

AGAWAM PLANNING BOARD
March 1, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Marc Strange
Amanda Boissonneault

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

1. 6:00 PM PUBLIC HEARING – Zoning Amendment – Solar Energy Systems – Sponsored by Council President Johnson and Councilor Rossi

Council President Christopher Johnson was in attendance to present a proposed zoning amendment for solar energy systems. Council President Johnson gave an overview of the proposed zoning amendment, emphasizing that Agawam is a green community and that solar energy systems cannot be unreasonably prohibited. The zoning amendment defines small and medium solar energy systems, and allows for large scale solar energy system installations to be allowed as a matter of right in any industrial zone, and will be allowed by special permit by the City Council in agricultural. All large scale solar energy systems will go through site plan review, which is enhanced by Chapter 180-153. Council President Johnson stated an amendment at the City Council level will limit the height of solar installations to no more than 20 feet. Council President Johnson stated an ordinance is needed, otherwise the Inspector of Buildings solely decides where solar installations can be placed.

The Planning Board members presented comments and questions about the zoning amendment. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked why town owned land is exempt; Council President Johnson answered that all town owned land is exempt from zoning regulations. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked that “fencing” be added to the total area of solar structures (Page 3, Sec. 180-150; Page 4, Sec. 180-153; Page 6, Sec. 180-155(c), add storm water controls (Page 4, Sec. 180-153(a)(iii), and emergency contact information to be updated annually (Page 8, Sec. 180-156(g). Council President agreed that language could be added. Council President Johnson also agreed with the Board members that the chart could be made clearer and easier to read. There was a discussion about the 20 foot height limit that will be added into the zoning amendment. Mr. Paleologopoulos expressed concern about panels being higher if there is any slope to the site. Mr. Paleologopoulos said there is mostly agricultural land abutting Provin Mountain, and he is concerned about seeing solar panels all the way up the side of the mountain; there will be no way to screen the solar panels from being seen. Mr. Tedeschi said 20 feet is too high, that’s about the size of an average two story home. Mr. Tedeschi stated he is concerned about being able to

screen a system that large, a 10 foot arborvitae will not cover it. Council President Johnson said he would check with the Inspector of Buildings to see what the height is of the existing solar energy systems in town.

Motion made by Ms. Baldwin and seconded by Mr. Elfman to open the hearing to the public.

VOTE 5-0

Councilor George Bitzas, 33 Fernwood Drive said that it would be a big mistake to allow any new solar installations to be any higher than those already built in town. Councilor Bitzas presented pictures of the solar installation at Shoemaker Lane/Route 57 to the Board members. The two panel solar installations are approximately 10 feet in height. Councilor Bitzas expressed concern about not being able to screen an installation that is any higher than that.

Doreen Prouty, 891 South Westfield Street stated this is the best version of a solar zoning amendment so far. Ms. Prouty submitted a list of comments to the Planning Board and City Council in a memo dated February 22, 2018. Ms. Prouty expressed concerns about limiting the language to photovoltaic installations and exempting town owned land. Ms. Prouty stated the use of any buildings on town owned land is exempt, but new construction has to meet zoning requirements. Ms. Prouty stated she disagrees with the City Council being the special permit granting authority, stating the Town of Agawam's Zoning Ordinances, under Chapter 180-2(C), specifically authorizes that the special permit granting authority is the board of appeals of the Town of Agawam.

Will Clark, 26 High Meadow Road expressed concern about public outreach and abutters being notified in a timely manner.

Corinne Wingard, 194 Elm Street stated she is in support in developing more solar energy systems and thanked the Councilors for their hard work.

No one else spoke for or against.

Motion made by Mr. Tedeschi and seconded by Mr. Pandolfi to close the public hearing.

VOTE 5-0

Motion made by Mr. Elfman and seconded by Mr. Tedeschi to send a positive recommendation to the City Council regarding the proposed solar energy systems zoning amendment.

VOTE 5-0

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

R. Levesque Associates, Inc. has requested to continued site plan review to the next Planning Board meeting.

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

VOTE 5-0

3. SITE PLAN CONTINUED – Mikel Coffee - 916 Suffield Street - Risos

Architect Edmond Brousseau and owner Antonios Risos were in attendance to present the revised site plan for Mikel Coffee, a coffee shop and drive thru to be incorporated into Kaptain Jimmy's restaurant. Mr. Brousseau said they have addressed all of the Engineering Department's comments from their February 15, 2018 memo and received their approval on March 1st. The plan now includes grading lines, a stop sign at the Suffield Street exit, erosion controls near the new patio area, gated screening around the dumpster, an upgraded bike rack, and language for detention pond maintenance. Handicap accessible spaces have been moved to directly in front of the entrance to Kaptain Jimmy's Restaurant with a striped walkway across the travel lane. Ms. Baldwin and Mr. Paleologopoulos agree this location is better than the original proposed location. Mr. Elfman asked how deliveries would be made. Mr. Brousseau said they will have to park in the parking lot to the right of the restaurant and walk deliveries in to the rear of the restaurant. Mr. Tedeschi asked if they knew what type of signage they would use. Mr. Brousseau said it has not been designed yet, but will be consistent with what currently exists for the restaurant. Mr. Brousseau stated a solution to outstanding off-site mitigation in regards to Notice of Intent 87-504 with the Conservation Commission was agreed upon at their February 22, 2018 meeting. The public hearing with the Zoning Board of Appeals for a Special Permit is scheduled for March 12, 2018.

Motion was made by Ms. Baldwin and seconded by Mr. Tedeschi to approve the Site Plan for Mikel Coffee at 916 Suffield Street conditional upon Special Permit approval by the Zoning Board of Appeals, offsite mitigation to be completed, and all professional staff comments to be addressed.

VOTE 5-0

4. SITE PLAN – Escape 413 – 396 Main Street

Jared Hamre was in attendance to present his site plan for Escape 413. Mr. Hamre stated the site plan is exactly the same as the Agawam Axe House; his business will be located within the other. There will be 3 approximately 15'x20' rooms which can accommodate 4-8 people in each. There will be 2 fulltime staff members, with 1 game master watching the rooms. Mr. Hamre said that screening for the dumpster will be completed once the ground thaws out, and he is working in conjunction with the owners of the property and the Engineering Department to provide ADA compliant parking and a bathroom. Mr. Hamre has also added a second egress to each escape room to comply with a request from the Fire Department. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked what hours the business would be open; Mr. Hamre answered it would be more of a Thursday- Sunday business, with similar hours to the Agawam Axe House. Mr. Paleologopoulos asked if the current amount of parking would be adequate; Mr. Strange stated they are working with the Building Inspector and Engineer to ensure that.

Motion was made by Ms. Baldwin and seconded by Mr. Elfman to approve the Site Plan for Escape 413 at 396 Main Street conditional upon ADA requirements being addressed, screening around the dumpster to be provided, and comments from the Fire Department's February 28, 2018 memo to be addressed.

VOTE 5-0

5. FORM A – Way Finders – Mill Street

Carolyn Shiel with Way Finders was in attendance to present the Form A that was prepared by The Berkshire Design Group, Inc. This plan shows the creation of four lots out of a 12 acre parcel, all with frontage on Mill Street.

Motion was made by Mr. Pandolfi and seconded by Mr. Elfman to approve the plan for Chicopee Kendall LLC (Way Finders) on Mill Street under "Subdivision Control Law Not Required."

VOTE 4-0-1(Tedeschi abstained)

6. RELEASE OF COVENANT & NEW PERF. AGREEMENT – Lot 7 Jasmine Lane

Joseph Cardaropoli, the new owner of Lot 7 Jasmine Lane, has posted a bond with the Treasurer's Office.

Motion was made by Mr. Tedeschi and seconded by Mr. Pandolfi to execute a Release of Covenant for Lot 7 Jasmine Lane.

VOTE 5-0

Motion was made by Mr. Tedeschi and seconded by Mr. Pandolfi to sign a new Performance Agreement for Lot 7 of Jasmine Lane to reflect the bond.

VOTE 5-0

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 1, 2018

Motion was made by Mr. Elfman and seconded by Ms. Baldwin to approve the minutes of February 1, 2018, as written.

VOTE 4-0-1 (Mr. Tedeschi abstained)

8. CORRESPONDENCE - None

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM