

SUTTON PLANNING BOARD
Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2020

Approved _____

*Note- This meeting was held remotely via Zoom in accordance with Executive Orders from Governor Baker. The Chair read a notice regarding the remote meeting format. (attached)

Present: W. Baker, M. Gagan, R. Largess Jr., S. Paul, W. Talcott (Associate)

Staff: J. Hager, Planning & Economic Dev. Director

As K. Bergeson was not present W. Talcott acted as a full member in his place.

Public Hearing – Site Plan Review – Eversource Energy – Natural Gas Gate Station

M. Gagan read the hearing notice as it appeared in The Chronicle.

The following development team members were present: Samuel Ijioma, P.E., Eversource, Tricia Foster, Senior Consultant, Epsilon Associates, Brendan Kearns, P.E. Tri-Mont Engineering Co., Mark Lamping, P.E. Eversource, Jennifer Buttaro, Senior Environmental Specialist – Licensing and Permitting Eversource, and Chase Bernier, CWB, PWS & CERP SWCA Environmental Consultants.

Samuel Ijioma presented a slide show detailing the project. He stated the function of a gate station is to transfer natural gas from a transmission entity to a distribution entity. At the gate station high pressure natural gas from a natural gas transmission line, in this case the adjacent Tennessee Gas Pipeline (TGP), will be reduced to the point where it can be fed into the local distribution system by Eversource to be delivered to customers. The gate station project pairs with ongoing construction of new gas mains in area roadways to serve parts of Sutton, Northbridge and beyond to help existing businesses and encourage further economic development.

Tricia Foster overviewed the project site which sits directly west of Sutton Solar Phase 2. A portion of the property is in Northbridge although development will all be within Sutton. She reviewed adjacent uses which are all non-residential.

Brendan Kearns summarized they will build one regulator building for Eversource as well as various pad mounted equipment. The access drive will be 15' wide and there will be 4 parking spots. The site will be secured with a security fence with barbed wire at the top. The developed area is within required setbacks. Environmental impacts were minimized by making sure the project is outside the riverfront area and utilizes the natural grade to sheet flow water across 25' vegetated buffer strips for pretreatment and into infiltration trenches. There is a portion of the active site which will be designed and permitted by TGP, this portion of the site will be where higher pressure gas is drawn off the transmission line and metered, it will then enter the Eversource portion of the site and the pre-cast concrete regulator building. The Eversource building will be approx. 1,000 s.f. and will feature a brick façade. Exterior lights will be photocell or switch activated and have little visual impact beyond the fence limits. Construction is estimated to take 5-7 months starting in April 2021 to be completed by the end of the year. There will be no daily staff at the site, there will be a weekly maintenance and monitoring visit only. A combination of trees and understory plantings was used to achieve native species screening. Coverage is only 4.4% conservatively.

T. Foster added the TGP s.f. is estimated to be 250 s.f. so the parking provided exceeds the bylaw requirement for both operators. The applicant has requested a waiver from the loading space requirement to eliminate this additional impervious area that would not be utilized at this site as there is no loading/unloading at the site. She noted that the Graves Engineering comments were recently received and they will provide a response to these comments. They began a Notice of Intent (NOI) process with Conservation which was continued. They will also acquire a NPDES permit from State.

In response to a question from S. Paul, J. Hager confirmed this use is permitted as a public utility under Sutton bylaws.

The Board reviewed department comments including fire safety concerns from the Assessors' office. S. Ijioma responded that the facility is not occupied and there are a myriad of remote detector/sensors which are monitored 24/7 and other failsafe features that are designed to shut off the supply of natural gas and or sources of ignition immediately in the case of equipment failure or damage or any other system issue. The un-manned gate station building is also made of fire proof materials.

There were no public comments.

The Board reviewed the one waiver request.

IV.B.3. – To eliminate the loading space as this site will not be loading or unloading anything during normal operations.

Motion: To grant the waiver to eliminate the loading space, R. Largess Jr.

2nd: M. Gagan

Vote: W. Talcott – aye, S. Paul – aye, M. Gagan – aye, R. Largess Jr. – aye, W. Baker – abstained as his connection was temporarily lost so he didn't hear all discussion on this subject.

J. Hager stressed TGP will come in separately under their own site plan application for the area inside this fence line that is marked as TGP area.

Motion: To continue the public hearing to November 16th at 7 PM, R. Largess Jr.

2nd: M. Gagan

Vote: W. Talcott – aye, S. Paul – aye, M. Gagan – aye, R. Largess Jr. – aye, W. Baker – aye

Public Hearing – Site Plan Review & Special Permits Large Scale Solar & Common Driveway 161 Armsby Road

M. Gagan read the public hearing notice as it appeared in The Chronicle.

Brad Parson and Kevin McCaffery, P.E of All Points Technology, Jeff Pipeling, Director of Business Development CTec Solar, and John Altomare on behalf of Giulio Fusaro, the applicant, were present.

B. Parsons began the presentation by acknowledging that the two parcels owned by the applicant at 229 Worcester Providence Turnpike and 161 Armsby Road have merged for zoning purposes under the Doctrine of Merger and they will file a Form A plan removing the internal lot line. The front lot will retain the pre-existing non-conforming home. He briefly reviewed requested waivers.

K. McCaffery addressed the application for a common driveway noting there is an easement in place with Atlas Box for shared access. He stated they feel the common driveway application is justified as it would be unsafe for various reasons to access the solar installation over the driveway for the existing home through the Worcester Providence frontage especially during construction as there would be little reaction time. He reviewed the 12% grade private access drive which will rise 50' to the panel location the drive will have a 3-5% grade landing area at the base before you enter the common driveway. They have worked to balance the 26,000 c.y. of cuts and fills on site including construction of berms to help with screening. There is one infiltration basin and rock lined swales along the entrance drive to handle stormwater flows. Screening is proposed in the form of earthen berms with sergeant junipers on top of the berm to supplement adjacent mature trees which have little understory. The eastern fence will also have privacy slats. Twenty-five feet of existing vegetation will remain untouched around the entire installation. Graves Engineering comments were just received so they have not been addressed on this plan set. The entire system will generate 2.3 MW through 5,400 panels.

The Board reviewed department comments. The system will interconnect to the existing electric distribution system via proposed overhead lines as is the usual practice. This line will be elevated to ensure it will not interfere with truck traffic to Unified/Atlas Box.

In response to a question from S. Paul, the applicant responded that the elevation across the project rises well over 65'. The applicant agreed that if reflection from the chain link fencing as a traffic distraction was a concern they would change sections of fence to black vinyl coated with privacy slats.

M. Gagan asked if Atlas Box responded to abutter notification and or as a property owner. The fact that Atlas Box has not signed the common driveway application was discussed. John Altomare on behalf of the applicant reviewed the easement jointly granted by Atlas Box and the applicant for grading, utilities and access stressing that this easement specifically says neither party can stand in each other's way with respect to development. J. Hager reported that in discussion with Atlas Box they stated they were just reviewing the drainage and a few other details. Mr. Altomare confirmed this is consistent with his conversation with Attorney Dawson for Atlas Box.

The Board reviewed Waiver requests:

The Board determined no waiver was required from the Route 146 Overlay Bylaws as the Board determined they do not apply to this development.

R. Largess Jr. suggested the remainder of waivers be tabled until the signature issue was cleared up. Mr. Altomare stressed they don't need Atlas' signature as they have a deeded legal right to proceed. He asked the Board to address whatever they can as he's confident issues will be resolved with Atlas.

In response to a question from W. Talcott, Brad Parsons stated the only noise generated by the facility is the transformers and inverters that emit up to 60 decibels at 9'. These will be located closest to Atlas Box. This decibel level is equivalent to a refrigerator running.

Shannon Grondin of 94 Stone School Road expressed concerns with the removal of many trees and an increase in noise from Route 146 and the visibility of the installation from her home. The applicant provided a sight line rendering from a property close to the Grondins which showed the line of sight going up and over the installation.

The Board continued consideration of waiver requests:

Setback of Principal use – The majority of the Board interpreted the panels themselves to be the principal use, in which case the project complies with the lot line and zoning district setback provisions. Open space amounts to about 3.08 acres which is more than the required percentage of 25%. The language also says this buffer shall remain in its natural state or can be upgraded and the applicant is maintaining they are upgrading this buffer with the earthen berm and screening plantings.

Motion: To continue the public hearing to November 16th at 7:15 P.M., R. Largess Jr.
2nd: M. Gagan
Vote: W. Talcott – aye, S. Paul – aye, M. Gagan – aye, R. Largess Jr. – aye, W. Baker – aye

Additional Action Items None.

Administrative Items

Motion: To approve the minutes of 10/05/20, R. Largess Jr.
2nd: S. Paul
Vote: W. Talcott – yes, S. Paul – yes, M. Gagan – yes, R. Largess Jr. – yes, W. Baker – yes

Correspondence

Atlas Providence Road Tenants - The Board reviewed a list of current tenant at the Atlas Box facility at 38 Providence Road. They have been advised, like other multi-tenant structures, they must get the approval of the Building Commissioner or Planning Board prior to new tenants moving in as the Town needs to be aware from a zoning compliance and public safety perspective who is present in structures within the Town.

Notices from Adjacent Towns - The Board reviewed public hearing notices for zoning changes in Douglas and Uxbridge as well as a notice for an information session on another potential marijuana cultivation and testing site in Uxbridge.

Singletary Arms, Millbury – The Board asked for an update of this project off Burbank Road. J. Hager told the Board the Millbury Planning Board required additional information in the traffic study. However, traffic monitoring devices were installed west of the entrance to Stratford Village which is just east of this proposed project site. Devices placed at this location will largely reflect the traffic to and from Stratford Village as opposed to reflecting how much traffic is actually coming and going from Sutton roadways. The Board expressed they were not sure why Millbury would not require a better evaluation of these adjacent roadways and intersections that residents of both towns travel. They noted surely Millbury would not be pleased if Sutton ignored the effects of a development in Sutton on Millbury.

Motion: To adjourn, R. Largess Jr.
2nd: S. Paul
Vote: W. Talcott – yes, S. Paul – yes, M. Gagan – yes, R. Largess Jr. – yes, W. Baker – yes

Adjourned 9:05 PM

**STATEMENT REGARDING
REMOTELY CONDUCTED OPEN MEETING**

Good evening. This Open Meeting of the Sutton Planning Board is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the "COVID-19 Virus." While still ensuring public access, this Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible *physical* location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely. You can find the Order posted on the Town's website.

Regardless of our inability to meet in person, it is our intent to ensure continued transparency and the ability of the public to at least view the actions of our Board. Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. Tonight's public meeting will not feature public comment.

For this meeting, the Sutton Planning Board is convening by Zoom teleconference as specified on the legally posted agenda.

Please note that this meeting is being recorded. Accordingly, please be aware that others may be able to see you, and that you take care not to "screen share" your computer. Anything that you broadcast may be captured by the recording.