



Town of Sheffield

Planning Board

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Public Hearing Minutes

Regarding Proposed Lime Kiln Road Solar Array, Kirt Mayland, Housatonic Solar One LLC

Wednesday, June 10, 2015, 7:00 PM

TOWN HALL - FIRST FLOOR MEETING ROOM

Board Members Present: James T. Collingwood Jr. Chairman
Daniel Watson
David A. Smith Sr.,
Marie Massini-Reynolds
Anthony Gulotta

Members of the Public Present: Kirt Mayland, Avon CT
Scott Leach, Lane Construction
Michael Parsons, Great Barrington MA
James M. Larkin, 174 West Road, Sheffield MA
James J. Larkin, 174 West Road, Sheffield MA
Thomas A. Gage

Chairman J. Collingwood Jr. opened the Public Hearing and read the notice published in the Berkshire Record.

Kirt Mayland spoke about his proposed project. He said the following:

He plans to lease about 3.5 acres from Lane Construction Corporation at 49 Lime Kiln Road and, in addition purchase about 5 acres from Thomas Gage. The actual area for the solar panels would only be 1.5 acres because of limitations. He is planning one project on 2 separate parcels which will be enough to power about 200 homes. The series of solar panels are 8-10 feet off the ground, tilted back. Rows are spaced 16 feet apart to eliminate row to row shading. They don't disturb a lot of ground, or change runoff or erosion. They won't make any noise or have lighting. The panels can be turned off by town emergency personnel. He will do landscaping along fence line and between rows. He described the project as low impact, easy to manage. 8-9 months of construction then another couple months of electrical planning. The site includes a gravel access road, inside chain link fence, screening shrubs along Lime Kiln Road and on Route 7 for Mr. Gage's property. He pointed out that there will be a large tax benefit to the Town. There is currently a proposal that school board take half the power, which would be about \$18,000 a year worth of electricity. Total benefits to the Town approach \$50,000. Access will be through the

existing access way. He would like to combine the 2 pieces of property but would need to get a variance so that he doesn't have to put set-backs between them.

D. Smith Sr. asked if Mr. Mayland would be adding solar panels in the case that he receives such a variance? Mr. Mayland said no, it would be a more coherent project but would not increase the number of solar panels.

Both Jim Larkin and his son Jimmy Larkin discussed the status of the adjacent area they currently farm. Mr. Mayland assured them they would not be affected.

A. Gulotta said that his only concern was that the fire department be able to get to grass fires that often start adjacent to the railroad when it is dry. Scott Leach, of Lane Construction, describes the gravel access road. Mr. Mayland stated that the fire department would have access to the area.

Jim Larkin pointed out that the flood of 1955 wiped out the access road and that they should take a possible flood into consideration. Mr. Mayland agreed.

Jimmy Larkin asked about regular mowing; Mr Mayland said it would be done.

J. Collingwood Jr. asked if there was a specific height targeted for screen planting. There was discussion with the Larkins about the seasonally wet conditions as they relate to planting trees for screening and mowing. Mr. Mayland stated that is a nice section of Route 7 and that he would like to keep it looking green rather than have drivers looking at the solar panels. The trees will be between 5-15 feet and will be trimmed as needed.

J. Collingwood Jr. clarified the location of the access road with Mr. Mayland.

Board members asked Mr. Mayland if these are moving solar panels. He said no, that technology still has too many problems for him to use.

A. Gulotta made a motion to continue the Public Hearing for two weeks, at which time, on June 24th at 7pm, the Board will also hold deliberations on the Special Permit. His motion was seconded by M. Massini-Reynolds and approved unanimously by roll call vote.

J. Collingwood Jr. explained that there was a lot of material for the Board to digest, continuing the Public Hearing would allow Board Members to formulate any further questions, which could be asked on the 24th. Deliberations would occur right afterwards.

Jimmy Larkin asked the Board if they would be consulting with Town Counsel on this application. The Board members answered that there was no need to do so because Mr. Mayland has experience complying with this bylaw from his application to the Town of Cheshire, which has a nearly identical bylaw that they got from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Thus he has addressed every requirement in his application.

At 7:25 PM The Public Hearing was closed.

Respectfully submitted,

Nadia Milleron

Nadia Milleron
Secretary to the Planning Board