

*Planning Board Minutes 12/20/18*  
*Unapproved*

CORNISH PLANNING BOARD  
MINUTES  
DECEMBER 20, 2018

The Cornish Planning Board met on Thursday, December 20, 2018, at 7pm in the Cornish Town Offices. Members present were Bill Lipfert, Acting Chair, Gail McKenzie, Mary Mancuso, Lyle Parry, and Scott Baker, Selectman. In the absence of the Board Secretary, Gail and Bill took notes to be submitted to Heidi Jaarsma.

Members of the Cornish Energy Committee were present, along with other members of the community who introduced themselves before the meeting began.

Bill Lipfert called the meeting to order at 7:03pm.

Minutes of the meeting of 12/06/18 were reviewed. Mary Mancuso made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, Scott Baker seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Bill Lipfert then opened the meeting to discussion of the draft 2019 amendments to the Cornish Zoning Ordinance. These amendments govern residential and commercial solar installations. Joanna Sharf, member of the Cornish Energy Committee, presented/reviewed an email which she had sent to Heidi Jaarsma regarding suggestions for the Cornish draft solar ordinance.

The Board then reviewed the draft amendment line-by-line.

In Article II – Definitions, it was agreed to drop “with a rated nameplate capacity of up to 1 MW AC” from the definition of Commercial Solar, retaining the characteristics that commercial solar is “less than 5 acres in solar land coverage.” Similarly, the definition of Residential Solar was modified to eliminate the “with a rated nameplate capacity of 10 kW AC or less” provision and retain the square footage of solar land coverage element of the definition. However, the square footage limit was increased from 500 square feet in solar land coverage contained in the working draft to 900 square feet. For the definition of Roof Mount Solar Systems, the provision that “Roof Mount systems may exceed 1 MW AC” was found to be unnecessary and was deleted.

In the Zoning Ordinance Summary Table, a minimum Front setback of 30 feet, in addition to the same Side and Rear setbacks already included in the draft, was added for Solar Collection Systems.

In Article V.D (Height Regulations), it was agreed to add “other than required for ancillary equipment” to the provision that “Roof Mount Solar collection systems as defined in this ordinance shall not increase the height of the existing structure by more than 5 feet and shall not extend beyond the exterior perimeter of the building.” This will allow for new meters, emergency shutoff panels and the like.

In that same section of the Ordinance, it was agreed that “Residential Ground mounted solar collection systems shall not rise more than 20 feet from the ground measured from the surface of the existing grade to the top of the collector at its highest point.” This will allow the installation of “tracker” solar systems available from multiple vendors in the area. Further, it was agreed that “Commercial Ground Mounted Solar Collection Systems shall not rise more than 15 feet from the ground measured from the surface of the existing grade to the top of the collector at its highest point.”

Attendees at the meeting expressed concern about potential electric shock hazards to first responders in the event of a fire at a Solar Collection System, especially one that is off-the-grid and not subject to review by a connecting electric utility. It was agreed to add the following provision as applicable to all

residential and commercial Solar Collection Systems: “All systems not connected to the grid shall be inspected by a licensed Master Electrician at the applicant’s cost and approved by the chief of the Cornish Fire Department. “

Other minor changes to the draft ordinance were made in the interest of clarity and completeness.

Scott Baker made a motion to accept the draft 2019 amendment to the Cornish Zoning Ordinance as modified during the meeting with two minor wording issues to be resolved by the Board Secretary and to advance the draft to a public hearing in January. Lyle Parry seconded the motion. A vote of the Board in the affirmative followed.

Gail McKenzie made a motion to adjourn, Mary Mancuso seconded the motion. Motion was passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.

Gail McKenzie and Bill Lipfert  
Planning Board Members  
1/2/2019