

WISCASSET PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES, APRIL 26, 2021
7 P.M. VIA ZOOM

Present: Jackie Lowell, Peter McRae, Chair Karl Olson, Deb Pooler and Steve Wallace and Emily Rabbe (LCPC)

Absent: Al Cohen, Tony Gatti and Lester Morse

PUBLIC HEARING

Solar Energy Conversion Systems Ordinance

Karl Olson called the public hearing to order at 7:01 p.m. Ed Polewarczyk asked for clarification on several sections dealing with roof-mounted systems. There was no other discussion.

REGULAR MEETING

1. Call to Order

Karl Olson called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes of April 12, 2021

Deb Pooler moved to approve the minutes of April 12, 2021. Vote 5-0-0.

3. Amy Burchstead – Pre-application meeting for subdivision on Willow Lane

Ms. Burchstead owns a duplex to which she would like to add an apartment. The addition of a third living area will result in a subdivision. The total area of the property on which the house is located is 2.6 acres, less than the three acres required under the subdivision ordinance for three apartments. Ms. Burchstead also owns 137 acres adjoining the 2.6-acre property; however, the land is under a conservation easement eliminating the possibility of a transfer of .4 acre to the smaller property. She has contractors lined up to make the renovations on the duplex, has contacted a bank about financing and has a potential tenant who will need to move into the proposed apartment soon following the sale of her house. She showed photos of the house and surrounding area and pointed out that the footprint of the house would not be changed. She asked the board if an exception could be made in the consideration of her application. Anna Charlotte, a real estate agent, spoke on the shortage of affordable rental inventory in Wiscasset, the difficulties in finding suitable housing and the possibility of the potential tenant becoming homeless. She asked the planning Board to do the right thing.

Karl Olson said 1) adding a unit to a two-unit building would create a subdivision; 2) under the subdivision ordinance three units would require three acres; and 3) there is nothing in the variance or appeals section of the ordinance which allows the planning board to change the requirements to allow three units on less than a three-acre lot. Deb Pooler said she worried about opening the flood gates if the board made an exception and approved the application. It was suggested that

Ms. Burchstead approach Chewonki Foundation who holds the conservation easement on her land to request the transfer of a small portion of the conserved land to the adjoining property.

Emily Rabbe, Lincoln County Planning Commission, said she understood the concern about setting a precedent by approving a subdivision on the smaller lot and that Ms. Burchstead had the option of selling the smaller lot. Rabbe suggested that the applicant contact Chewonki Foundation to see if .4 acre of the conservation land could be transferred to the smaller lot in exchange for which Ms. Burchstead would agree to not build an accessory apartment on the conservation land which would otherwise be allowed. Ms. Burchstead said she understood that her options were to talk to Chewonki, contact neighboring property owners or go through an application/denial/appeal process.

4. CMP (Gorrill Palmer Engineers) – Pre-application meeting regarding upgrade to transmission line

Cole Peters, Permitting Specialist, said CMP's proposed 345 Kv AC transmission line will run from Maine Yankee 2.9 miles north on existing poles to the Woolwich border and then back into Wiscasset on 30 new wooden poles within the existing right-of-way 3.4 miles northward into Alna. The project will include work in the substation plant, concrete foundations, and new H-frame poles. The upgrade will be peripherally related to the Clean Energy Corridor project. Approvals have been received from Maine Public Utilities Commission, Maine Land Use Planning Commission, Maine DEP and the Army Corps of Engineers. Emily Rabbe asked that applications be submitted 10 days in advance of the Planning Board meeting including permits from other agencies, copies of cross-sections of H frames, preliminary revegetation plans, and erosion control measures. Abutters must be notified. Peters asked if abbreviated forms of some of the documents that had been submitted in the past would be acceptable including a spread sheet with book and page number of various properties and date of recording. Olson said there is a recorded survey with the information available. An electronic copy and three paper copies will be necessary. Olson asked that the check be submitted to the town office marked for planning board attention. After receipt of the application, the first meeting will be devoted to finding the application complete. A public hearing will take place at the subsequent meeting and the board will also consider the approval of the application at that time.

5. Other Business

Karl Olson reported on the meeting with Dennis Simmons and Emily Rabbe and Mary Ellen Barnes of Lincoln County Planning Commission on ways the LCPC could help the planning board. Taking over the reviewing and approval of de minimus projects under 2500 sq. ft. is a possibility.

6. Adjournment

Deb Pooler moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m. Vote 5-0-0.