

Town of Tyringham

Planning Board Meeting

7:00 PM July 15, 2015

Town Hall, Tyringham, MA 01264

**Approved Minutes**

**In Attendance:** Christina Alsop, Holly Ketron, Mark Curtin, April Roche, Michael Curtin

**Public Present:** none

**Minutes** of 7/08/15 were approved

**Mail:** Email from Matt Puntin regarding proposed solar bylaw

**New Business:**

- 1) Associate member appointment: Group discussed identifying an associate member. Steve Cohen showed interest but is only available in the summer, which would not be sufficient. Board members will reach out to potential candidates. (Mark will contact Larry Bravo. Christina will contact Josh & Rebecca Hodig.)
- 2) Ashintully special events permits: Ashintully sent the board the Trustee contract for holding events at Ashintully. Christina will email the contract to board members for review and further discussion at the next meeting. Christina advised Rebecca that the caterer needs to apply for a catering permit from the town, including permit for alcohol. She will also tell Rebecca that this requires a Serve Safe certification.
- 3) Available Planning Board members will attend a BRPC event on July 30<sup>th</sup> being held at 1 Fenn St, Pittsfield. The event is at 7pm.

**Old Business:** Proposed Wind & Solar Bylaws.

Board reviewed the feedback and questions from the 7/8/15 wind and solar bylaw information session. The board was appreciative of people's involvement and agreed that we are now ready to make some edits to the bylaw drafts. The group discussed solar projects that have potential in Tyringham – small scale, private owner projects that generate solar for personal use and a town project that generates solar for town use and/or potential income for the town. The group reviewed the Municipal Lighting Plant (MLP) discussion and all agreed that this falls in the realm of a town project, and is a separate issue from the bylaw at hand.

Mark did some quick research and the group discussed the concept of a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). There was discuss of whether or not the town would want to take advantage of a plan similar to the one Tonio Palmer was approached about. The group discussed the option of it being a community rather than a commercial project. There were various opinions on this concept. The board agreed to further research industry definitions. The group agreed that the bylaw should be crafted in such a way that the door could be kept open to possible future solar project that might benefit the town.

Christina reported that she followed up on the question about solar panels as structures and learned that solar panels are not considered taxable structures.

Board also discussed email sent by Matt Puntin suggesting that roof panels and small yard installations less than 1000 square feet be exempt from the review process, as it could be cumbersome. Board agreed that creating a site plan for a very small solar installation may not be necessary. Christina will incorporate part of this suggestion into next draft of bylaw. This led to a question about if the bylaw should focus on limits based on allowing for generating a specified percentage of power above the need of the home/property, rather than on acreage size. This would need more research as this concept has been used by National Grid to formulate how much they would buy back from landowners, rather than a concept used by towns. At this point, the group will proceed with acreage limits.

The group discussed the issue of visibility of the solar panels. Tonio Palmer had told the information session attendees that Smart Solar LLC requires 200' of open land all around the panels. The group debated whether or not this 200' is considered part of the array. Holly will research industry standards on this issue. Holly pointed out language in the cell tower bylaw that requires the project fit the character of the town. The group reviewed this section of the bylaw. Christine will add language to the solar bylaw around preserving the character of the town, borrowing from language currently used in the cell tower bylaw.

Mark will talk with Larry Gould to gather information regarding what is covered on a building permit, so that the board would not be duplicating this in the solar bylaw.

The group then discussed the Public Hearing paperwork. A plan for completing is was deferred until draft is updated. Holly will update Molly that the Planning Board will not be ready to present at the Special Town Meeting they are planning for August. Planning Board is projecting September for being more realistic, given the need to edit the bylaws, publicize, and to hold a public hearing in the times required.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM

Our next meeting will be July 22, 2015.

**Respectfully submitted,** April Slater Roche