

Tinmouth Planning Commission

February 23, 2015

Minutes

Members present: Michael Fallar, Vito Macaluso, Cindy Lewis, Denise McGinley, Grant Reynolds, Kevin Ruane, and Bob Lloyd. Kim Harbaugh participated via telephone.
One vacancy.

Others present: David Birmingham and Kirk Shields from Green Mountain Power, and Gail Fallar, Secretary

Michael called the meeting to order at 7:05. Agenda was reviewed, Gail added new solar project on Gulf Road, and the need for member recruitment at town meeting (Michael volunteered to do that.)

Minutes of 1/12/15 were read and approved as written.

Kirk presented information regarding Green Mountain Power (GMP)'s solar initiatives, net metering, size of projects – 15 kW is a household, 150 kW would cover about an acre and a half, 500 kW is the biggest right now and would cover 3-5 acres. If a homeowner is thinking about a roof installation – they need to make sure the roof surface will last 25 years – slate roofs are not user friendly to solar installations. Solar installations over 10kW are taxable. Units are becoming more efficient and cost is coming down.

Grant inquired about large scale projects – Dave advised that 3 Phase power lines are required – closest is in Wallingford. The Vermont Marble line from Proctor to the quarry in Danby (running six miles through Tinmouth) is a transmission line, so in order for anyone to access it, they would have to build a substation at a cost of \$1.5 to \$3 million. And that line may not have the capacity to handle it.

Further pressed about the chance of anyone connecting to it, the reply was “really low”.

Kirk also advised that it is easier if developers and towns worked together before projects went before the Public Service Board (PSB), and that GMP wanted public engagement to gather concerns first.

It was also noted that solar systems have a life span of about 25 years – after that they run about 80% of capacity, but that the PSB does require a decommissioning plan.

Grant inquired about community solar projects – reply: 150 kW would be the maximum and would depend on distance for a substation, each project would be considered individually, but most developers would look elsewhere first. Size determines economics of a particular project.

On a more local note, Kim inquired about upgrades to existing power lines on White Birch Drive – there are exposed lines, etc. – David noted Tinmouth is not his territory, but will inquire.

Gail advised that the Select Board is interested in meeting with the Planning Commission (PC) regarding the need for a Capital Plan and Budget. It is the PC's duty, per state statute, but the Select Board is willing to work with the PC.

Gail also advised receipt of an application to the PBS regarding a solar project on Leo Branchaud and Tami Carboni's farm on Gulf Road. PC reviewed plans, noted that as the project will be “on the grid” they have no jurisdiction, but support the project as presented.

Next meeting was set for March 23rd at 7:30, to accommodate a member with a prior meeting that day.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Fallar, Secretary