

Springfield Township Planning Board Meeting Minutes
August 6, 2019

Chair Jacques called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and led the salute to the Flag.

The Chair read the Open Public Meetings Statement. "Public notice of this meeting, pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, has been given by the Springfield Township Planning Board in the following manner on January 4, 2019;

- a. Posting written notice on the official bulletin board at the Municipal Building, Jobstown, N.J.
- b. Mailing written notice to the Burlington County Times and the Trenton Times.
- c. Filing written notice with the Clerk of Springfield Township.
- d. Mailing written notice to each person who has requested copies of the regular meeting schedule and who has prepaid any charges fixed for such service.

Roll Call:

Jo Jacques, Chairperson	Present
Denis McDaniel	Present
John Hlubik	Present
Bernard Dunn	Absent
Theresa Nicholson	Present
William Bauma	Present
Stephen Makuka	Present
Richard Toone, 1 st Alternate	Present
Alexandra Corwin Johnson 2 nd Alternate	Absent

Also present – Elizabeth McManus, PP of Kyle & McManus Associates

Minutes:

None

Informal:

Summit Ridge Energy – Block 1201, Lots 10.01 & 10.02

Applicant's Operations & Engineering: Dan Jordan

Applicant's Planning Acquisition: Wesley Hodges

Mr. Hodges indicated they represent a solar development company headquartered in Arlington, VA with an office in New York and a small office in the Princeton area. Mr. Hodges gave overview of their proposal for a community solar project. The landowner, Mr. Choi, is not present but the Summit Ridge team has been working on a design for a solar project just off Juliustown Road which would entail a 10-acre array development out of the 20-acre parcel. A consultant was hired to do a wetlands delineation. Environmental surveys are being run to avoid prime farmland. Before submitting application to the State, Mr. Hodges and Mr. Jordan want to discuss with the Board to get an idea of their thoughts and answer any Board questions.

After some preliminary surveys regarding the low to moderate income offtake of power that the facility would generate, they've had a good amount of success. The State requires surveys to be done and looks to have at least 40% purchasers of the energy facility per Mr. Hodges.

Mr. Jordan indicated community solar differs from other solar projects because the programs in New Jersey mostly required solar generators to connect directly to someone's behind the meter. For example, if a factory building or a building that consumed a lot of electricity, that was the entity that would take advantage of the solar. In the case of community solar, they sell energy off the grid so people in that area can sign up to subscribe to buy the power

directly for that project. It would be sold at a discounted rate. Low to moderate income are encouraged to sign up. The State provides incentive to do so because the lower income households may have lower FICO credit scores so they may have a harder time taking advantage of discounted solar. Financing is then set up for the low to moderate income households. Community Solar is currently being done in Maryland, New York and Massachusetts. It's a pilot program in New Jersey and starting a new program in Illinois.

Mr. Hodges indicated the goal is to install 75 megawatts. A lot of the allocation is based in PSE&G territory; approximately 50%. The projects will be somewhere about 3 to 15 or 20 acres throughout New Jersey.

A handout was provided to the Board providing details and timelines of the project. Mr. Hodges indicated a community meeting will take place and application will be submitted to the BPU approximately September 9, 2019. Response should be given within a month or two for selection of the program. The plan is early permitting in 2020 to the NJDEP, then to Springfield and install the summer of 2020. Mr. Jordan indicated approximately 250 households can be served. Mr. Hodges pointed out the benefits of a community solar project, the site selection, environmental constraints, the community character regarding landscaping and design, zoning regulations and soil in the handout. Mr. Hodges further indicated that the site is well liked because it is about a half mile off the road and it's out of sight. Mr. Choi has a large piece of property but less than 10% of the property will be utilized.

When the Phase I Environmental portion is done, the State and Federal approvals will be needed. Chair asked if any other projects are occurring in this area. Mr. Hodges replied that none are under construction but 8 are in development across the state. Chair mentioned that the Board Solicitor indicated he just had a community solar application at one of his other municipalities. Mr. Hodges asked for any questions.

Chair asked if the proposed property is wooded or farmland. Mr. Hodges replied it's a bit of a mixed property; some of the farmland is no longer in production. Some trees/brush will need clearance; not much to alter. Mr. Jordan indicated no building will take place in the wetlands. Mr. Hodges indicated buffering will take place even though it's far from the public road. Mr. Jordan indicated low-mow grass will be planted; stabilization ahead of time and posts will be installed for racking; electrical trenching; racking and panels installed and the connections. Chair asked if 10 acres will be utilized. Mr. Jordan replied as yes. Mayor asked if it's regulated by the BPU. Mr. Jordan replied as yes. Mayor asked about affordable housing would be participating. Both Mr. Jordan and Mr. Hodges responded they are not sure of the standards. Ms. McManus interjected that HUD's definition could be the New Jersey municipality's moderate income and is their low income; 80% or less of the median income. Mayor asked if the community solar can work with JCP&L or only PSE&G; JCP&L is down the road. Mr. Jordan replied it would depend on where the connection is made and gave further example. Mayor asked why only 10 acres. Mr. Jordan replied that it could go up to 20 to 30 acres but for now, 10 acres is fine. It can be expanded later. Community solar leases up to 25 to 30 years from the landowner; it goes with the life of the panels. Mayor indicated that there are problems with the land that will need to be addressed prior to development by the Town. Suggestion to solar team to investigate for possible issues. Mr. Toone asked what a community meeting is. Mr. Hodges replied that a mailer would go out to the community for a forum. To obtain a conditional use, a public hearing would require notice to property owners within 200' of this parcel. Early application will occur in early 2020. Chair recommended to come to the Town Hall for such application after receiving approval from State and Federal agencies.

Chair asked the Board for any questions/comments. It is a conditional use in the zone and the buffering is being addressed in the concept plan. The land is not being actively farmed today. Ms. McManus would like to see a topography to identify parcel visibility and preserved properties. Mr. Hodges indicated that renderings will come forth when application is submitted. Chair indicated the Board Solicitor has been involved with another municipality's community solar project. Mr. Hodges indicated a memo will come forth in late October to let the Board know status.

Discussion:

- Master Plan re-examination

- Ms. McManus gave overview of last meeting. The noncontiguous transfer could work in Springfield. If receiving areas will be implemented, they are preferred near the Hamlets' areas and second, there are reservations to the program as a whole. Ms. McManus offered to pursue the area of thinking to look further into receiving areas near the Hamlets. The Board should identify areas near the Hamlets as "locations for noncontiguous cluster for noncontiguous cluster receiving areas and/or locations where traditional clustering would be permitted or more heavily incentivized" as per Ms. McManus August 1, 2019 memo to the Board. In addition, "As part of this evaluation, the Board should consider incentivizing clustering – both traditional and noncontiguous. Recommendation an incentive of density be utilized to encourage a developer to take the extra effort and cost of land for noncontiguous cluster (both land costs and soft costs to administer the acquisition and preservation), soft costs to seek approval for a more complicated application (potentially additional submission documents, additional meetings, etc.), and infrastructure costs associated with road construction and perhaps utilities" as per August 1, 2019 memo.
- Ms. McManus gave overview of the maps containing Existing Zoning and Environmental Constraints. Ms. McManus received some updates to the maps from Brian Wilson, Burlington County Farmland Preservation, so the current mapping will need revision to accurately depict all the preserved farmland.
- Mayor interjected to discuss affordable housing. Ms. McManus indicated the town's obligation is 94 units. Further discussion had ensued regarding affordable housing. Chair requested the conversation go back to area identification
- Upon mapping review, the Board has identified the following areas as suitable for receiving areas
 - Area 1 is acceptable
 - Area 2 – 17.01 and 17.04 (east) is acceptable
 - Area 3 is acceptable
 - Area 4 is acceptable
 - Areas 5, 6 and 7 are not acceptable
- Ms. McManus will have updated mapping and include layers with information for each area including zoning, density affordable housing, etc.
- Mayor mentioned a letter went to Helis Farm but no response. Mayor asked if Helis could be included as a receiving area on both sides. Ms. McManus replied it will be included.

Public Comment:

Chair opened the floor to public comment. Being no public comment, Mr. Toone motioned to close; seconded by Mrs. Nicholson; All in favor.

Adjournment:

Chair called for motion to adjourn. Mr. Toone motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Nicholson. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan A. Minock
 Planning Board Secretary