

PLANNING BOARD
TOWN OF WILBRAHAM
240 Springfield Street
Wilbraham, Massachusetts 01095

John McCloskey, Chair
Gordon Allen
James Moore
Tracey Plantier
James Rooney
Bruce Williams, Associate



Michelle R. Buck, Planning Director
Heidi Burnham, Admin. Assistant

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MINUTES OF THE WILBRAHAM PLANNING BOARD
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2023

In attendance: John McCloskey, Chair
 Gordon Allen
 James Moore
 Tracey Plantier
 James Rooney
 Bruce Williams, Associate

Staff: John J. Walsh Jr, Building Inspector
 Heidi Burnham, Administrative Assistant

Chair John McCloskey called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM and asked those assembled in the room to proudly join the Planning Board in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Approval of Minutes – December 1, 2021 & December 7, 2022

Chair John McCloskey called for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2021 and the December 7, 2022 Planning Board meetings and asked if there were any comments or revisions.

MOTION (ROONEY, ALLEN): I move that the Board approve the minutes of the December 1, 2021 and the December 7, 2022 Planning Board meetings as submitted. Approved (5-0).

2. Citizens Open Forum

No citizens took advantage of the open forum opportunity.

3. Building Inspector's Report

Building Inspector John Walsh shared the following with the Board: The car wash is open and offering free car washes; they are not using recycled water at the moment because they are awaiting some parts to complete the system; Senior Center footings are in, foundation will be poured soon, steel framing will start in March; Building Department is putting together a letter with an enclosed copy of the by-law concerning prohibited signs along the Boston Road corridor to hand out to businesses in violation on Boston Road.

4. **Public Hearing - Special Permit (SP22-07) – To Allow a 35+/- Foot Ground-Mounted Solar Tracker with a Total Footprint of 1,200 Square Feet, Accessory to the Residence**
Carl A Jasmin – 303/305 Mountain Road

Chair John McCloskey read the legal notice into the record at 5:45 PM. Carl Jasmin and Glenn Martin, Engineer and owner of GM Industries, Inc. appeared before the Board to present plans for the proposed ground-mounted solar tracker. Mr. Martin shared with the Board that he has been building and enhancing solar trackers since 1983, the largest one being 80 panels exists on his property in Tolland, CT. Mr. Jasmin shared with the Board that he has visited four sites in CT where Mr. Martin has installed solar trackers; the largest of the four trackers having 48 panels. Mr. Martin described the proposed solar tracker to be installed at the Jasmin residence located at 303/305 Mountain Road, the color of the structure will be white and it will have 54 transparent bifacial glass panels. The solar tracker will supply 50,000 kWh per year for the Jasmin home. In the evening the solar tracker goes to tabletop flat (zero degrees), height at this point is 22 feet. At the start of day the tracker rotates east tracking the sun starting at 6:00am, the tracker is vertical at start of day and at the end of day and is tabletop flat from dusk to dawn. Mr. Jasmin shared with the Board that he has a geothermal heating and cooling system for his house, pool, basement and the garage.

Planning Board member Tracey Plantier researched GM Industries, Inc. online and asked Mr. Martin the following questions:

- Your website indicates that the solar trackers are engineered for 115 mph winds, is this accurate for the proposed solar tracker at 303/305 Mountain Road? *This solar tracker is engineered for 140 mph.*
- What is 'storm stow' position and how does it work? *The solar tracker is automatically set to go flat at 40 mph, but the customer or anyone from the company can activate it at any time with the push of a button. There is a fail-safe mode in case of power loss, the tracker will go to safety stow position.*
- Does the solar tracker have battery storage? *Yes, 22,000 watts all night long, up to 50,000 watts during the day if it is sunny, otherwise 27,000 watts and 28,000 watts if it is raining throughout the day.*
- What is the required maintenance for the solar tracker? *They are required to be greased once every two years.*
- How is the height of the tracker engineered? *Designed 6-7 feet in the air so that children are not able to touch the solar panels, and no wires or conduits or electrical components can be reached from the ground.*

Board member James Rooney asked Mr. Martin where the storage batteries will be stored. Mr. Martin explained that there will be two lithium iron batteries UL listed for in home installation that will be stored in the basement of the Jasmin residence. Mr. Rooney was questioning if fencing was required around the tracker if when at its lowest point it is 5.5 feet off the ground. Mr. Martin reported that he would put a hard stop on the tracker at 30 degrees, restricting it to 8 feet off the ground.

Mack Wallace representing the Donald Wallace Estate at 307 Mountain Road attended the meeting and asked the following questions:

What noise will come from the tracker during oscillation when it is windy? *Mr. Martin - None, you can be underneath the tracker when it rotates and you will not be able to hear it.*

Will any trees need to be cleared to install the tracker? *Mr. Jasmin – Five Ash trees, many of which are already dead. It is for the safety of the tracker not because of shading.*

Will there be any glare or reflection off the tracker? *Mr. Martin – None, the panels are transparent.*

Raymond & Susan Burk of 19/21 Sunset Rock Road attended the meeting and asked the following questions:

Do you have a rendering of what the solar tracker will look like in its setting? *Mr. Jasmin – There are pictures of solar trackers in residential settings on Mr. Martins website, it might be possible to put something together on what it would look like on my property.*

Do you think future growth of the existing trees on your property will interfere with the solar tracker? *Mr. Jasmin – No, judging by the height of most of the trees they are well aged and mature, others possibly still growing should not interfere.*

Will the large inverters be shielded so that they do not radiate any high frequency signals to interfere with my ham radio? *Mr. Martin – They are set so that there are no emissions right from the factory. Existing customer has a system right next to his antennae and it has no affect at all.*

Chair McCloskey expressed that he feels this is an superior product and the location of the solar tracker has been well thought out but it might be helpful for the Planning Board members to do a site walk of the Jasmin property to get an idea of the overall plan with the solar tracker and the possibility of a future proposed barn. Mr. Jasmin agreed to a site visit and it was determined that Ms. Burnham will work with Mr. Jasmin to coordinate a day next week.

MOTION (PLANTIER, ROONEY): I move that the Board continue the public hearing to January 25, 2023 at 6:00 PM. Approved (5-0).

5. **Appt – Glen Garvey – Administrative Amendment, Special Permit (SP21-04)
Center Village - 6 Burt Lane**

Glen Garvey, Mark Pafumi and Dave Buel appeared before the Board to present an update on the parking requirement for the Center Village project at 6 Burt Lane. Mr. Garvey reported that the easement agreement for the off-site parking at 2 Crane Park Drive had expired and they needed to find alternate means of parking to comply with the special permit. Mr. Pafumi shared that he approached the Whyte family of 1-3 Crane Park Drive to inquire about a possible lease agreement for parking spaces located at 1-3 Crane Park Drive. There was an agreement formed for a two-year lease with five two-year extensions for 16 parking spaces located at 1-3 Crane Park Drive. Mr. Pafumi handed out a copy of the proposed (unsigned) lease agreement to the Board members to review. Board member Tracey Plantier asked if the 16 off-site parking spaces would be for employee parking. Mr. Garvey's response was yes, employee parking since the spaces are further away from the building and possible extra parking for the tenants of the seven apartments. There will be seven reserved parking spaces on the premises at 6 Burt Lane, one assigned for each of seven the apartments. Ms. Plantier pointed out that the lease reads that the premises is to be used only as parking for the neighboring restaurant and for no other purposes without prior consent. Ms. Plantier suggested that they look into that further for clarification as to tenant (apartment) parking and overnight (24 hr.) parking. Board members raised concerns with the lighting of the off-site parking. Mr. Garvey reported that the off-site parking will be equipped with the same lighting that will be in the parking lot at 6 Burt Lane. Chair John McCloskey shared a request from Planning Director, Michelle Buck requesting that engineer, Mike Pietras supply her with the calculation for the required parking for 6 Burt Lane and indicate how many spaces will be onsite and how many spaces will be off premise. Mr. Garvey's response was yes, we will get that information to Ms. Buck after we have finished tweaking the plans. Chair McCloskey requested that a condition be added to the administrative amendment requiring the submittal of an annual parking report.

MOTION (PLANTIER, ROONEY): I move that the Board grant Administrative Approval #2 to special permit 21-04 to allow a lease agreement with the abutting property owner at 1-3 Park Drive for use of sixteen (16) parking spaces in lieu of the parking previously required at 2 Crane Park Drive per condition #14.C. for the Center Village project at 6 Burt Lane, based on a determination that the parking is adequate for the proposed use and that the proposed parking modification does not constitute a major substantive change which would require a formal amendment to the Decision and conditioned upon the applicant supplying the Planning Board with an annual parking report. Approved (5-0).

6. **Appt - Attorney Thomas R. Reidy – Starbucks Revised Plan, 2005 Boston Road**

Attorney Thomas Reidy and Richard Korris, Developer appeared before the Board to present a revised preliminary plan for the proposed Starbucks at 2005 Boston Road. Attorney Reidy shared that the revised plan is for a new 2,400 sq. ft. building with 25 parking spaces, single drive through lane with a bypass lane on the easterly side. The outdoor patio is in the front of the building, along with the trash enclosure which will be completely screened. The three odd ball parking spaces on the west side of the building are required to meet Home Depot's parking requirement and can be used for employee parking. Attorney Reidy stated that this plan requires a complete site redesign which will require a new storm water design and town engineering feedback and approval. Attorney Reidy reported that the plan has been approved by both Home Depot and Starbucks. Mr. Walsh asked if the Fire Department had commented on the preliminary plan. In Ms. Buck's absence, administrative assistant, Heidi Burnham replied that she would check and if not, she would forward the plan to the Fire Department for review and comment. Board members expressed initial feelings that this plan is a better fit for the property and thanked Attorney Reidy and Mr. Korris for their continued work on the proposed project.

7. **Performance Agreement - Golden Nozzle Carwash (SP21-09)
2788-2810 Boston Road**

The Planning Board reviewed the performance agreement and voted unanimously to accept the performance security.

MOTION (MOORE, ROONEY): I move that the Board accept performance security in amount of \$50,760 for Golden Nozzle at 2788 & 2810 Boston Road (SP21-09) and to approve and authorize the Planning Board Chair to endorse the Performance Agreement Secured by Cash Deposit. Approved (5-0).

8. **Nonsub Plan 23-01
Chris & Amy Lomascolo (Trustees) – 601 Glendale Road**

The Planning Board reviewed the plan to carve out a parcel of land for a building lot abutting Glendale Road. The Board voted unanimously to approve the plan because it meets all requirements for the zoning district and has adequate road frontage.

MOTION (ROONEY, MOORE): I move that the Board approve Nonsub Plan 23-01 as submitted and authorize the Chair to endorse the plan with the Board's determination that approval under the subdivision control law is not required. Approved (5-0).

9. **Planning Director's Report & Planning Board Updates**

Planning Director Michelle Buck was not in attendance at the meeting.

10. **Other Business**


Reserved for Matters the Chair did not Reasonably Anticipate at the Time of Posting

Chair McCloskey ask the Board for feedback on whether or not the Planning Board should continue to use GoToMeeting and offer remote participation for meetings. Board members want to continue to use GoToMeeting; the feeling is that anything they can do to increase citizen participation in the meetings is important. Board members acknowledged the existing system can be frustrating for staff to set up and agree that updating the technology in the BOS meeting room would help. Chair McCloskey reminded the Board about the 2023 Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) annual conference on March 18, 2023 at Holy Cross College in Worcester. The Board discussed Facebook posts on the Wilbraham Open Town Forum. The Board feels it is a good avenue to receive feedback and an opportunity for the

Board to let residents know when the next meeting is and encourage them to attend. However, it often contains a lot of misinformation about zoning.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:59 PM. The Board will reconvene at its next meeting on **Wednesday, January 25, 2023 at 5:30 PM.**

Submitted:


Heidi Burnham, Admin. Assistant

Date: 1/24/23

Approved As To Form And Content:


John McCloskey, Chair

Date: 1/25/23