

TOWN OF WEBSTER

SOLAR PROJECT SUBCOMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY August 31, 2021

The Solar Project Subcommittee held a meeting on Tuesday, August 31, 2021. The meeting was held at Town Hall; 945 Battle Street, Webster NH 03303 in the Grange Hall.

Subcommittee members present: Chairperson David Hemenway, Betsy Janeway, Marty Bender, Craig Fournier, Daniel Nudd.

Also, present: Town Administrator Dana Hadley, Land Use Coordinator Russell Tatro, Dan White.

Chairperson Hemenway opened the August 31, 2021, Solar Project Subcommittee meeting at 7:04pm and took attendance. He then asked the Committee to review and approve the draft minutes. The committee then reviewed the minutes.

MOTION: David Hemenway

To approve the minutes from 4/20/21 as amended, 6/22/21 as written, and 7/27/21

SECOND: Craig Fournier

CRAIG FOURNIER – YES

MARTIN BENDER – YES

DANIEL NUDD – YES

DAVID HEMENWAY – YES

BETSY JANWAY – YES

The motion passed 5 to 0

Chairperson Hemenway stated that the purpose of this meeting was to review the agreement between Hopkinton Solar and the Town. The old pilot was currently still in effect because it had been approved by the previous Committee. The updated pilot in front of the committee showed the changes that had been made because the project had increased in size. The changes to the pilot were in red. The largest change where due to the added properties for the larger project. The construction term had also been increased. The last major change was that the fee schedule had been updated to match the new energy output of the project. These fees would be paid to the Town annually in lieu of taxes. Many residents had been asking if the Town was getting a good deal on this project and to answer this question he had reached out to the Concord. Concord had provided the Committee with a table of all the solar projects that they had data. The table showed all the rates that each town received for their solar projects. The Committee reviewed and briefly discussed each of the communities listed on the chart. The Town was being offered \$3,000 per Megawatt with a 2.5% annual increase and this appeared to be the standard rate for a solar project. The Committee then discussed the revenues, SEC timeline, and how the project would be evaluated for taxes.

Dan White asked what amount the Town was receiving in taxes currently for the proposed properties in comparison to what the Town would receive after the Solar project was built. Chairperson Hemenway stated that he didn't not have the exact numbers in front of him. Most of the lots for the project were in current use and the tax bills would be around \$200 and if they were not, they would be around \$2,000.00 dollars. The pilot would only cover the land that was actively used for the project and any additional land would be valuated normally. Mr. White asked if when the project was completed would it be re-assessed. Chairperson Hemenway responded that it would be. Member Fournier asked about the amount the Town would review for the Land Use Change Tax. Chairperson Hemenway stated that this topic had been discussed in the previous pilot and pointed out that not all the proposed properties are in current use. The Committee then reviewed the table of amounts the Town would receive in lie of Land Use Change Tax.

Chairperson Hemenway stated that this was a legally different document because of the properties that had been added and this was why he wanted to get the Committee to review the changes before

1 recommending them to the Select Board. Member Nudd asked if the companies name change effected the
2 pilot agreement. Chairperson Hemenway stated that it was still in effect because the parent company had
3 stayed the same. Member Nudd asked if the company name could be updated to the current name. Land
4 Use Coordinator Tatro would investigate this further.

5
6 Mr. White asked if there would be any storage of solar panels on the site. Chairperson Hemenway stated
7 that this use was not covered in the existing pilot agreement, and he would have to check with legal. He
8 pointed out that the way the pilot was written was that if the solar company upgraded their solar panels to
9 increase the projects output, that the Town's annual revenue from the project would automatically
10 increase. Mr. White asked what happened if the whole or parts of the project shut down. Chairperson
11 Hemenway responded that natural disasters were currently covered in the pilot agreement. Member Nudd
12 stated that his interpretation would be that any change to the agreed output would be subject to the Select
13 Boards review and approval. Member Fournier asked what mitigation the Town would receive if the
14 project was shut down and decommissioned. Chairperson Hemenway stated that this topic would be
15 included in the MOU.

16
17 The Committee then reviewed the sample pilot agreements from other towns. Chairperson Hemenway
18 pointed out that most of the documents were very similar and likely were drafted from the same source
19 document. The other pilots were very similar to the Town's.

20
21 Chairperson Hemenway stated that he wanted to address some topics that had consistently come up. He
22 had been asked how this project would fit into the master plan. The master plan stated that the Town
23 wanted to move in more sustainable direction and maintain a small population. This project would
24 accomplish both and aid in keeping the tax rate low. This project would not require any additional school,
25 road, or public safety infrastructure. Also because of the recent passing of HB64 this project would not
26 count towards the States education needs or effect the valuation and equalization. Member Fournier
27 pointed out that the land was relatively flat and would have likely been developed in the future and was a
28 good clean energy project for the Town. Chairperson Hemenway agreed and stated that the wetland
29 scientist that had reviewed the project had also agreed with that sentiment. Mr. White commented that
30 since the project was going to gain access through the power lines it would significantly lessen the impact
31 of the project. Member Nudd stated that this was something that the Town could further stipulate in the
32 MOU.

33
34 Member Bender asked when the MOU process was expected to start. Chairperson Hemenway stated that
35 the project had been delayed because they were waiting for responses from various State agencies.
36 Olivewood Energy expected to get additional plans to the Town early next year. They also planned to
37 provide a draft MOU to the Town. At this point it would be up to the Committee to review the draft and
38 make changes to address the Town's needs. Then it would be submitted to the attorney that the Town had
39 on retainer for the project. However, it would be a good idea to come up with a list of stipulation for the
40 MOU in the meantime.

41
42 Then Committee then discussed if a percentage of the projected revenue would be equivalent to 2.5%
43 annual increase in the fee schedule. Chairperson Hemenway pointed out that over the life of the project
44 the revenues would likely fluctuate. The way the agreement was written even if the revenues went down
45 the Town would still receive the same amount. Member Fournier asked if they needed to take a vote to
46 recommend the changes to the Select Board. Chairperson Hemenway stated the committee could request
47 more information, make additional changes, or recommend the current changes. Member Nudd stated that
48 he didn't want to price the solar company out of the project. However, he still wanted to see the projected
49 revenues before he made his decision.

50
51 **MOTION:** Craig Fournier

1 *To recommend the amended pilot agreement to the Select Board on the condition that the names be*
2 *changes to the appropriate company.*

3 **SECOND:** Martin Bender

4 **CRAIG FOURNIER – YES**

5 **MARTIN BENDER – YES**

6 **DANIEL NUDD – NO**

7 **DAVID HEMENWAY – YES**

8 **BETSY JANWAY – YES**

9 **The motion passed 4 to 1**

10
11 Member Fournier stated that they could wait till they got the revenue information before the
12 recommendation was submitted to the Select Board. If the numbers were drastically different, they could
13 withdraw the recommendation.

14
15 **MOTION:** Daniel Nudd

16 *To adjourn the meeting at 8:27pm*

17 **SECOND:** David Hemenway & Craig Fournier

18 **CRAIG FOURNIER – YES**

19 **MARTIN BENDER – YES**

20 **DANIEL NUDD – YES**

21 **DAVID HEMENWAY – YES**

22 **BETSY JANWAY – YES**

23 **The motion passed 5 to 0**

24
25 The meeting adjourned at 8:27pm

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27 *Minutes taken by Russell Tatro*