

MINUTES
CORNISH PLANNING BOARD
OCTOBER 29, 2016

The Cornish Planning Board met on Saturday, October 29, 2016, at 8am at 719 Town House Road, Map 6, Lot 22. Members present were Bill Lipfert, Chair, Mary Mancuso, Gail McKenzie, and Jay Young; David Haseman, Alternate; Scott Baker, Selectman; and Heidi Jaarsma, Secretary.

Also present were Doug and Betty Miller, property owners; Jack Bingham of Barrington Power, Ron Gallant of PG Electric, and Jeffery Watson of Lighthouse Power.

Doug & Betty Miller – Site Visit re: Site Plan, 100KW Solar Array, Town House Road.
Voting: Bill Lipfert, Chair, Scott Baker, David Haseman, Heidi Jaarsma, Mary Mancuso, and Jay Young

The Board observed the pole on Town House Road and a large pine to be removed. Jack Bingham stated that the applicants have received initial interconnect approval from Eversource. The applicants have presented two alternatives to bring the three-phase power lines from the road to the solar array: underground and overhead. The underground option includes three transformers on the Town House Road Pole and an 8-foot swath of cleared land to bring power to the substation on the array site. The overhead option would place the three transformers midway between the road and the site with the lines buried for the remainder path to the substation. A 31-foot wide swath of land would be cleared for the overhead option. Mr. Gallant noted that the 8' swath for underground power could be allowed to re-vegetate once construction had been completed. Mr. Miller said that he had seen three phase power coming from one transformer and would have more information about that hardware at the 11/3/2016 hearing.

The applicant showed the Board the bounds of the array field and the path of the proposed fence. The grade will follow the existing slope. No removal of material is planned. The applicant does not plan to remove trees on the west side of the proposed fencing. The proposed gate, site of the substation, and access to the development as shown on the plan were also observed.

Bill Lipfert asked the applicants if a pad mounted transformer, close to but below the road, had been considered. Jack Bingham and Ron Watson stated that a pad mount would require vehicle access and a clearing of 10'x4'. The Board discussed with the applicants the three possibilities of bringing power to the site: underground, overhead, and pad mounted. Jay Young noted that the applicants had only submitted plans for the first two options.

Bill Lipfert asked the Board for a sense of each option. Mr. Lipfert stated that he was concerned about the visual impact of three transformers on the Town House Road pole. He asked if the existing pole would need to be replaced by a taller pole. Mr. Bingham said that the pole would need to be replaced. The new pole would measure approximately 10' higher than the existing.

Heidi Jaarsma felt that the visual impact of the 31' swath required for overhead power was greater than the potential impact of three transformers on the Town House Road pole. The abutters present at the Zoning Board Hearing regarding the array had expressed that the three transformers on the Town House Road pole were not a cause for concern. Ms. Jaarsma also considered the clearing, maintenance, and access required for the pad-mounted option. Screening by non-native shrubbery of pad mounted transformers, she added, has had varying degrees of success.

The sense of the Board regarding the three options was as follows:

Underground from Road: 7 in favor, 0 against

Overhead from road: 0 in favor, 7 against

Pad mounted: 2 in favor, 5 against.

Jack Bingham stated that he would have information regarding the exact dimensions of the proposed transformers for the underground option at the 11/3/2016 hearing. Applicants also will know if the proposed path of the underground power would encounter ledge by the 11/3/2016 hearing.

David Haseman made a motion to adjourn. Mary Mancuso seconded the motion, and the vote of the Board was in the affirmative.

Respectfully submitted,
Heidi M. Jaarsma