

## Plainfield Zoning Board of Appeals

Minutes

May 16, 2019

Approved June 20, 2019

**Members Present:** Peg Keller, Chair, and William Latimer, ZBA member. Also attending: Rob Ritchie, Nexamp; Kelley Fike, SVE Associates; David Alvord, Plainfield Assistant Fire Chief; and Chris Roos, 27 Broom Street LLC.

Chair Keller called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m., welcoming attendees.

### Request to Amend Plans for Solar Array at 29 Union Street to Include Battery Storage Facility

Representing Plainfield Solar LLC, Kelley Fike of SVE Associates reviewed the site plan and specifications for a proposed battery storage facility at the solar array previously approved by the Board. By way of project update, she reported that the access road was constructed, the utility poles are in place, swales have been cut, infill basins are in, the grass is coming in, and construction has progressed according to the permitted plans. Full operation is scheduled soon.

The proposal before the Board is to add a battery storage facility to the site. The structure is 40 ft. by 8 ft. by 9.6 ft. The structure will sit on a foundation raising it 10-12 inches. It will be enclosed with fencing and will be slightly taller than the existing solar panels. Three HVAC units on the roof will add 30 inches to the overall height of the unit. Mr. Ritchie explained that the State SMART Program, implemented last fall, offers incentives to projects such as these for solar storage. This is why the component is being added now, rather than at time of application. The ability to store energy on site for use later in the day allows the local grid to operate more efficiently. Prices for these units have come down in the last three years. Inside the unit are racks of lithium batteries. The unit has the highest engineering and production rating earning a global reputation for quality. There has not been a single safety issue reported anywhere. The operating software is monitored 24/7 from Nexamp's operational base. If any defect is detected, the unit will be shut down immediately from the remote location, the closest one being in Westborough.

Asst. Chief Alvord was asked if he had any questions. He noted that in case of an issue, the system employs a horn and strobe light. He asked about turning off the horn, which gets louder as the situation worsens. Mr. Ritchie said power to the entire site would be discontinued, therefore terminating the horn and light. It was noted that Nexamp was doing a training for local emergency personnel this coming Saturday. Asst. Chief Alvord asked about susceptibility to lightning strikes. Mr. Ritchie said the conduits would be grounded. He said preventive

maintenance is carried out annually, which usually only involves changing out filters. A truck and crane will deliver the unit to the site. The applicant agreed to provide a list of all project contact people and how to reach them.

Chair Keller asked the applicant to review the proposed changes to potential stormwater runoff patterns related to the additional gravel surface with the Conservation Commission. Ms. Fike said she anticipates no drainage impacts but would communicate with ConCom Chair Williams. The applicants assured the Board there would be no noise, vibration, or lighting detrimental to any abutters resulting from the installation of the facility.

Member Latimer made a motion to approve the request to install a battery storage facility unit on the site. The motion was seconded by Chair Keller, and the vote in favor was unanimous. Although the request was publicly posted on the Meeting Notice at two local town sites and on the town website, because the request was addressed administratively, Chair Keller asked the applicant to notify the abutters about the project revision and the timetable for the delivery of the unit. Ms. Fike agreed to get an updated abutters list and send out notification as requested. Chair Keller agreed to draft a Memo to the File, noting the project revision and subsequent Board approval.

#### 27 Broom Street/ Update on Monitoring Plan

Mr. Roos had reviewed a proposed Scope of Services drafted by a potential consultant sent to him by the ZBA. He expressed concern about how the odor from the marijuana facility would be evaluated due to his plan to plant adjacent acreage with hemp plants. Mr. Roos said he had made it clear to the Board during the special permit process for the marijuana facility that he planned on planting hemp, a process that does not require local permitting. Chair Keller said he had said that if the marijuana facility licensing did not get approved by the state Cannabis Control Commission, he would revert to planting hemp. She clarified that never did he say he would do both at the same time. Mr. Roos said he is moving ahead with the hemp due to the time delay in getting a provisional license from the state for the marijuana operation. He already has a license to grow the hemp and is cutting trees on 3 acres now. He said his obligation to investors compelled him to move forward with the hemp, because this extensive delay awaiting the state approval had not been anticipated.

Chair Keller said she would get back to the consultant and get his firm's thoughts on how the evaluation and monitoring of the odor would occur for the marijuana growing operation, with the presence of hemp on site. Chair Keller also told Mr. Roos she felt compelled to notify the direct abutter, Mr. Shippee, about the plans for the hemp production, since this was new information for the Board.

Mr. Roos reaffirmed his commitment to an expenditure of the \$5,000 for the monitoring plan for the noise and odor, but wanted to be clear about the Scope of Work. Chair Keller said she would be in touch with him after talking with the consultant.

**Adjourn/** There being no additional business to discuss, the meeting concluded at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Peg Keller