



Town of Hampden
Planning Board Meeting
Wednesday December 9, 2020

Minutes

This meeting was held via remote means (Google Meet) due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, in accordance with SP0789 / LD2167, An Act To Implement Provisions Necessary to the Health, Welfare and Safety of the Citizens of Maine in Response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.

In Attendance:

Planning Board

Kelley Wiltbank, Chairman
Ladoiya Wells
Brent Wells
Gene Weldon
Richard Tinsman

Staff

Sarah DelGizzo, Contract Planner
Ryan Carey, CEO
Wanda Libbey, Recording Clerk
Amy Ryder, Economic Development Director
Paula Scott, Town Manager

Public

Chad Thornwell
Lea Thornwell
Nate Miles
Jordan Betts
Mark Martin

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. Chair Wiltbank explained that this meeting is being held remotely, with himself and Gene Weldon in the Council Chambers and everyone else via Google Meet, in accordance with the guidelines for the pandemic. He took attendance by roll call; all members listed above participating with both audio and video. Members Jake Armstrong and Jennifer Austin were absent. It was established that all board members were able to hear and speak to all the other members. All staff and public participants could likewise hear and speak to all other participants.

1. Administrative

- a. Minutes – November 12, 2020 workshop meeting

Motion: by member L. Wells to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2020 workshop meeting, seconded by member B. Wells; motion carried 4/0/0 by roll call vote

- b. Minutes – November 17, 2020 regular meeting

Motion: by member B. Wells to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2020 regular meeting, seconded by member Weldon; motion carried 4/0/0 by roll call vote

2. Old Business

- a. Stearns Farm – Request for extension of the Preliminary Subdivision Plan approval granted by default on January 10, 2020.

Motion: member Weldon moved that we approve the requested extension of the review of the preliminary and final plan for Stearns Farm to February 10, 2021; seconded by L.Wells; motion carried 5/0/0 by roll call vote.

3. New Business

- a. Public Hearing, Conditional Use: Chad & Lea Thornwall have submitted a conditional use application for an Agricultural Diversity Use (A-ACC-1), which includes the proposed activities farm/agricultural classes, hosting of agricultural professionals and others, seasonal events, and hosting farm-stays accessory to their principal use, agriculture located at 137 Sawyer Road (04-0-060) in the Rural District.

Chair Kelley Wiltbank opened the public hearing at 7:06pm

Chad and Lea Thornwall, property owners, presented the application:

- Seeking a secondary use for their 120-acre property on Sawyer Rd. with several fields and a stream flowing through the property.
- Current property uses for agricultural purposes such as organic haying, beehives, and goats.
- Propose to use temporary structures to hold events.
- Public events for education and enjoyment of the associated agricultural products, services, or experience.
- Events will host approximately 50 people at a time.

There were no comments from the public and Chair Wiltbank closed the public hearing at 7:14 pm.

Sarah DelGizzo, Contract Planner stated that the application is for conditional use for the Agricultural Diversity Use. The key is that the events or activities that are held are accessory to and associated with the principal use, which is agricultural. Sarah mentioned the conditions in the memo she provided to the board concerning noise, lighting, and traffic. If extra lighting will be on site to make sure that the noise and lighting will be ceased at a reasonable time in the evening. The last condition was concerning events that would draw more than 50 people in a short amount of time to make sure that there is a flagger to control traffic entering and exiting.

Ryan Carey, CEO wanted to remind the Thornwall's that if in the future they wanted to provide private events that they would need to come back before the Planning Board to do so.

Member Tinsman was pleased with the passion for agricultural use and supporting that agricultural use.

Member Wiltbank, asked Ryan Carey, CEO if the town has an Event Application for anyone that would like to have an event, and if that is where some of the conditions derive from?

Ryan Carey explained that the town adopted the Private Event Venue Ordinance, on November 4, 2019, which spells out uses and describes parameters for obtaining a license. Some of the conditions for this application did come from the Private Event Venue Ordinance.

Motion: by member Tinsman that based on the findings, dated November 30, 2020, and the representations made at the December 9, 2020, Hampden Planning Board moves to approve the conditional use application to operate cultural diversity uses, which includes farms-stay vacations and public events for education and enjoyment that directly relate to agricultural products, services, or experiences on their property located at 137 Sawyer Rd. subject to the following conditions:

1. That all amplified sound associated with a sound system must be shut down by 10PM on the nights of any Agricultural Diversity Use activities.
2. That all outdoor lighting associated with an Agricultural Diversity Use activity must be turned off by 10PM on the nights of those activities.
3. That any activity which draws more than 50 cars within a 1-hour period, have a private flagger located at the entrance of the property to assist with traffic and pedestrian safety.

The motion was seconded by member L.Wells; motion carried 5/0/0 by roll call vote.

- b. Informational Review: Hampden Highlands Solar Project for 4.95 MWac ground mounted solar array (23.3 acres of total fenced area) located at Meadow Road (exact address TBD) (02-0-040), in the Rural District. This application will be reviewed as a Major Site Plan on the January 13, 2021 Planning Board agenda.

Jordan Betts, Employee of Wishcamper Company who are the current owners of Hampden Solar Holdings LLC briefed Planning Board on Hampden Highlands Solar Project.

- 75-acre lot located just south of the intersection of Meadow Rd., Patterson Rd. and Cannan Rd.
- Developing 4.95 megawatts of solar panels
- Total developed area approximately 25 acres used for solar panels
- Solar panels will not be seen from road or abutters
- Will be utilizing the existing gravel entrance and gate off Meadow Rd.
- Went over the life span of different pieces of equipment
- Standard life expectancy is 35 to 40 years

Nate Niles, representative from Revision Energy, spoke briefly about the project. He stated that there will be a seven-foot-tall chain link fence encircling the entire array. This fence is a requirement of the State Electrical Code. The array structures will be mounted upon steel vertical I beams. In terms of other equipment there will be the solar inverters, and a couple of pad mounted transformers on concrete pads. There will be no sort of conventional structures.

Primary discussion points:

- Traffic both during construction and post construction.
 - Life span of equipment and if there will be an extension
 - Have there been studies concerning what megawatts the grid will handle.
 - Discounts to residents
 - Consistency with Solar Ordinance
 - The upgrade of transmission lines
4. Planning Board Comment - none
5. Adjournment

Motion: member Tinsman moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 pm, seconded by member Weldon; motion carried by roll call vote 5/0/0.

*Respectfully submitted by Wanda Libbey,
CED Administrative Asst.*