

Meeting Minutes
Freedom Board of Selectmen
Date: 12-2-2024
Approved 12-16-2024

In attendance: Laura Greeley, Heather Donahue, Ryan Willette, Cindy Abbott, Jim Waterman, Beth Owen-Mishou, Tom Clay, Prentis Grassi, Steve Bennet, Brian Murphy, Mary Ann Bennet, Samantha Turner, Meredith Coffin

Zoom Meeting: Meeting ID: 431 235 8395
Passcode: TownMeet

1. Call Meeting to Order / Finalize Agenda: Laura Greeley called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.
2. Announcements:
3. Review and Approve Minutes: Secretary's Report: Heather Donahue made a motion to approve the minutes as amended and add to the record, Laura Greeley seconded and all approved.
4. Fire Chief & EMA Director Reports: Jim Waterman
 - o He will have the budget ready after next week.
 - o Jim Waterman is able to stop online burn permits and set it up so that the applicant for the permit needs to see him in person.
 - o Still working on the kitchen at the fire station.
 - o Christmas baskets are coming up later in the month.
5. Public Works: Ryan Willette
 - o 11/18 troubles with the trash truck and it has been repaired.
 - o Have been working on the Rollins Road.
 - o They will haul more materials from Sergeants.
 - o 11/25-27 Put the snow tires on the trash truck
 - o Called on prices for the new budget.
 - o Went to Hartland and picked up the used wing and put it on Truck 6.
 - o Number 7 broke down.
 - o Plowed on Thanksgiving
 - o Lost the alternators on 7 and 8
 - o Working on the drive line on 7.
 - o Putting on new cutting edges on the plows.
 - o Will be putting the sander on the back of the ton truck.
 - o They are continuing to work on the budget for next year.
 - o It was suggested that they rent a mulcher next season.
 - o Ryan Willette has submitted the bill to Unity for services rendered by Freedom.
 - o Ryan Willette has attempted to contact Mr. Bridges regarding the earthen dam on Sandy Pond. He was not able to reach him. Ryan Willette will research a contact for the dam. Brookfield
6. Treasurer's Report:

- Payroll Warrant = \$11172.17
 - AP Warrant= \$79730.14
 - Camden National Balance: \$788946.61
 - Heather Donahue made a motion to pay the Payroll Warrant = \$11172.17, Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
 - Heather Donahue made a motion to pay the AP Warrant= \$79730.14 , Ryan Willette seconded and all approved.
7. Town Clerk & Tax Collector Report: Cindy Abbott
- Rapid renewal is now online, Cindy Abbott will send the link to Beth Owen-Mishou for the website.
 - Abatement request: There was a question about if the lot was in Albion or Freedom. Ryan Willette would like clarification. Laura Greeley will call Jackie for further information.
 - Posters for the Children's Christmas Party were presented. It will occur on December 14th.
8. Citizens Issues:
- Tom Clay asked about the ambulance situation. Ryan Willette responded as he has been attending the meetings. It appears that we will have to pay per capita regardless of what service we use. It will be presented at the town meeting.
9. Review Correspondence:
- IRS bill 2019 for approximately \$7000 This has been sent to Ron Smith, accountant.
 - MRC representative:
 - Heather Donahue made a motion to vote for Rebecca Hapgood, as our MRC representative, Laura Greeley seconded and all approved.
 - Email from the Morrill Select Board regarding grants and working cooperatively. Our select board members would like to try to attend this meeting.
10. Town Officials Reports
- Code Enforcement: Cindy Abbott
 - There was an executive session with the town Atty to discuss steps moving forward and he will be in contact with Cindy Abbott.
 - Assessors Agent: Jackie Robbins
 - Health Official: Patricia Ashland
 - School Board Director: Eleanor Hess
 - General Assistance Officer: Ryan Willette
 - Plumbing Inspector: Cindy Abbott
 - Solid Waste Director: Phil Bloomstein
 - Animal Control Officer: Peter Nerber
 - There is an issue on the corner on 137 with cats being fed and there is concern regarding them being near the road. People appear to be dropping them off.
11. Town Boards & Committee Reports:
- Planning Board: Tyler Hadyniak

- Recreational Committee: Chair yet to be determined.
 - Appeals Board: Michael Smith
 - Historical Society: Wilson Hess
 - Cemetery Committee: Steve Holmes
 - Budget Committee: [Laura Greeley](#)
 - This Thursday by 6:30pm
 - CDAC Committee: Lissa Widoff
 - Broadband Committee: Phil Bloomstein
 - Ad Hoc Policy Committee: Rene Ouellet
 - Budget Committee:
12. Old Business:
13. New Business:
14. Date of Next Meeting: Monday December 16, 2024 at 6:00 pm.
15. Next Select Board Workshop Monday December 9, 2024 at 7:30 am
16. Adjourn: Ryan Willette made a motion to adjourn at 6:12pm, Heather seconded and all approved.

Hearing for Commercial Solar Array Ordinance

Rene Oullet : Moderator

Rene Oullet initiated the meeting at 6:34pm. A hearing for the proposed Solar Array Ordinance. He reviewed the history of the development of the ordinance proposal. The purpose of the meeting is for the Select Board to explain their purpose and get the town's feedback. The draft will be revised as needed and eventually have a ballot vote on the final ordinance.

[Laura Greeley](#), thanked the residents for coming and the planning board for their help in developing the ordinance and all of their hard work. There were 6 different areas that the Select Board made changes to. She feels that this ordinance reflects what the citizens asked for.

Tom Clay: pg 5, standards of approval section 1, panels need to be made in the US he would suggest adding and their components. Section 10, he feels 6 feet is not very high when looking at 12 feet solar panels.

Elaine Higgins: paragraph 8 regarding fencing, she questioned the wood fencing versus metal. Heather Donahue responded that the purpose would be to allow small animals to be able to pass through. This was in the national electric code.

Elaine Higgins made a motion to allow Kyle Price to speak at the meeting although he is not a Freedom resident, Meredith Coffin seconded the motion.

Kyle Price asked if the fence was to keep the game in or out. The fence was to allow access for small game. Ryan Willette clarified.

Meredith Coffin: she felt that there were inconsistencies in naming who is being referred to and that this should be clarified under the definitions. She saw 3 awkward sentences. Pg 2 4 acres was referenced as the wrong amount of feet. On pg. 11-12, J is identical to H. Pg 8 under invasive plant. She suggested adding invasive animals, i.e. cracy worms. Pg 9 section 8 #1. "Other options" what did that mean? She asked why it was only USA made components?

Tyler Hadyniak: he said there were spirited discussions about where the panels were made. He said that the majority of the planning board agreed.

Prentice Grassi: suggested that it be fleshed out further regarding component parts being made in the USA.

Meredith Coffin: had other concerns about redundancy. On page 4 is 10a the same as 11? Pg 3, CMP was mentioned and she did not feel that that was necessary. What is the reason for having 2 pre-construction scientists? (pg 10, #13)

Steve Bennett: Clarified the square footage of an acre.

Tyler Hadyniak: Standards of approval on page 5, no waivers should be involved. Subsection 1: preservation of the town's character. He feels this will cause confusion. This ordinance has the select board as the decider of the application. [Laura Greeley](#) clarified that she felt that both boards should be making the decision. She feels that this would protect the best interest of the citizens of Freedom.

Mary Ann Bennett: that she is in favor of both boards agreeing but it is not written in a complete sentence.

Addison Chase: He is asking if each individual has an equal vote when it comes to voting with the planning board. He is concerned that we are being short sighted by not having more solar. We will be using more oil and poorer air quality. Laura Greeley responded that the select board does not rule. The people will ultimately vote for or against the ordinance. She reviewed the survey that was sent out.

He suggested running them in a North/South line, he feels the height restrictions are too restrictive. He feels there is not enough flexibility for the upcoming changes in technology.

Ronald Price: Section 4: he was concerned that the town can have a commercial solar array but that the citizens cannot.

Prentice Grassi clarified why this was in the proposed ordinance. He stated that there are still checks and balances.

Steve Bennett asked about the cost of building arrays

Prentice Grassi clarified that the town does not need enough energy to justify a commercial solar array.

Mary Ann Bennett stated that #1 section 3 was there for municipal purposes not commercial.

Tom Clay: questioned residential versus commercial. Ryan Willette clarified that residential is for their own use. He felt that the statement is unclear.

Ron Price: Clarified that the Curra family is happy that the solar array is there.

Elaine Higgins: thinks the town should have solar arrays as the town will need the electricity. She thinks the rules should apply to the town as well.

Kyle Price: He reiterated that a town in Massachusetts came up with their own energy producing facility.

Prentice Grassi: asked about the process of making changes to the proposed ordinance?

Rene Oullet clarified the process.

Heather Donohue discussed sustainability of losing farmland to solar panels. Because we are on the ISO grid very little of what we produce stays in our state.

[Steve Bennett](#) stated that he agrees with Heather. He feels it is a waste of our future to lose more farm land. He feels the MPUC has made it profitable for non-reliable energy to continue.

Kyle Price: Section 3 under applicability. #5 on the following page appeared out of place and how does that apply to exemption of applicability. Heather Donahue clarified her understanding of this. Prentis Grassi offered clarification and a correction. Meredith Coffin asked if it was redundant to #4.

Section 6, 10c pg 4. He asked about the context of the 1 mile and how that was established. No one had any background to offer on the 1 mile.

[Steve Bennett](#) stated that it is not just the panels that affect the flora it could also be the transmission lines.

Kyle Price: #11 infiltration. Heather Donahue stated that it refers to run off and erosion. Ryan Willette said that it was also about not having concrete. #19 he was concerned about the waiver language and why does this ordinance not reflect what the other ordinances state.

Steve Bennett asked if we should amend some of our other ordinances with regard to waivers.

Samantha Turner: regarding the 1 mile of endangered species. She read the guidelines for distance.

Prentice Grassi: section 7 under #1. Last sentence. He suggested adding an extra number regarding the USA made panels. Pg 7 section 7 #18, he suggested drainage structure repair b, revegetation c. Pg 8 a section 20 a, revegetation monitoring should be monitored by whom? [Tyler Hadyniak](#) stated that it was felt by the planning board that the CEO should enforce. Pg 4 at the bottom, must include the following, which is a list. He feels that #13 would require a preconstruction soil survey completed by ... Residential systems should be in the definitions. Section 6 pg 3 #6 written evidence that the ... shall conform. Section 7 #2, he asked what this meant.

Kyle Price: #5, pg 5 discussion about appropriate distance. He was asking about the rationale for the distance. [Laura Greeley](#) stated that it was a compromise after conferring with MMA. Section 7 pg 6, impervious it was clarified that this referred to pavement.

Meredith Coffin: pg 3 first paragraph, in addition to the An application should also include the following... The select board stated that they had planned to remove that. She asked how she could share her capitalization errors.

Samantha Turner clarified that who is editing can be used on google docs.

Eleanor Hess: commented on the components being made in the USA and she is concerned that this may not be possible. She feels that the acreage with panels should be researched. She is concerned with soil build up over the 6 inches in 20-30 years. She asked about businesses using solar panels on their properties? What are the restrictions regarding businesses using solar panels on their roofs. Prentis Grassi clarified that those exemptions are in the document.

Addison Chase: asked about residential versus commercial. It was stated that if it is behind the meter that it is residential.

Elaine Higgins: pg 7 #19 Roman numeral 5. She is concerned that some weeds are more effective than other plants. Heather Donahue clarified the statement.

[Steve Bennett](#)#13 pg 6, risk of PFAS contamination. He wanted to compliment the board for putting that in the ordinance.

Ronald Price: pg 5 #5 set back, he feels that solar arrays can provide supplemental income to farmers. He has no problem with set backs if there were mitigation waivers still in the ordinance. [Laura Greeley](#) is interested to see when all the tax credits are gone will these solar array companies still be as aggressive in creating solar fields.

Meredith Coffin is concerned when the word majority is used. [Laura Greeley](#) clarified why she uses that term.

Samantha Turner talked about elected officials making the best decision based on the voices of the people who are showing up.

Addison Chase: pg 5 set back 1000 feet from the high water mark. He is asking what is the purpose of the 1000 feet. He suggested an altitude as opposed to the linear distance and he is wondering where that came from.

Tom Clay: a set back from any waterfront property

[Eleanor Hess](#): stated that it is usually 100 feet.

Prentice Grassi: is not in favor of the ordinance in its current form. He thinks ordinances are important. He read a prepared statement.

Laura Greeley: clarified her thoughts on the one mile.

[Steve Bennett](#) respects everything that Addison and Prentis have done for the town. He is concerned about ruining the land.

Heather Donahue, she asks that we differentiate between commercial and industrial development.

Kyle Price: He hopes that 489 people show up to vote. He feels that the ordinance goes too far. He hopes that the ordinance isn't so restrictive that we prevent the town from developing its tax base.

Willa Dibner is not in favor of any commercial development of this type in Freedom.

Samantha Turner stated that the majority of people who respond to polls are ones who are affected at both ends of the spectrum. We can only work with the information from those who have responded. All people were invited to respond. She is concerned about the PFAS leaching from the solar panels.

Meeting Minutes
Freedom Board of Selectmen
Date: 12-9-2024

1. Call Meeting to Order / Finalize Agenda: Ryan Willette called the meeting to order at 7:30 am.

2. Heather Donahue made a motion to sign the warrant for the second solar ordinance hearing to be held on 12/16/2024 at 6:30 pm, Ryan Willette seconded the motion and all approved.
3. The warrant has been signed, approved and posted.