

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FORT EDWARD PLANNING BOARD MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2024 AT TOWN HALL COMMENCING AT 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Belden called the meeting to order at 7:10pm

Pledge of Allegiance

PRESENT: Chairman Belden
Donald Sanders, Jr
Max Fruchter
Joseph McMurray
Valerie Ingersoll

ABSENT: Zachary Middleton
Dolores Cogan

OTHERS PRESENT: Cole Gailor, Laurel Gailor, Scott Fitzgerald, Kimberly Fitzgerald, Katie DeGroot, Town Engineer Chris Koenig and Planning Board Clerk Aimee Ives.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: MOTION by Valerie Ingersoll, Seconded by Joe McMurray to approve the minutes of the meeting of February 14, 2024 **ALL AYES**

BUSINESS:

Scott Fitzgerald
S&S Mobile RV Storage & Service
State Rte. 4

Chairman Belden: I just want to state that we are not an enforcement Board; the Town Code Enforcement Officer handles that.

Scott Fitzgerald: I spoke with the Code Enforcement Officer regarding an expansion plan and that is when he told me there were concerns about the property.

Chairman Belden: In 2012 the Planning Board approved 20 RV's on site and an evergreen tree buffer. Are you over 20 RV's? Did the trees get planted?

Scott Fitzgerald: We are over 20 RV's now and we have tried many times to plant trees with no success.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Max Fruchter: How many RV's are there now?

Scott Fitzgerald: 40 for storage.

Max Fruchter: I am concerned about approving something further when we don't even know what is there now.

Valerie Ingersoll: What are the extra 20 RV's parked on? Did you extend the gravel?

Scott Fitzgerald: Yes the gravel has been extended and some of them are parked on the old existing road to the property. The septic has been moved as well and was approved by Matt French. We did add more trees in the last week.

Chris Koenig: I would suggest having your surveyor update the base map and build from that.

Chairman Belden: Have sales added to your map as well; right now it just says service.

Scott Fitzgerald: If I thought I was doing something wrong I would not put it where everyone can see it.

OTHER BUSINESS:

RES. NO. 1 OF 2024: MOTION by Valerie Ingersoll, Seconded by Donald Sanders, Jr to approve Resolution #1 of 2024 exempting matters of local concern from Washington County Planning Agency review **ALL AYES**

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Max Fruchter: I want to bring up some issues on the Somers and Dolan Solar Projects. I have some deep concerns on the landscaping end of it. They took the viewshed pictures in the summer; I went back at the end of March and took the same pictures and there is a marked difference in the visual impact. They did not take the pictures perpendicular to the road; they were always on an angle to a forested area which enhanced the limitation of visibility. If you look at their pictures they are always from the top of the line of visual impact and we are trying to protect the lower view. The new model solar energy law by NYSERDA recommends plantations of 6' trees, staggered which we did not require in our landscaping requirement. We also agreed to 2 tier and Cornell and NYSERDA recommend 3 tier. Most of the trees at their other location are less than 4' with a 30% mortality rate. The trees that we should be recommending and are not pointed out in the landscaping plan are Eastern Red Cedar, Juniper Virginia and Black Hill Spruce. Cornell recommends strongly that we put in a performance bond; a \$50,000.00 performance bond will cost \$358.00/year.

- Chris will contact CS Energy and let them know that we need to revisit landscaping on both the Somers & Dolan projects.

Valerie Ingersoll: What is the availability in this area for the recommended trees?

Cole Gailor: Black Hill Spruce are hard to come by right now in large quantities and last I knew they needed around 350 trees to create their buffer. A reasonable replacement would be the white spruce which looks very similar to the Black Hill Spruce and grows natively around here.

Chris Koenig: I have seen the Eastern Red Cedar fail in a lot of projects in Fulton County and it is also slower growing.

Cole Gailor: A lot of times the mortality is an installer problem because they drop it in ball and burlap with the wire mesh; best case scenario is that they cut the rope off at the stem and peel some of the wire back and it still won't survive more than 5 years.

Max Fruchter: Do you recommend that we have them de-burlap?

Cole Gailor: The general rule is to remove half of the casing; get the burlap and wire mesh half way down the ball.

Katie DeGroot: Where are the Dolan and Somers projects located?

Chairman Belden: Somers is between Hunter and Duer Rd. and Dolan is Patterson Rd, County Route 46 and Woodard Rd.

Katie DeGroot: It sounds like the one on Gamble's Farm is problematic?

Chris Koenig: The last think I heard is that they have to re-evaluate due to finding more wetlands on the site.

Katie DeGroot: I noticed in Greenwich at King Dairy that they are tiling the field with black plastic. Is that allowed?

Chairman Belden: That would be a question for USDA.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION by Max Fruchter, Seconded by Joe McMurray to adjourn the meeting at 8:10pm **ALL AYES**

Dated: April 25, 2024

Aimee Ives, Clerk