



Town of Hampden  
Planning Board  
**Wednesday, July 13, 2022, 7:00 pm**  
**Municipal Building Council Chambers**  
**Minutes**

In Attendance:

Planning Board

Richard Tinsman, Chair  
Jennifer Austin, Vice Chair  
Benjamin Dunham  
Amanda Day  
Kelley Wiltbank

Staff

Clifton Iler, Town Planner  
Wanda Libbey, Admin Asst.  
Ryan Carey, CEO  
Amy Ryder, Economic Development Director

Public

Steven Griffith  
Phil Badger Jr.  
David & Ann Boomer  
Jeffrey & Amy Millett  
Sean Murphy  
Thomas Cole  
Barry & Gloria Asalone

Chair Tinsman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and verified that all attendees in-person and virtual could hear and see each other.

1. Administrative

a. Minutes – June 15, 2022, Regular Meeting

**Motion** by Member Austin to approve the minutes of June 15, 2022, regular meeting as amended, second by Member Dunham; motion carried 4/0/1 by roll call vote (Member Wiltbank abstained).

b. Minutes – June 22, 2022, Workshop Meeting

**Motion** by Member Austin to approve the minutes of June 22, 2022, workshop meeting as amended, second by Member Dunham; motion carried 4/0/1 by roll call vote (Member Wiltbank abstained).

2. Old Business – None

3. New Business

a. 747 Western Ave – Public hearing for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a home business at 747 Western Ave; Tax Map/Lot: 08-0-007-M. The property is located in the Rural District.

Chair Tinsman went over the rules for public hearings, confirmed with Planner Iler that the required public hearing posting had been met, and then opened the public hearing at 7:05 p.m.

Applicant, Thomas Cole presented opening statements:

- His intent is to operate an online gunsmithing shop out of the existing garage.
- He has received temporary approval from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) subject to Planning Board approval.
- He is certified by the American Gunsmithing Institute.
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Town Planner Iler presented his report on the application:

- The property meets lot and building dimensional standards.
- There are no new structures being constructed for the business.
- There will be no signage or exterior displays for the business.
- No additional non-resident will be employed on site.
- No additional parking is required for the business.
- Applicant has submitted the proper documentation to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF).

Town Planner Iler reached out to Chief Bailey and Adrienne Brown, Senior Industry Operations Investigator for the ATF, to confirm that there are no additional requirements for the applicant. If Planning Board approves the application, the ATF application will be approved.

Interested Parties Questions/Concerns/Opposition:

- Resident David Boomer of 70 Aaron's Way and Barry Asalone of 111 Canaan Rd shared concerns with the noise level and safety of apparent gunfire on the property. The applicant, Thomas Cole, explained that he will not be live-firing on his property. He is a member of the gun club across the street and will conduct any live-fire at that location.

Planning Board Questions:

- Town Planner Iler described the location of the property for the benefit of the public and the Board.
- Member Austin questioned whether the Board could make a condition of approval that no live-fire would be conducted on the property. Town Planner Iler explained that the business would be located in an existing structure and the Board cannot stipulate where live-fire could occur since it wasn't the primary function of the business.

Chair Tinsman closed the public hearing at 7:18 p.m.

**Motion** by Member Wiltbank to approve the Conditional Use application, based on findings and information presented, for a home business at 747 Western Ave (Tax Map/Lot: 08-0-007-M) in the Rural District; seconded by Member Dunham; the motion carried 5/0/0 by roll call vote.

- b. Silverrod Solar – Public hearing for a Major Site Plan to construct a 1.99 MW solar array located at 1158 Western Ave; Tax Map/Lot: 07-0-022. The property is located in the Rural District.

Chair Tinsman confirmed with Town Planner Iler that the required public hearing posting had been met and opened the public hearing at 7:21 p.m.

Steve Griffith of OneEnergy Development LLC and Sean Murphy of Flycatcher LLC, applicant representatives, presented opening statements:

- The project will be within a 17.5-acre portion of the property. The fenced area will be approximately 11 acres with 0.68 acres of impervious area.
- There are no direct wetland impacts on the site.
- The 1.99-megawatt (MW) array will be ground-mounted.
- Local businesses and residents will be able to subscribe to a portion of the project's generation.
- Project located over 1,000 feet from Western Ave.
- No public resources are required for this project.
- Maintenance will occur as needed.
- Natural Resource Protection Act Permit and Stormwater Permit pre-approved.

Town Planner Iler presented his report on the application:

- Third-party peer review for compliance with general engineering and stormwater management requirements has been met.
- Copy of DOT Entrance Permit has been submitted.
- FFA compliance has been verified.
- Decommissioning plan meets requirements of Solar Ordinance.

Public Questions/Concerns/Opposition:

- Amy Millett of 1185 Western Ave:
  - How does this fit the Comprehensive Plan for Hampden? Planner Iler explained that from the Town's perspective it meets the requirements of the Comprehensive Plan.
  - How can [the applicant] guarantee wetlands and airspace impact when solar farms are known for, frying birds and insects, including pollinators? Flycatcher LLC representative, Sean Murphy, explained that larger facilities out west rely on mirrors to concentrate sunlight onto it. Those are not the type of facilities we're using in New England. These facilities are less reflective and designed to capture and hold in the sun. The low glare enables them to take in as much solar energy as possible. We don't have the same burning conditions they experience out west.

- Do we understand the impact of the EMFs along with noise and light pollution? Sean Murphy explained that there is no EMF associated as it is not a high-tension wire. During the day the transformers might have a light hum, if you are within 25 or 50 feet, it might sound like your refrigerator. There will be no light impact as the fencing is enough to provide the security necessary for the facility.
- What about road safety for pedestrians and cyclists during the construction phase? Sean Murphy explained that the contractors will provide the needed warnings, construction signs, etc. during the construction phase.
- Would there be any need for herbicides and pesticides? OneEnergy Development LLC representative, Steve Griffith, stated that the use of herbicides and pesticides would only be used if necessary to help with the growth of the soil.
- Is this a small energy source for a limited duration of 25 to 30 years? Sean Murphy explained that the duration of these facilities is generally 25 years, but the applicant may come back and ask to extend the lifetime of the project in the future.
- Who's paying for the cost of producing this energy? Sean Murphy explained that they're relying on a community solar model where people are buying shares in it.
- How much actual energy with this produce? Steve Griffith explained that their engineers estimate the megawatt hours per year to be approximately 3,700 hours.

Planning Board Questions:

- What is a decommissioning plan, what does it mean, and what does the applicant have to do to decommission a site? Sean Murphy explained that a decommissioning plan defines what will be taken out when the facility has reached the end of its useful life, what the expected cost will be, and commits to removing it.
- What is left after decommissioning a site? Sean Murphy explained that the applicant will be required to remove the road unless the existing landowner can make an argument to DEP that there's a reason why they want to leave it in place. Removal of the road is part of the overall cost. He also stated that OneEnergy will remove all equipment from the project site, all wires buried, all solar panels, and all the racking system. Everything will be extracted from the earth and taken off the site.
- Has OneEnergy been physically involved in decommissioning a project since their inception in 2009? Steve Griffith stated they have not gone through a decommissioning to date.
- How close are the array of panels allowed to come to the property line? Planner Iler explained that the setback in the Rural District is 30 feet, but it increases by

a factor based on the overall size of the array. This application is well within that boundary.

Chair Tinsman closed the public hearing at 7:48 p.m.

**Motion** by Member Austin based on findings and information presented herein moved to approve the Major Site Plan for a 1.99 MW solar array located off Western Ave. (Tax Map/Lot: 07-0-022) in the Rural District subject to the condition below:

Conditions:

1. Construction activities are limited to the hours between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM.

Seconded by Member Day; the motion carried 4/1/0 by roll call vote.

#### 4. Town Planner Report

Town Planner Iler reminded board members that a workshop will be on Wednesday, July 19, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Planner Iler invited those present to the Comprehensive Plan Workshop on Friday, July 15, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Town Council Chambers.

#### 5. Planning Board Comment

Member Wiltbank asked CEO Carey about the status of projects around town that the board has approved. CEO Carey shared that the Emerson Lux project has broken ground. Town staff has met with DEP on the newly approved project next to the Dollar General. The Stearns Farm project has broken ground and they have hired a third-party consultant for review. The Town has not yet received a building permit application for that project but CEO Carey has been in contact with the developer.

Member Wiltbank asked Economic Development Director Ryder if there were any promising business opportunities currently. Economic Development Director Ryder explained that there have been approximately 10 lots sold in the Business Park within the last year. One of those lots is being developed currently. There is no word currently on the status of the others. There is work continuing to fund sewer infrastructure to help bring more businesses to Town.

Member Austin shared with those present that the project the Board-approved on Emerson Mill Road next to the YMCA camp is looking good and fits into the landscape well.

#### 6. Adjournment

**Motion** by Member Wiltbank moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m., seconded by Member Dunham; motion carried by roll call vote 5/0/0 in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Wanda Libbey,  
Administrative Asst.