



Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Date: September 24, 2020
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: Audioconference Broadcasted Live from McCourt Social Hall
Memorial Town Hall, Spencer, MA
Present: Administrator Gregory, Chairman Hicks, Vice-Chair Woodbury and
Clerk Howard
Dialing in: Members Berthiaume and Administrator Gregory. Mr. Pepe was absent.
Fire Chief Parsons and Town Planner Paul Dell'Aquila

Chairman Hicks called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and announced that the Board will meet with a combination of members present and remote, for this meeting Chairman Hicks, Vice-Chair Woodbury and Clerk Howard are present and Selectman Berthiaume is remote, and as such, all votes will be by roll call in accordance with Regulation 940, CMR 29.10 of the Open Meeting Law

Review and Act on Request to Refer to the Planning Board a Temporary Moratorium on Ground Mounted Solar Facilities per General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 5

Dr. Hicks announced that ground mounted solar for homeowners is not included in the moratorium discussion. The moratorium is being brought forth to allow time to incorporate the recommendations of the SBAC into a revised solar bylaw which will reduce the impact from solar facilities. He noted inconsistencies with decommissioning fees and said fees should be in the range of \$100,000 per megawatt, with an escalation clause.

Mr. Woodbury indicated that he is pro-solar, however agrees a moratorium is in order to develop a solid solar bylaw. He pointed out that current projects are exempt from a moratorium.

Ms. Berthiaume said she has confidence that the Planning Board and the SBAC can work together to draft a revised bylaw without a moratorium.

Dr. Hicks said bylaw amendments need to be made based on the SBAC recommendations and a moratorium will allow bylaw changes to be made in an orderly fashion.

Ms. Berthiaume asked if anyone contacted the Attorney General's (AG) Office to ask if a moratorium would be approved. Mr. Woodbury said Charlton, Athol, Orange, and other communities have already received approval from the AG.

Dr. Hicks stated that the proposed moratorium is based on the Town of Blandford, which was approved by the Attorney General.

Kurt Nordquist, Gale Drive, said wants to ensure residents who own large parcels of land are not impacted by a potential loss of income.

Mr. Woodbury said the goal is to develop a bylaw to protect the Town. Another concern is in addition to solar facilities, battery farms are being built.

Chairman Hicks said that batteries are a major concern with the hazardous material and fumes.

Mr. Gregory noted that if a draft moratorium is submitted to the Planning Board and they issue a recommendation to move forward, the item will be placed on the Town Meeting Warrant. If approved by Town Meeting, the Bylaw will be submitted to the Attorney General for review and approval.

A motion to submit a Moratorium Bylaw to the Planning Board for review and recommendation (Woodbury/Howard) passed 3-1 with a roll call vote: Berthiaume-no, Howard-yes, Woodbury-yes, Hicks-yes

A motion to adjourn (Woodbury/Howard) passed with a roll call vote: Berthiaume-yes, Howard-yes, Woodbury-yes, Hicks-yes

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Savoie
Executive Assistant

Referenced documents: Solar Bylaw