

# Town of Panton

## Development Review Board/ Planning Commission

November 12, 2015

Present: Howard Hall, Heidi Mahoney, Katie Werthmann, Mary Rudd, Barbara Fleming, Terry Findeisen, DRB/PC Chair David Raphael, Louise Giovanella, Zoning Administrator Ed Hanson

Others present: Rosemary Mueller, Dennis Mueller, Kara Marszalkowski, Eben Markowski, Rod Veins-Grosolar, Tom Hand-SE Group, Dotty Schnure-GMP, Beth Tarallo, Lincoln Large-Grosolar, Anita Hayden, Kirk Shields-GMP, Sam Carlson-Green Lantern, Deb Hartenstein, Joe Bogan, Paulette Bogan, Warren VanWyck, Paul Sokal, Hans Vorsteveld, Seksan Caniyo, Beverly Biello, Ed Biello, Rudy Vorsteveld, Gerard Vorsteveld, Roy Shea and Cheryl Shea

### **DRB**

#### **Old Business**

October's meeting minutes were reviewed. Louise Giovanella motioned to accept the minutes with word committee be removed next to the word Chair Mary Rudd 2<sup>nd</sup>. Unanimously approved. Ed Hanson reported that no lights were on in the camper on the Brace property.

#### **New Business**

At the 7:00 p.m. the DRB convened with a site plan review from Adam and Kara Marszalkowski for a variance to the minimum side-yard setback distance requirement for a detached accessory structure. The property is in the RA 10 district and is non-conforming in minimum lot area and road frontage. Zoning Administrator Ed Hanson and Kara Marszalsowski presented the proposed site for the detached accessory structure. The findings of fact are: the property in a non-conforming lot in a RA10 district, a variance is necessary, and a plan for the location of the structure has been provided. Louise Giovanella asked that in the future the DRB/PC require more detailed drawings be submitted. Heidi Mahoney motioned to accept the request with the condition that the structure be placed a minimum of 15' from the assumed property line. Terry Findeisen 2<sup>nd</sup>. Unanimously approved.

Ed Hanson is expecting a check from Hans Vorsteveld for an approval of farm labor housing. The septic system changes have been authorized as well as a state waste water permit. The brown ranch house on the former Lowenstein property located on Arnold Bay Rd. is to be moved across the street to be used as farm labor housing.

Heidi Mahoney motioned to adjourn the DRB and simultaneously convene the PC Katie Werthmann 2<sup>nd</sup>. Unanimously approved.

## **PC**

### **Old Business**

GMP Project Manager Kirk Shields, Lincoln Large from Grosolar, Tom Hand from SE Landscape Group, Dotty Schnure from GMP and Rod Veins from Grosolar presented the proposed 40 acre 4.9 mega watt project located on Vorstelveld Farm property on Panton Rd. An informal site visit took place at 8:30 a.m. Thursday morning November 12, 2015.

Chair David Raphael reiterated that the PC does not have the authority to issue or deny a permit but does have automatic party status to be involved in providing input and feedback. He also stated that his company is not at present under contract with GMP. This project will go before the Public Service Board. It is subject to the provisions of section 248 of Vermont State statutes. This presentation was for the pre-file testimony, exhibits and other initial filings of the petition of GMP Solar Panton for a certificate of public good.

The proposed site is 900' off Panton Rd. on the west side of Dead Creek out of the flood plain in unproductive ground. Single axis tracker type panels 8-9' above the ground will be employed. Projected project time is 16-18 weeks. Any access road upgrade will be in conformance with Panton regulations. No batteries will be stored at the site. Two transformers are proposed on the site. Sixty five percent of the content of this project will be provided by American companies. This project will be cost effective to GMP customers and improve reliability in having additional generation locally. The site will connect to the poles on Panton Rd.

The major benefit to the town is in property taxes. The land is taxed at the normal rate and the solar structures are taxed. The tax is based on the income revenue stream that is going to be generated. It is estimated that \$45,000.00 is to be provided in municipal property taxes. No municipal services are required from the town. The project will also pay approximately \$20,000.00 in state education tax.

When the project reaches the end of its use GMP will come back and decommission it. All structures will be removed and recycled as best to GMP's ability leaving the land as they found it.

At present the Vergennes substation is served by a radial transmission line. Adding solar to the hydro, diesel and energy battery storage there is the potential to island a large area of the circuit. The Public Service Board Hearing Officer will visit the proposed site and then hold a public meeting.

A hedgerow surrounding the site will be located on the west, south and east side of the solar field. It will be 35' in width consisting of small, medium and large tree growth. Larger trees can be intermixed within the hedgerow. It will take the expected lifetime of the project for the plants to fully mature. Low growth grass and possibly pollinators will be planted below the structures and a 7-8' wire mesh fence will surround the site. GMP will maintain the site. A question and answer time took place.

### **New Business**

Green Lantern Solar Company representative Sam Carlson explained this company and proposed two 4 acre 500 kilowatt sites in Panton. This company focuses on commercial net metered solar power. GMP does not pay for the power instead they issue credits. Net metered credits are issued to pay down an electric bill. Green Lantern in contract with Cabot Creamery sells them credits. Cabot Creamery invited their co-op members to lease their land to Green Lantern. Green

Lantern signs a lease with the Cabot Agri-mart farmer and then Cabot Creamery becomes the off taker of those credits. Hence Cabot Creamery lowers their electric payment and the Agri-mart farmer earns a lease payment from their land.

One of the proposed sites is on Jersey St. across from the Vorsteveld Farm. This location is on unused ledge filled land. This site will not go forward until GMP has finished its' system impact study on the 40 acre 4.9 mega watt project.

The second site is at 1069 Panton Rd owned by Vorsteveld Farm. An existing gravel road runs from Panton Rd. through the 249 acres of which the 4.1 acres are proposed. Access to this site will be from the west side of the gravel road. The solar panels will be fixed at 8' 1/2 high. One power pole with three transformers mounted and three poles will be required to connect to Panton Rd. The site will enclosed by a fence. Landscape screening will be done to hide the panels from the abutters view.

When the project has finished its expected time it will be decommissioned and the land will be left as it was found.

Chair David Raphael mentioned to the PC that the PC can adopt intervening by-laws for these projects with provision for de-commissioning plans to be in place. Katie Werthmann motioned to adjourn the PC Terry Findeisen 2<sup>nd</sup>. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marjorie Huff,  
Clerk