWN OF PLAINFIELD**

### **Zoning Board of Appeals**

**Monday, July 20, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the Plainfield Town Hall**

### **Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Members Peg Keller, Chair, Laurie Israel, and Alternate Ann Irvine. Member Joan Wattman was absent at the meeting. Alternate Sandra Morann was not present at the meeting, and has recused herself from the current ZBA application.

Call to Order: The ZBA meeting commenced at 7:07 p.m.

Kelley Fike, Associate Engineer for SVE Associates was present. Also present were Julie Beauchemin, Assistant Project Manager, for Nexamp, Inc., Chris Clark, of Plainfield Solar, LLC. Gerry Garner, Town of Plainfield Building Inspector joined the meeting at 7:15 p.m. and remained through the discussion of the requested amendment to the Plan of Plainfield Solar, LLC for a Solar Farm (the “Solar Farm”) behind 29 Union St and for the discussion of the zoning issues relating to the expected Special Permit application for the marijuana farm on Broom Street.

#### Revision of Request for Amendment of Plan for Solar Park by Plainfield Solar, LLC.

Plainfield Solar, LLC received a Special Permit with conditions for the Solar Farm, as required under Section 8.3 of the Plainfield Zoning Bylaws, and a Site Plan Review as required in the Town of Plainfield Zoning Board of Appeals Rules and Regulations on June 8, 2017. The applicant came to the ZBA to present and explain a change in the plans for utility poles that have now been required by Eversource Energy, the electrical services company to which the energy will be sold.

Kelley Fike made the presentation to the ZBA. Highlights of her comments follow:

The original plan which was approved by the ZBA had 6 above ground utility poles near the abutters (Taylors) on Union Street, 2 - 3 of which were to be owned by Plainfield Solar, and the remainder would be owned by Eversource. The energy would have been transmitted from the arrays to the poles via an underground conduit.

Eversource has now required a change of plans. They are requiring that the poles be placed on the same parcel on which most of the solar arrays will be located. Kelley showed a plan that identified the majority of array on Tract 1, which is the Western lot of the proposed project area.

There will be 2 above ground poles remaining near Union Street. Eversource requires the conduit to be above ground, for easier access for maintenance. There will be 9 poles added to the installation. The visual impact of these new above ground poles were discussed. The poles are about 45 feet high. They will be about 150 feet apart behind an existing tree line, where the trees are 60-70 feet high. To the south of the new poles there is existing vegetation which provides screening. This vegetation cannot be removed as they border a wetland.

Eversource will own all of these new poles. Kelley says that SVE made an effort to negotiate with Eversource that instead of the above ground poles there would be an underground conduit, but they were unsuccessful.

Kelley and Chris said they foresee no other changes that will be needed to be made to the Plan. Chris and Kelley indicated that this type of adjustment to a plan happens in about 90% of the projects. This is because Eversource does not finalize plan specifications until the local permitting has been secured.

In order for Plainfield Solar to have ongoing access to the 6 poles on the point of coupling, the revised plan also has a 20 foot wide access road. Kelley says this spur will have no impact on drainage.

For the Union Street abutter (Taylor), the visual impact will be reduced. Instead of 6 poles there will be 2.

Chris indicated that when this has happened before, no other ZBA has considered it to be a material change and dealt with the revisions administratively.

The ZBA members discussed it, and thought that the question was visual impact. Peg asked if Kramer/Bernstein would be able to see the poles from their property. Kelley says it's unlikely that they will be able to see the poles. The new poles will be in front of those high tension lines, which have a great negative visual impact.

Ann made a motion to approve the revised plan, determining it is not a "material change" as referenced in Special Condition #2 of the Special Permit approved on 6/8/17, based on the following:

The most impacted abutter (Taylor) will have fewer poles near their property, and;

The additional poles will be adequately shielded visually by the existing tree canopy.

Laurie seconded Ann's motion. There was no further discussion. The vote to approve the revision to the plan as a non-material change not requiring a public hearing, was unanimous.

Peg will notify David Kramer and Lina Bernstein of the change.

We discussed the procedure for the plan amendment. The ZBA will draft a permit amendment. Kelley will draft a paragraph describing the change to be included in the amendment. Peg will write it up and get it signed by the ZBA members. It will be taken to the Town Clerk who will sign and stamp it. Then it will be emailed to Chris who will record it at the Registry of Deeds.

Chris said that construction of the project is expected to begin either early Fall, or in March of 2018.

Medical Marijuana Facility: The ZBA members discussed a potential Special Permit application. Members looked at the Plainfield Zoning By-laws, to determine how to categorize the intended use. The ZBA is seeking to find a reported letter from town counsel regarding what businesses are allowed in Plainfield in preparation of the expected special permit application for a medical marijuana farm.

Larry Smith's bills from PVPC for technical assistance were unanimously approved for payment as submitted.

Reviewed and Approved Minutes from 5/15/17 meeting. Motion to approve by Laurie, seconded by Ann. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Future Meetings: Our next scheduled meetings will be held at 7 pm on the following dates: Thursday, August 17, Thursday, September 19, Thursday, October 19, Thursday, November 16 and Thursday, December 21. Alternate Ann Irvine will notify the Plainfield Post and town office personnel and post notices at Town Hall and Town Hall Offices within the prescribed time for the meeting notice. When Ann posts, she will pick up the ZBA mail at Town Hall. Member Laurie Israel will post approved minutes on the Town website.

Adjournment: There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was concluded by a motion to adjourn made by Ann, seconded by Laurie, with a unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Israel, Clerk