

AGAWAM PLANNING BOARD
February 1, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mark R. Paleologopoulos, Chairman
Violet E. Baldwin
Charles Elfman
Nicholas Pandolfi

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mario Tedeschi

ALSO PRESENT:

Marc Strange
Amanda Boissonneault

Mr. Paleologopoulos called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

1. SITE PLAN – 311 Shoemaker Lane – TJA Solar

Mr. Paleologopoulos explained that a Zone Change request from Agricultural to Industrial B was denied by the City Council last year, and now the applicants are before the Planning Board for Site Plan Review. Rich Tabaczynski, P.E. with Atlantic Design Engineers, Inc. was in attendance to present the site plan for TJA Solar. Mr. Tabaczynski stated they attended a Team Meeting on December 12th after a Form D was submitted in November 2017. Parcel 2 of 311 Shoemaker Lane is zoned Agricultural and consists of approximately 60.6 acres. The proposed ground mounted solar installation will be 4.9 megawatt, include approximately 16,800 panels and will utilize approximately 16 acres of the parcel. Mr. Tabaczynski described the land as being fairly flat and including large areas that were formerly used for pasture, wooded areas and some areas with wetlands. There is a Tennessee Gas easement that runs through the property, which will split the ground mounted solar installation into two sections. The site plan currently meets all setback requirements, and is approximately 50 feet from all property lines. Mr. Tabaczynski stated the closest solar panel to Shoemaker Lane is approximately 2,200 feet away, the home closest to 311 Shoemaker Lane is approximately 1,900 feet from the closest solar panel, and the closest panel to Crestview Country Club is approximately 1,400 feet away. There will be a 15 foot wide gravel access road that ties into the existing curb cut on Shoemaker Lane and the former farm road. Utility cabinets will be in the NE corner of both the northern and southern arrays. The entire installation will be surrounded by a 7 foot tall fence with gates at various locations, the first being close to where the northern array beings. The Fire Department requested a gate at the rear of the property in case of an emergency, which has been included on the plan. Mr. Tabaczynski stated that all other professional staff comments were addressed in a letter submitted on February 1 2018. Ms. Baldwin asked if there would be work performed in the wetlands. Mr. Tabaczynski informed the Planning Board that a Notice of Intent will be filed with the Conservation Commission. He described how 7 catch basins and swales would be utilized for stormwater management. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked if any fill would be brought in.

Mr. Tabaczynski stated they would be using existing grades on the property and that no fill would be brought in. Ms. Baldwin asked if revised plans were going to be submitted. Mr. Tabaczynski stated that a revised plan would be submitted. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked if the Engineering Departments Comments from a January 30, 2017 memo were addressed. Mr. Tabaczynski answered the comments were addressed in their memo from February 1, but not addressed on the current plan. Mr. Tabaczynski stated visual concerns were discussed during the December 12th Team Meeting, which prompted them to conduct a visual assessment of the proposed project area. The assessment was done in two parts; sight line cross sections from the clubhouse, tennis courts and closest house, and photolocation plans showing existing vegetation in both summer and winter. The photos show there is enough existing vegetation to screen the solar panels from view except for a few gaps at the southern array. Mr. Tabaczynski stated screening will be proposed to compensate for any gaps that were uncovered during the sightline assessment. Ms. Baldwin asked what type of plantings for screening would be utilized. Mr. Tabaczynski stated green giant arborvitae would be utilized, along with a variety of other plantings from an approved list. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked what height the trees would be. Mr. Tabaczynski stated mature trees, approximately 20 feet in height, would be planted where the gaps in screen had been observed. Mr. Elfman asked if the solar panels could be seen from the closest putting green at Crestview Country Club. Mr. Tabaczynski answered no; the existing vegetation and height difference shield the panels from being seen from that area. Ms. Baldwin asked if the revised site plan would include landscaping. Mr. Tabaczynski stated yes it will be included, and will be ready for their NOI filing with the Conservation Commission. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked if the solar panels could be seen from the closest residential abutters. Mr. Tabaczynski stated that the panels were so far away from the closest residential abutter that the natural vegetation would shield them from view. Mr. Tabaczynski stated the solar arrays cannot be seen from Shoemaker Lane. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked how proposed landscaping would be maintained and if any tree cutting would occur. Mr. Tabaczynski answered that the Conservation Commission would have jurisdiction, with erosion controls and a limit of work being clearly defined. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked what the utility cabinets would look like. Mr. Tabaczynski stated there would be two, one at each array, and they would be an approximately 5 foot tall electrical box, 6 foot by 20 feet. Mr. Paleologopoulos explained it is important to have the Engineering Departments addressed on the site plan and to receive their sign off before the Planning Board takes action. Mr. Paleologopoulos would also like time to review the sight line and photolocation package that was received during the meeting. Ms. Baldwin stated it is important to have a new plan that addresses Engineering's outstanding comments and shows more detail on the landscaping. Attorney Joseph Pacella, 1380 Main Street, spoke on behalf of his clients, suggesting that conditional approval should be given because of 90 days that is allowed for Site Plan Review. Attorney Pacella stated his clients addressed all of the Engineering Departments comments in the memo that was submitted to the Planning Board on February 1st. Mr. Paleologopoulos explained that conditional approvals are not preferred because they leave a lot of loose ends. Mr. Paleologopoulos would also like to speak to the Law Department. Ms. Baldwin commented that a revised site plan could have been submitted that addressed the Engineering Department's comments that were provided to the applicant on January 3, 2018. Ms. Baldwin also stated that a conditional approval has proven to be dangerous in the past, and that the Engineering Department needs time to review the memo submitted by the applicant dated February 1, 2018. Mr. Elfman does not want to give site plan review

approval until exactly what is being done is shown on the plan. Mr. Pandolfi commented that vegetative screening is a hot topic when it comes to large solar installations and needs to be addressed in detail on the site plan.

Motion was made by Mr. Pandolfi and seconded by Mr. Elfman to continue the Site Plan for TJA Solar at 311 Shoemaker Lane until the Planning Board's February 15, 2018 meeting.

VOTE 4-0

2. PUBLIC HEARING – Definitive Plan – Ace Precision Way – 1123 Suffield Street

Mr. Paleologopoulos opened the public hearing. Philippe Cravo from R. Levesque Associates, Inc. was in attendance to present the Definitive Plan for Ace Precision Way. Mr. Cravo stated this plan shows the creation of a 3 lot subdivision with a short cul-de-sac on the lot in which Ace Precision is already located. The parcel is zoned Business B and has bordering vegetative wetlands. Comments from the Engineering Department were received a few hours before the meeting and are not addressed on the current plan. Mr. Cravo stated tonight's public hearing is only for the creation of the subdivision and 3 new lots, and not to for any potential structures to be built. Site Plan Review will be need for development on any of the three lots. Utilities will be brought in from Suffield Street, and all stormwater will be handled on site. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked what the length of the cul-de-sac would be. Mr. Cravo stated it would be approximately 280 feet long. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked who abuts the property. Mr. Cravo answered the property abuts both Business B and Agricultural zoned land. Mr. Paleologopoulos stated he visited the area recently and the site is in need of improvements. Mr. Strange advised the Planning Board members that Engineering's comments are a mix of definitive plan and site plan comments, and will be separated out for review. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked for any public input.

Guy Remillard, 63 Zachary Lane, stated he directly abuts the rear of the property. Mr. Remillard described Zachary Lane as being a nice quiet street that currently cannot see or hear anything from the Ace Precision lot. He is concerned with privacy, lighting and noise.

John Criscola, 42 Zachary Lane, is concerned about his property value decreasing, and asked when construction would begin. Mr. Cravo answered in approximately 12 months.

Jerry Sibilgia Jr., 64 Zachary Lane, expressed concern about seeing a large industrial building through the trees that currently screen the lot. Mr. Sibilgia also mentioned concerns about lighting, decreasing property values, lighting, and if any chemicals would be used onsite.

Dorian Black, 23 Zachary Lane, asked if larger trees can be requested for screening. Mr. Paleologopoulos answered stating the existing trees can be looked at and additional screening can be discussed during Site Plan Review.

Richard Fafard, 1091 Suffield Street, estimated the site plan showed approximately 100 parking spaces and is concerned about an increase in traffic. Mr. Paleologopoulos said the amount of spaces required will be determined by the use of a potential business.

Tom Sroka, 43 Zachary Lane, expressed the same concerns as those who spoke before him. Mr. Sroka is also concerned about water run-off because the Ace Precision lot is higher than his.

Attorney representing Mr. Elias (property owner) – Stated the plan is to construct a new building on the upper lot for Ace Precision first, and then build the other two lots to suit. All potential new construction will comply with zoning.

Thomas Bourget, 54 Zachary Lane, explained that the public hearing is about the creation of the three lots, and then the reality is that the other two lots could be used for anything. Mr. Bourget stated with a max height of 45 feet, the neighborhood's concern is seeing a business from their property. Mr. Paleologopoulos stated that when it is time for site plan review, grading and screening will be taken into consideration, among other things.

Mark Busco, 74 Zachary Lane, asked if abutters will be notified for site plan review. Mr. Paleologopoulos answered no, but agendas are typically posted a week prior to the meeting, or the abutters can check contact the Planning & Community Development Department.

Kathy Donabed, 61 Pineview Circle, said she knows the problems that can happen with new developments. Ms. Donabed said she does not want to look at any more buildings in Town, and that it is unfair to the abutters to see taller businesses from their property.

Motion was made by Ms. Baldwin and seconded by Mr. Elfman to close the public hearing for Definitive Plan for Ace Precision Way.

VOTE 4-0

Motion was made by Mr. Pandolfi and seconded by Mr. Elfman to continue the Definitive Plan for Ace Precision Way at 1123 Suffield Street until the Planning Board's February 15, 2018 meeting.

VOTE 4-0

3. SITE PLAN – 218 Shoemaker Lane – Motion Auto Carriers, Inc.

Philippe Cravo from R. Levesque Associates, Inc. was in attendance to present the site plan for Motion Auto Carriers, Inc. The property at 218 Shoemaker Lane is the old Zielinski contractor yard. Motion Auto Carriers, Inc. will be using the site as a trucking terminal, towing and storage facility. The applicant has also filed with the Zoning Board of Appeals for a Special Permit. Mr. Cravo explained the company is a car carrier service that will hold vehicles on site for a short period of time. The applicant wants to utilize the property as it is, using the existing home for an administrative office and the garage at the rear of the property for storage. There are two access points to the property, one of them being from an adjacent easement that will be discontinued. It appears to be an old access road with no curb cut. The gravel in that area will be removed, then

loamed and seeded. Mr. Cravo said the entrance from Shoemaker Lane will be used, and the curb cut and radius will be assessed. Ms. Baldwin asked if they had responded to the Engineering Department's February 1, 2018 comments. Mr. Cravo answered those comments will be addressed, but they did not have time to revise the plan prior to the meeting. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked if there were wetlands on the property, Mr. Cravo answered no. Mr. Pandolfi asked where the existing driveway ends. Mr. Cravo stated it ends just past the home, then will be gravel to the rear storage area. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked what the hours of operation would be, Mr. Cravo said he did not know and would look into it. Mr. Paleologopoulos questioned if there would be any additional lighting, Mr. Cravo stated only the existing lighting would be used.

Motion was made by Mr. Elfman and seconded by Mr. Pandolfi to continue the Site Plan for Motion Auto Carriers, Inc. at 218 Shoemaker Lane until the Planning Board's February 15, 2018 meeting.

VOTE 4-0

4. DISCUSSION – Allison Lane – Tirone

Philippe Cravo from R. Levesque Associates, Inc. provided the Planning Board members with a plan showing a concept to extend the cul-de-sac on Allison Lane. The extension would create enough frontage at 40 Allison Lane to allow the owner to split the parcel into two building lots. Ms. Baldwin researched the creation of the subdivision, and stated minutes from 1984 noted the cul-de-sac as being permanent. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked if the extension to the cul-de-sac would be paved, Mr. Cravo answered it would not be. Mr. Elfman wants to know how the abutters would feel. Mr. Strange expressed concern about creating a precedent. All members agree they would like more time to research the plan and lot. Mr. Paleologopoulos suggested continuing the discussion at the February 15th meeting, all members agreed.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 7, 2017

Motion was made by Ms. Baldwin and seconded by Mr. Pandolfi to approve the minutes of December 7, 2017, as written.

VOTE 3-0-1 (Mr. Elfman abstained)

6. CORRESPONDENCE - None

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.