

**STURBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES OF
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2018
CENTER OFFICE BUILDING**

Mr. Blanchard called the regular meeting of the Planning Board to order at 6:30 PM.

Present: Charles Blanchard
Christopher Bouchard
Russell Chamberland
Michael Chisholm
James Cunniff
Heather Hart
Susan Waters

Also Present: Jean Bubon, Town Planner
Rebekah DeCoursey, Administrative Assistant

Mr. Blanchard opened the meeting and read the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: Made by Mr. Chamberland to approve the draft minutes of October 23, 2018 as amended.
2nd: Mr. Bouchard
Discussion: None
Vote: 5 – 0 – 2 (Mr. Cunniff, Ms. Waters)

APPOINTMENT OF CMRPC REPRESENTATIVE

The Planning Board representative for CMRPC will be Michael Chisholm, and the alternate Chris Bouchard. Both had a chance to attend the most recent quarterly meeting held by CMRPC.

DISCUSSION OF LNG FACILITY PROPOSED 249 STURBRIDGE ROAD, CHARLTON

On November 13, 2018 Mr. Blanchard and Ms. Bubon attended a public hearing where they had the opportunity for public comment regarding a proposed natural gas liquefaction, storage, and truck-loading facility at 249 Sturbridge Road in Charlton, which is located less than a mile from the Sturbridge town line. Northeast Energy Center, LLC has filed petition with the Energy Facility Siting Board under M.G.L. c. 40A, Section 3 to consider the project “reasonably necessary for the convenience or welfare of the public” and thus qualified for a zoning exemption. This public hearing was held to provide public input to the Energy Siting Board while they make their determination considering the qualifications for zoning exemption. Northeast Energy is also looking at two other project sites in Massachusetts.

This parcel is roughly 200 acres, and 11 acres will be the facility that will hold a total of 1 million gallons of natural gas on site.

Ms. Bubon spoke at the public meeting putting on record that Sturbridge concerns were primarily regarding the traffic and safety considerations of the facility. She stated that as this proposed facility is so close to the Sturbridge town line, any type of accident would most likely bring in public safety officials from the surrounding towns and if the facility is built, that public safety officials in all surrounding towns, not just Charlton, should receive specialized training.

The Board has the following questions, comments, or concerns:

- The Board had several questions about the specifics of the site plan. Ms. Bubon stated that currently the project is only going through the Energy Facility Siting Board requirements for a zoning exemption. They look at things such as economic viability in a centralized location that provides a public service. If the project moves forward, a formal Site Plan Review process would be done in the town of Charlton. Sturbridge – as an abutting town – will be notified. Specific questions about site plan, traffic flow, and design could not be answered at this time. The presentation at the public hearing was an elementary overview of natural gas a production facility with an emphasis on the simple and safe process.
- The trucks using the facility would be 18-wheeled tractor trailers. The applicant estimated there will be 25 deliveries over an 8 hour day. The estimate given at the public hearing was that there could be up to 32 trucks entering the facility each day, therefore a total of 64 truck trips in and out. There would be a maximum of 3 employees working on 3 shifts.
- The potential for disaster. There are predictable, preventable measures that would be in place at the facility to avoid the worst case scenario. The specifics of these measures were not covered in the public hearing.
- Members of the Board felt that at a minimum, yearly training refresher courses for emergency personnel should be paid for by Northeast Energy Facility. It would not be enough for a one-time training when the facility opened. Public safety can have a high turnover in employees and yearly training would be imperative.
- Traffic concerns regarding traffic lights or turning lanes were unknown at this time. A Board member brought up the point that tractor trailer trucks carrying natural gas are not allowed on the MassPike in certain snow conditions. This would detour these potential 64 trucks a day onto Route 20 during snowstorms. Route 20 traffic is certainly an ongoing concern of the Planning Board.

Overall, the Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, and the Planning Department will stay aware of the progression of this project. The formal comment submission period ends on November 30. Ms. Bubon and Mr. Blanchard drafted a letter to offer public comment on behalf of the Town of Sturbridge Planning Department to submit to the Massachusetts Energy Facilities Siting Board/DPU.

Motion: Made by Ms. Waters to authorize the letter to be sent to Kathryn Sedar, presiding officer of the MA Energy Facilities Siting Board.

2nd: Mr. Bouchard

Discussion: None

Vote: 7 – 0

ROUTE 15 STUDY – NEXT STEPS

Earlier this year, CMRPC presented the final recommendations for Route 15. Ms. Bubon would like to take the next steps for this area of Town in terms of rezoning the Route 15 Corridor. The next thing to do will be to hold a working session with the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board to discuss which direction the Town should take in response to the recommendations from CMRPC. She will see if this can happen in the month of January .

TOWN PLANNER UPDATE

- Next meeting date: December 11.
- Green Communities official designation is expected to come in soon.
- Complete Streets Prioritization Plan is on the next meeting agenda.
- The department is diligently working on implementation of the new permitting software.

OLD BUSINESS

- Status of the redevelopment of 9 Holland Road still appears to be moving forward – current understanding from the department is the sale of the land is under agreement.
- Pine Lake RV Resort is moving along. They are working with DEP on their wastewater plan and the business is hoping to open for this upcoming camping season. Old buildings are being demolished and new plans are going through the building department.
- 198 Charlton Road – the sign appears to be very close to the road, can the department just double check if this is the 20’ setback the Board approved?

NEW BUSINESS

- Mr. Chisholm had an update from CMRPC that they are now taking applications for the technical assistance grants for 2019.

On a motion made by Mr. Chamberland and seconded by Ms. Waters, and voted 7 - 0, the meeting adjourned at 7:25 PM.