

Planning Board – Public Hearing

Zoom Virtual Platform – www.zoom.us, P: 646-558-8656, Meeting ID: 985 0134 5275, Password: 396039
Wednesday June 3rd, 2020 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Donald Holland, Chair; Walter Gunn, Clerk; Ken Taylor, Bruce Colton, Josh Levine.

Others Present: Curt Freedman, Bert Carter, Bonnie Katusich, Stephen Jablonski

The *Planning Board Virtual Public Hearing* was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chair Donald Holland. This is a continuation of the April 1st, 2020 and May 6th hearings.

Mr. Freedman explained, per his comments on the last hearing, that Citizen Petition 1 (ATM Article 36) was to be withdrawn on ATM floor and then proceeded to present the case for Citizen Petition 2 (ATM Article 37), which consists on the installation of ground-mounted thermal and/or photovoltaic solar panels within the front and/or side lot lines of a residential property subject to the following parameters:

- a) The panels shall be installed in a single 15'-deep row parallel to the dwelling's foundation, with each row including multiple panels with varying height and length. The rows are to be separated 5' from the building's foundation to avoid interference with egress, visuals or overall building maintenance.
- b) The highest position of the panels may not exceed 8'-6" and the lowest upward edge of the panel to be no less than 1'-0" above grade. The panel's pitch will range from 20° to 70°.
- c) The panel is to be skirted on all perimeter sides that are in view from a public way or abutting neighbor with lattice and shrubbery to soften its aesthetic appearance.
- d) All equipment must comply with applicable Commonwealth building, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and other relevant code standards as well as standards of good engineering practice.
- e) The installation of solar panels on a given property may not proceed should the town's Fire Department, Police Department and Building Commissioner envision any safety issues.

A mock-up of a panel has been built in the applicant's property for public officials to see. Mr. Freedman acknowledged that some properties in town would be ineligible under the parameters herein due to lot size constraints and that panels would encroach on the decades-old established 40' setbacks indicated in the Subdivision Control segment of the town bylaws. While he expressed that, per MA laws, no zoning ordinance or bylaw should unreasonably prevent the installation of solar panels, the board clarified that there are instances in which the Home Rule portion of said laws does provide the Town with the ability to regulate the matter herein should it be found that it may adversely impact the community's already established parameters. As final notes, he aims to provide the town with an alternative to solar panels placement in a given property, as rooftop installation have proven to be cumbersome in many cases, with issues pertaining to roof leaks or sliding snow in the winter but, while the ground-mounted installation may help mitigate these issues, he cautioned against tree clearing since tree shade aides in the reduction of a structure's cooling costs during warmer months.

Mr. Gunn raised concerns over the impact this bylaw may have on the town's tree canopy and cited the state's efforts in pursuing renewable energy have unintentionally encouraged the deforestation of inexpensive undeveloped land for the purposes of constructing solar farms, which may be counterproductive from an environmental standpoint. On another note, Mr. Levine raised concerns over reflectivity or glare, although Mr. Freedman stated that the solar panels are meant to capture energy, thus provide low reflectivity ratings.

Documents presented: Citizen Petition 2 with graphics.

Mr. Gunn made a motion, and was seconded by Mr. Colton, to close the public hearing. Roll call vote - Mr. Colton: yes; Mr. Taylor: yes; Mr. Levine: yes; Mr. Gunn: yes; Mr. Holland: yes. All in favor 5-0, motion carries unanimously, public hearing closed at 7:44pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bianca Damiano