

## Shaftsbury Planning Commission (PC)

Wednesday September 13, 2023

In person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

### 1. Call to order

The meeting came to order at 6 p.m. Present were commissioners Naomi Miller (chair), Mike Foley, Chris Williams, and via Zoom, Martha Cornwell. Also present was zoning administrator Shelly Stiles.

### 2. Minutes

Mr. Foley moved to approve the August 30 minutes. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. Mr. Foley asked that a section describing his response to a question about why he voted “no” on the letter the PC crafted for the Select Board be changed as follows: the words “in which he didn’t want to participate” should be replaced with “and Shaftsbury should not have to take on the burden of the large solar array proposed for the town.”

Ms. Miller asked if others thought they agreed on August 30 to try to come up with statements regarding screening, scale, and preferred sites for the Enhanced Energy Plan. Ms. Cornwell said she recalled it that way. It was agreed that the minutes needn’t be changed to reflect that consensus.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

### 3. Discussion Enhanced Energy Plan (EEP) draft

Ms. Miller suggested the PC dispense with the moratorium proposal and go right to discussing screening, scale, and preferred sites. Ms. Cornwell and Mr. Foley agreed to do so. Ms. Cornwell said we have a responsibility and an opportunity to create a documents that will shape our energy future.

The discussion proceeded.

- Mr. Williams suggested preferred sites be those within one-quarter mile of three phase power lines. This is what the market dictates, he said. Figure 14 in the EEP is incorrect. Others wondered why so specify if it wouldn’t make a practical difference, if “the market” would go there anyway. Mr. Williams said “for clarity.”
- The group discussed how to balance the desires of citizens who want solar in their neighborhood with those who don’t. Ms. Miller remarked that “A good contract is one nobody likes.”
- Mr. Foley suggested focusing on screening and maximum array size. He said the Town has more than 2000 acres of potential solar sites, that a time could come when three phase is no longer a limitation, and that some of those potential sites could be important for developing solar farms.
- How about a maximum fifteen acres? Twenty acres? Ms. Cornwell said some who responded to the survey suggested ten acres.
- Twenty acres is about fifteen football fields (a football field is 1.32 acres). The group wondered about sites in town that people could visually understand – the old Stanley plant, or the Clearbrook Farm corner on 7A and Hidden Valley, the school, and others. None quite met the need.
- Ms. Cornwell moved to limit the size of all new solar arrays in the EEP to twenty acres or less. Mr. Williams seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.
- All agreed to continue next time talking about screening and placement.
- Mr. Foley said we should note that solar arrays will have positive impacts on tax receipts.
- Mr. Foley asked that units (MW, kW, mwh, etc.) referenced in the EEP be consistent and shown as a percentage of 2050 projections.

- Mr. Foley wondered whether wood should be recommended as a source of energy. It is a controversial issue.

Mr. Williams said he wants to see what the Select Board submits to the Public Utility Commission. He wants to know whether the PC's suggestions are being respected. Ms. Miller said the town administrator and town counsel are working on a statement which will be shared with the Select Board, probably in November.

#### 4. Other business

The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 7:20 p.m.