



## Planning Board – Town of Spencer

### *Minutes*

#### Special Planning Board Meeting

**Tuesday, December 05, 2017 at 7:00 PM**

McCourt Social Hall, 157 Main Street Spencer, MA 01562  
Memorial Town Hall

Planning Board Members Present: Chair Robert Ceppi, Maria Reed, Jonathan Viner, Shirley Shiver

Planning Board Members Absent: Jeff Butensky

Staff Present: Paul Dell'Aquila, Town Planner & Monica Santerre-Gervais, ODIS Clerk

#### **1) Mr. Ceppi opens the meeting at 7:06 pm.**

**2) Public Hearing: Major Site Plan Review/ Stormwater Permit – Applicant: Joseph Bartzis, Sunpin Massachusetts Opus Centrum, LLC; Owner: Joseph and Susan Foley, Location: North Brookfield Road; Spencer Assessor's Map R39/14. The applicant is requesting a Major Site Plan Review under Section 7.4 of the Spencer Zoning Bylaw to install a solar farm. The property is located within the Rural Residential district.**

Mr. Ceppi read aloud the narrative for the project and Mr. Dell'Aquila briefly summarized the previous approval in 2012 for the Special Permit, Sunpin attempted to revise the solar array plan this year but were denied, and now they have returned for site plan review on the Special Permit issued in 2012.

John Henry, Beta Group, engineer for Sunpin Solar was present and introduced Jamie Boyd and Sam Diane from Sunpin Solar. Mr. Henry came up and presented a presentation on the projector screen. Mr. Henry said the parcel is 35 acres and 29 acres will be forested for the solar array. The fence around the solar array will be 7 ½ - 8 ft high fence with 6 inch gap on the bottom to allow for wildlife to pass through, the land outside the fence will have a chance to re-grow, and the vegetative buffer around the array will remain and is 25-50 feet away from certain areas. The access road will be in the Northeast corner, will install 11 utility poles to convert DC to AC, and will have a turnaround suitable for the largest fire truck. Arborvitaes will be planted along some of the southern and northern portions of the site. Mr. Henry went over the landscaping plan on page 10 and spoke about the grass and wildflower mix that will be planted; trees will be allowed to grow but the height of the trees will be limited because of shading concerns. Mr. Henry said there was a preliminary meeting done and Sunpin received feedback on the chain link fence, turnaround on the access road, and snow storage, which, has all been addressed in this new plan. The current submission was sent to a third party reviewer, Lenard Engineering, and Mr. Henry addressed some of Corey Brodeur's concerns. However, in Lenard's report he quoted the Spencer Solar Bylaw and Mr. Henry wanted clarification because the applicants were told that because they are going off of the 2012 Special Permit the new solar bylaws would not apply. Mr. Dell'Aquila said he was correct and the Spencer Bylaw would not account for some

questions but Stormwater would. Also, Mr. Henry needed clarification on the access road driveway grade, the grade cannot go over 5% but they are proposing an 8% grade, therefore, a waiver would need to be requested. Mr. Dell'Aquila recommended speaking to Steven Tyler at the Highway Department and having him submit his questions and comments via email. Additionally, Mr. Henry explained that the site construction would take a couple months and then once the solar array was completed operation and maintenance would be once a month.

Mr. Viner asked about condition #8 on the original Special Permit requesting a chain link fence with black vinyl coating and if the applicant was still doing that and Mr. Henry said yes black coating on the south side. Mr. Ceppi asked frequency of equipment change outs and Mr. Henry said maybe every 10 years or if there is a faulty panel. Mr. Ceppi questioned the amount of exchange for inverters on the decommissioning plan and felt that the panels would be worthless after 10 or 20 years. Mr. Henry said they based their calculations in between what other decommissioning plans had. Mr. Ceppi asked if the calculations were done based on today's numbers and Mr. Henry said based off of 2018 to 20 years out. Mr. Ceppi asked how they could project the next 20 years and Mr. Henry said they really can't but they put \$20,000.00 in a savings account to cover any difference. Mr. Viner asked if the labor rates on the decommissioning plan were prevailing wage and Mr. Henry said no. Mr. Ceppi said the labor rates would need to be based off of prevailing wage rates because if this needs to go to bid the Town of Spencer has to pay out based on prevailing wage rates and Mr. Henry said he would revise.

Mr. Dell'Aquila reviewed his handout of pictures taken on November 30, 2017 during his walk thru and there was much discussion in regards to screening. Mr. Dell'Aquila said during his walk through the site and noticed many stone walls and wanted to know the plans for the stone walls. Mr. Henry answered that where applicable the stone walls will stay, but in the solar arrays they would need to be removed, and the stones would be kept on the site.

Mr. Ceppi opened the meeting to the public 7:46 pm.

Matt Defosse, 7 Paul's Drive, asked if their previous statement of the field being 5 acres was accurate. Mr. Henry said they covered that in the narrative and said the area of the existing meadow is 5.7 acres. Mr. Defosse asked if the applicant did a site walk and Mr. Henry said yes. Mr. Defosse said he was concerned with the stones on site and the soil for screwing in the racking system. Mr. Henry discussed the earth screws and the process to install the racking and said everything should work. Additionally, Mr. Defosse said he was concerned with the access road not going around the solar array in case there was a fire. Mr. Henry said that they met with the Fire Chief, Robert Parsons, and he didn't need the road around but wanted the arrays to be far enough apart so that a brush truck could go in between the panels if there was ever a fire. Mr. Defosse handed out a 3-ring binder to the Planning Board for review of his concerns. Mr. Defosse believes the project contradicts the towns Master Plan, Conservation Plan, Solar Plan, etc. Additionally, he has issues with the Special Permit that was issued in 2012 with some of the conditions, and he does not believe the Planning Board should issue the waiver for the traffic plan. Mr. Henry answered that the project would be 2-3 months and it won't impact the neighborhood. Mr. Defosse brought in large pictures of other Solar Farms in town and their biggest issues at the sites are mitigation. The area for the proposed solar array is in rural residential, the arrays will be on a slope, there are wildlife and wetlands close by, there will be

water issues and erosion issues. Also, Mr. Defosse felt the stormwater plans that Sunpin solar submitted were inadequate. Mr. Henry said they will be addressing the stormwater questions because Lenard Engineering wanted them to revise the stormwater plan too. Mr. Dell'Aquila mentioned that on the third party review comments there are 18 questions in regards to stormwater and all of that will get addressed. Mr. Defosse asked when the stormwater will be revised and Mr. Dell'Aquila said hopefully by the next meeting and before the project can be voted on everything would need to be updated.

There was discussion in regards to have a staging access on the site so that there will not be any delivery trucks parked on the road or idling, and Mr. Tyler will map out the best route for the trucks during construction.

**MOTION: Ms. Shiver motioned to continue the public hearing until December 19, 2017**

**SECOND: Mr. Viner**

**DISCUSSION: None**

**VOTE: 4-0**

**Ms. Shiver motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 pm**

**Mr. Viner Seconded**

**Vote: 4-0**

**Submitted by: Monica Santerre-Gervais ODIS Clerk**

**Approved by the Planning Board on: 12/19/2017**

#### **List of Documents used on December 05, 2017**

Items sent to Planning Board prior to Meeting by email/ in person:

- Agenda
- Application, plans, narrative, stormwater plan, and seed mix memo for Sunpin Solar, proposed solar array for N. Brookfield Road

Items submitted at the Meeting:

1. Pictures taken by Paul Dell'Aquila on 11/30/2017 of the proposed solar array site.
2. Email from Corey Brodeur dated 12/5/2017 in regards to fence gap
3. Peer review comments for N. Brookfield Solar from Lenard Engineering dated revised 11/30/2017.
4. Decommissioning plan submitted by Sunpin solar, received 12/1/2017
5. Exhibit E- Impact Study Agreement dated 10/12/2017, received 12/1/2017
6. 3-Ring Binder handed in and presented by Matt Defosse 7 Paul's Drive.