

Agawam Planning Board October 17, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Violet Baldwin, Chair
Frank DeStefano
Michael DiLullo
Charles Elfman

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Michael Cleavall

ALSO PRESENT:

Taryn Egerton
Stefanie Kesecker
Pam Kerr

Chairperson Baldwin called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

1. SITE PLAN-404 Silver Street-Silver Street Energy Storage, LLC c/o New Leaf Energy Inc.

Eric Weinstein and Luke Peregoy with New Leaf Energy were present for this agenda item. Mr. Weinstein stated the proposed project is a battery energy storage system (BESS) with a capacity of approximately 5 megawatts (4hrs.) . Associated site improvements would include battery containers, transformers, and inverters, that will sit on a concrete pads enclosed by a combined 7ft.tall chain link fence with an access gate and 10 ft. sound barrier wall. He went on to say there will be improvements to the existing access road, expanding it 20ft. The proposed plan is near the Silver Street substation. There will be an ANR to subdivide the large lot into 2 lots, he stated. Lot A will contain the existing residence, and LOT B will contain the BESS equipment. He stated this is a renewal energy option. The batteries will charge during peak energy hours and be used by the utility company during seasonal peak times.

He stated there is ample preexisting tree screening for neighbors. The location of the BESS will be in the back portion of the parcel.

Mr. Elfman asked how much noise this proposed project would generate. Mr. Weinstein stated there is some noise associated with the inverters, which would be similar to the sound of a commercial air conditioner running. He went on to say that the project would comply with all noise requirements of the Mass DEP. Mr. Elfman asked about decibels. Mr. Weinstein stated a noise study had just been completed and the noise generated would be similar to 40 decibels, which is similar to small town ambient noise. He went on to say there will be a 10ft. wall on the west side, that will also act as a sound barrier.

Mr. Elfman asked who the customer would be. Mr. Weinstein stated the electricity is sold to the grid (Eversource), which allows them to get some of their electricity from renewable energy sources, and utilize it during times of increased demand.

Mr. Elfman asked about the 4 hour life of the batteries. Mr. Weinstein explained the batteries would allow energy to be transferred to the grid for up to 4 hours, before needing a solar recharge.

Ms. Baldwin asked about trees being removed on the western side of the parcel, near 2 abutting homes. Mr. Peregoy stated a small portion of trees would be removed near the abutters, and a

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small number of trees will be removed at the connection area. Ms. Baldwin asked if the screening would be enough for the abutting homes. Mr. Peregoy stated the trees that remain should provide sufficient screening for the abutters, but they would be happy to provide additional screening/trees if necessary. Ms. Baldwin asked if the screening would be trees or shrubs. Ms. Melinda Costello, with Weston & Sampson stated the amount of tree clearing was just under .2 acres which is equivalent to 7,600 sq. ft.

Ms. Baldwin asked about the widening of the access road and how close it would be to the property line side setback. Ms. Costello stated it would be a little over 15ft. for the side yard setback to the west edge of the gravel access road. Ms. Baldwin asked about the plan showing a 10ft setback. Ms. Costello stated that the 15ft. side yard setback Residential-A requirement has been reflected on the updated plan.

Ms. Baldwin asked about mitigation for dust when the gravel access road is being expanded. Ms. Costello stated there is a sediment and erosion control plan, and there is mitigation for dust during construction including gravel stone and water trucks if needed.

Mr. DeStefano asked how the electricity would be transferred to the grid. Mr. Weinstein stated the substation was about 400 ft. to the east of the BESS, and there will be underground conduit to connect the BESS equipment to proposed pole mounted equipment, and there will be underground trenches to the footprint of the storage site.

Ms. Baldwin asked about the level of traffic in and out of the site. Mr. Weinstein stated there would be very minimal traffic, only a few times of year for maintenance.

Ms. Baldwin confirmed there would be a fence around the BESS. Mr. Weinstein stated the fence would follow the requirements of the electrical code.

Ms. Costello then addressed the Engineering comments from October 17, 2024, which she stated were all minor and easily addressable.

Ms. Baldwin stated the Fire Department has not approved the swept path analysis. Ms. Costello stated the specs were based on a 40ft., 4 wheel, 2 axle truck, but they have received updated specs from the Fire Department and the new specs, clarify that the truck measures 4 ft. longer, so the new swept path analysis will be for a 49'7" truck.

Ms. Kerr asked about storm water management onsite and if detention was needed. Ms. Costello stated onsite detention was not necessary as the soil is fine sandy loam, which drains well. She stated an updated Stormwater Management Plan will be submitted, but although the project increased the impervious area there will be no change to the stormwater patterns, and they had run tests for the 2, 10, and 100 year storms.

Motion was made by Mr. Elfman and seconded by Mr. DiLullo to table the SITE PLAN-404 Silver Street-Silver Street Energy Storage, LLC c/o New Leaf Energy Inc. to the November 7, 2024 meeting.

VOTE 4-0-0

2. SITE PLAN-195 South Westfield Street-Aljanabi

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The Planning Board received a request to continue this agenda item to the November 7, 2024 meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. DeStefano and seconded by Mr. Elfman to continue the SITE PLAN-195 South Westfield Street-Aljanabi to November 7, 2024, as requested.

VOTE 4-0-0

3. SITE PLAN-1422-1444 Main Street-Shields Hotel

The Planning Board received a request to continue this agenda item to the November 7, 2024 meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. DeStefano and seconded by Mr. DiLullo to continue the SITE PLAN-1422-144 Main Street to November 7, 2024, as requested.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES-October 3, 2024

Motion was made by Mr. DeStefano and seconded by Mr. DiLullo to approve the October 3, 2024 minutes, as written.

VOTE 3-0-1(Elfman)

5. Correspondences

Ms. Kerr informed the Board there will be a public hearing held by the Community Preservation Committee(CPC) on October 23, 2024 at 6:00pm at the Agawam Senior Center to provide an overview of the financial performance of CPA funds as well as sharing recent accomplishments. THE CPC welcomes input from town residents, town boards, committees, and commissions on goals, activities, procedures, and spending.

Ms. Kerr also informed the Board that the City Council is holding a hearing on November 18, 2024, at 7:00pm at the Agawam Senior Center, for a zone change for 71 Maynard/131 Coronet Circle from Agricultural to Residence A-1. The Planning Board's public hearing has been advertised for November 7, 2024.

Ms. Kerr also stated the Town was working on a new Zoning Amendment for battery energy storage systems.

Motion was made by Mr. Elfman and seconded by Mr. DiLullo to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE 4-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 6:45pm.