

Bristol Planning Commission

Meeting minutes January 15, 2019

Commission members present: Katie Raycroft-Meyer, chair, Anna Daylor, vice chair, Sue Kavanagh, Rob Rooker, Bill Sayre, Bill Brown

Public: Ian Albinson, Mary Arbuckle (NEATv)

Zoning Administrator: Kris Perlee

Chair Katie opened the meeting at 7:06 pm.

Agenda item #1, agenda changes or additional discussion items: Katie asked that the PC receive information from Ian Albinson, chair of the Bristol Energy Committee, about an inquiry underway by Green Lantern Solar to consider development of the former Bristol landfill (now closed) site for a solar installation. The PC agreed to add this topic to the New Business agenda item #5. Katie also clarified that under #3, approval of minutes, the PC would only need to approve November 20th minutes this evening (Oct. 30th had previously been approved).

#2 No Public Hearings this evening.

#3 Approval of minutes: Sue motioned to accepted the November 20, 2018 minutes as presented, seconded by Bill B., approved 6-0.

#4 Admin matters: Katie and Anna asked that the PC members be prepared to pitch in with administrative work as necessary, all were receptive.

#5 New/Old business:

Regarding work to begin updating the Bristol Town Plan, Katie restated that Bristol was approved for a municipal planning grant to support the update with professional planning consultant support (to be provided by the Addison County Regional Planning Commission), and if not the ACRPC the proposal would have to be put out to bid for an alternative consultant. As far as the PC is concerned, it will begin working with the ACRPC designate. Kris P. will check with Valerie Capels, town administrator, about formal steps necessary to receive the grant.

Katie asked Rob R. and Ian Albinson (in the audience representing the Bristol Energy Committee) to describe the work of the Enhanced Energy Plan (EEP) working group, with one meeting with ACRPC's Andrew L'Roe so far and another meeting soon. Mainly organizing Bristol focused energy information, data, mapping resources so far, and using template provided by other towns. Question and discussion about the Enhanced Energy Plan and whether it will appear in total in the Town Plan update, be summarized in the Town Plan body and appear as an addendum in full, or other. Concerns/questions (need clarity): would the EEP need to be updated more often than the full Town Plan and therefore perhaps require being a separate town document all together? Does the EEP need approval beyond Selectboard? Reminder: once adopted, having an EEP allows Bristol to have preferential status with solar proposals (giving the town more say before the Public Service Board). Next EEP meeting is Jan. 22nd, continue with populating the template.

Continued discussion of Green Lantern Solar proposal for a solar array installation at Rathbun family property off S. 116. Challenge: Bristol does not yet have regulations (or an Enhanced Energy Plan) specifying criteria for solar siting since Act 174 went into effect at the state level. Following Green Lantern's Oct. 30th presentation, the principals of the company have asked the PC to consider providing a letter stating the proposed site should have preferred site status, thereby allowing for maximum economic benefit for the project (and allowing for it to proceed). Following the PC's request that Kris P. speak with ACRPC director Adam Lougee for guidance, Kris shared options including waiting until the full Enhanced Energy Plan is complete before proceeding, or adopting interim siting criteria sooner in order to consider the proposal sooner. ACRPC provided several documents to help the Bristol PC in its deliberations on this question: town of Salisbury's recently proposed siting criteria, an October 19, 2015 ACRPC memo about siting guidelines, and renewable energy maps provided by ACRPC showing possible constraints throughout town (ag soils, FEMA special flood hazard areas, etc., known constraints (vernal pools, state river corridors, national wilderness, etc.), primary and secondary solar resource siting areas, and three others. (note: all of these maps are available online and can be made available by the zoning administrator in the town offices if requested.) The PC reviewed a Google Map derived image of the proposed Rathbun Green Lantern site, discussed need for site visit and possible guidance by ACRPC or other professionals. Question about the stream through the site. Discussed PC interest in being supportive and encouraging of solar development while needing to have formal siting criteria (which have not yet been developed but will soon through EEP process). Through a straw poll of the PC members, the group agreed to not grant preferred site status at this time, but rather to continue to pursue siting criteria through EEP process (if possible prioritizing this work before other EEP work) and hope to be able to soon (2-3 months?) be able to use criteria to take up the Rathbun Green Lantern proposal. Katie asked Kris to inform Green Lantern of this plan.

Katie called on Ian Albinson to briefly describe contact he's had as chair of the Bristol Energy Committee to explore the former Bristol landfill site for solar development, via a possible proposal by Green Lantern Solar. 500w, framing would site on top (no puncture of landfill membrane, net metering, town benefits from leasing fees for the site and the possible benefit of the kw electric derived from the installation (for public benefit). Ian inquiring with Waterbury which has a similar project with Green Lantern, making sure this would be a company the town would like to work with. Next step: review town electrical use to better understand possible benefits and challenges (multiple meters). PC generally supportive and curious about the exploration and potential.

Rob motioned to adjourn, Ann seconded, all in favor approved, 6-0, meeting closed at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by PC member Susan Kavanagh.