

Town of Freedom Planning Board Meeting Minutes
1/23/2024
Town office

Present: public: (Freedom Residents) Willa Dibner, Tom Berry, Susan Berry, Elaine Higgins (left partway through meeting to attend another town related meeting); (non-resident) Chris Byers; (Freedom Selectperson) Laura Greeley; (Freedom Planning Board) Brian Murphy, Tyler Hadyniak, Clara Alvarez, Mary Ann Bennett, Peter Abello, Prentice Grassi (via google meet).
Absent planning board member: Kevin Malady.

Tyler gaveled into session at 6:00 pm

Minutes of 1/9/2024 Meeting

Motion to approve the 1/9 meeting minutes with following changes (Tyler):

- Add language that gives context to the general discussion of the Solar Ordinance and solar array height limit.
- Correct spelling of Willa Dibner's name.

These changes were made in real time by Tyler on google doc.

Mary Ann Seconded

Discussion? None. All in favor? Unanimous 6 – 0

Annual Report

Tyler asked planning board members if anyone wanted to write a summary of planning board activities during the last year for the Town Annual Report. No takers. Tyler offered to write the summary. Motion to have Tyler write Planning Board summary for Annual Report (Tyler), Mary Ann seconded. Discussion? None. All in favor? Motion passed 5 – 0 – 1 (Tyler abstained)

Solar Ordinance Discussion

The purpose of this agenda item was to have the Selectboard and Planning Board work through selectboard concerns of draft solar ordinance. Some of those were identified at the last meeting and addressed, others were not, specifically the issue that the draft ordinance doesn't do enough to protect farmland. There seemed to be others as well. Tyler, prior to the meeting created a live document entitled Settlement Issue Tracker and shared with selectboard so they could document their specific concerns so we could focus our discussion on those tonight. None of the selectboard entered any concerns into the document.

There was much discussion for the better part of an hour or more with very few actionable decisions. The following concrete actions were decided upon:

- Laura suggested that the title of the ordinance should make clear that it s a commercial solar ordinance for clarity purposes. All agreed this was a good idea. Motion to change title of ordinance to Town of Freedom Commercial Solar Ordinance (Tyler); Mary Ann Seconded. Discussion? None. All in favor? Motion passed 6 – 0.

- Table discussion until selectboard can document specifically what their concerns are with the ordinance. Motion: To put off further discussion on this topic until selectboard comes to planning board with specific settlement positions on Draft Solar Ordinance at next planning board meeting on February 13, 2023 (Mary Ann); Brian Seconded.

Discussion? Take aways:

- 2/13 meeting will be dedicated to settlement discussions with selectboard.
- What if we are still at an impasse? We will not be at an impasse, because the selectboard has final say whether this ordinance is passed on to the voters or not. Citizen petition can force a vote on the ordinance. By statute, 10% of voters who voted in the last Gubernatorial Election (around 40 per Tyler) would need to sign the petition to force vote on ordinance.

All in favor? Unanimous 6 – 0 motion passes.

General reminder to all that respectful behavior should be exercised in planning board meetings.

Motion to adjourn (Mary Ann); Clara Seconded. All in favor? 6 – 0 motion passes.
Meeting adjourned 7:25 pm.