

**TOWN OF MAYFIELD PLANNING BOARD
OCTOBER 16, 2019
6:00 P.M.
TOWN OF MAYFIELD TOWN HALL**

MEETING NOTES

PRESENT:

**JOHN KESSLER, CHAIRMAN
AARON HOWLAND, VICE CHAIRMAN
JERRY MOORE
RICHARD MILES
FREDERICK CASTIGLIONE, ALTERNATE**

**SEAN M. GERAGHTY, SENIOR PLANNER
DAMON CURLEY, CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER**

OTHERS PRESENT:

MARTIN JAMES

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST REGULAR MEETING:

MOTION: To approve the minutes to the September 18, 2019 meeting.

MADE BY: Richard Miles

SECONDED: Aaron Howland

VOTE: 4 in favor, 0 opposed

III. MARTIN JAMES – PROPERTY TRANSACTION ALONG GRIFFIS ROAD:

A. Background:

Martin James owns two (2) pieces of property along Griffis Road in the Town of Mayfield [Tax Map Parcel Nos. 121.13-1-73 (.22acres) and 121.13-1-75.5 (2.9 acres)]. There is an existing home on the smaller parcel and

Mr. James would like to transfer a portion of the larger parcel to the smaller parcel in an effort to provide more space for an onsite septic system.

PLANNING BOARD DISCUSSION: Planning Board Chairman John Kessler asked Mr. James if he gave any consideration to making the smaller parcel at least 1 acre in size?

Mr. James indicated that he hadn't given it any thought. He pointed out that the remaining acreage that is left with the larger parcel is where his daughter is going to build her new home.

PLANNING BOARD ACTION:

MOTION: Recognizing that Martin James' property transaction along Griffis Road is not subject to the Town of Mayfield Subdivision Regulations and to approve the property transaction as a lot line amendment.

MADE BY: Jerry Moore

SECONDED: Aaron Howland

VOTE: 4 in favor, 0 opposed

IV. SOLAR FARM MORATORIUM:

A. Background:

During its September 18, 2019 meeting, the Town of Mayfield Planning Board briefly discussed the Mayfield Town Board's request that the Planning Board offer some feedback and recommendations with regards to regulating Solar Farms in the community. At that time, Sean Geraghty, a Consultant with the Fulton County Planning Department, suggested that he be allowed to do a little research and offer up some suggestions for addressing the Solar Farm issue in the Town of Mayfield. The Town Board has instituted a 6-month moratorium on Solar Farm development and if that moratorium needs to be extended, the Town has to show that some type of analysis or progress is being made towards resolving the issue of how the community is going to regulate Solar Farms from here on forward.

(NOTE: Planning Board Alternate Fred Castiglione arrived at the meeting.)

B. What are Solar Farm Companies Looking For:

- A minimum of 10-20 acres of available land.
- Easily accessible site.
- Proximity and the ability to connect to National Grid infrastructure.

- Avoidance of certain natural features such as steep topography, prime agricultural soils, wetlands, etc.
- Sunlight angles and lack of shadowing.

C. What is the Town of Mayfield Looking For:

- No Solar Farm development along major traffic thoroughfares.
- Tax revenue – no more PILOT Agreements.
- Extensive and attractive landscaping that will conceal Solar Farm developments.
- The ability for residents with large tracts of lands, in particular farmers, to continue having the opportunity to lease portions of their property to Solar Farm developers in order to generate needed revenue.

PLANNING BOARD DISCUSSION: The Planning Board spent a few minutes talking about the County's recent decision to opt out of the Real Property Tax Law provision allowing Solar Farm developments a tax exemption. Mr. Geraghty stated that, to his knowledge, the Broadalbin-Perth School District, as well as the Town of Broadalbin and the Town of Perth, are looking to also opt out of the legislation. He asked if the Town of Mayfield will be opting out of the tax exemption?

Town Code Enforcement Officer Damon Curley indicated that the subject was introduced during last month's Town Board meeting.

The Planning Board had no other issues or ideas to add to the list of issues that are important to the Town.

D. Town of Mayfield Zoning Law:

- Under the current Town of Mayfield Zoning Law, Solar Farm development is allowed in every district except the Residential-1, Residential-2, Lake Area-1 and Lake Area-2 Districts.
- Article III, Section 301, lists the zoning districts and gives a description of the types of uses that are permissible in each district. A new District called the "Solar Farm Overlay Zone" (SFOZ) will need to be added to the list. The description for that District will read as follows:

"In Districts that allow Solar Farms subject to a Special Use Permit, this Overlay Zone specifically identifies the parcels where the Town will consider an application for a Solar Farm project."

- In Table 301-Zoning Use Table, there are nine (9) districts that identify Solar Farms as needing a Special Use Permit. A notation will be added to each of those nine (9) boxes clarifying that Solar Farms are only allowed on properties in that District that are also included in the Solar Farm Overlay Zone.
- In Article V, Subsection 508-3-Minimum Requirements, the first sentence should read as follows:

“In any district that requires a Special Use Permit for a Solar Farm, on a property that is also included in the Solar Farm Overlay Zone (SFOZ), the development shall conform to the following standards which shall be regarded as minimum requirements.”

E. Map Review:

PLANNING BOARD DISCUSSION: Mr. Geraghty briefly reviewed some of the text changes that will have to be made to the Town’s Zoning Law in order to create an Overlay Zone for Solar Farm development. Mr. Geraghty showed Board members a zoning map of the Town and suggested that the Board may want to begin by looking at some of the other Zoning Districts that allow Solar Farms by Special Use Permit and see if any of those specific districts can be eliminated from consideration.

Planning Board Member Jerry Moore, for example, mentioned the Commercial Zone and the Resource Hub as possibilities.

Planning Board Member Aaron Howland indicated that he felt the most important consideration would be for the Town to protect the areas where municipal infrastructure has been planned and investments have been made. He stated that it makes no sense for the Town to allow a large Solar Farm project in an area where investments in municipal infrastructure have already been made.

The Board then spent a great deal of time talking about some of the areas in the community that are not conducive to Solar Farm development.

Mr. Geraghty showed Board members an overlay of the Town Zoning Map with wetlands and prime agricultural soils depicted.

Eventually, County Planning Consultant Sean Geraghty suggested that he be allowed to take some of the Board’s ideas and thoughts and put together a more refined proposal for next month’s meeting. The Planning Board felt this was an acceptable way to continue looking at the Solar Farm issue. There were a few items that will be addressed in the revised analysis:

- Mr. Geraghty will contact the Adirondack Park Agency to see where the Agency stands with regards to Solar Farm developments within the Park.

- Consideration will be given to adding the Resource Hub area and the Commercial Area to the list of Districts that do not allow Solar Farm development.
- Consideration will be given to simply leaving the Zoning Map and current Solar Farm Regulations in place and adding a provision to the Zoning Law indicating that the physical components of a Solar Farm development can be no closer than 500' to a State road.
- Some additional detailed mapping analysis will be prepared.

V. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Code Enforcement Update:

Town Code Enforcement Officer Damon Curley indicated that the Sacandaga Brewing Project is moving along. He pointed out that the developers have received a local economic development grant for the project.

Planning Board Member Aaron Howland asked about Dave Huckans' project along the Great Sacandaga Lake?

Mr. Curley indicated that he has been down to the Huckans' property and walked the site and it appears as though some of the stormwater infrastructure improvements that needed to be made have been completed. He indicated that there has been very little other progress on the project.

B. Chairman's Update:

Mr. Kessler pointed out that, during yesterday's Fulton County Planning Board meeting, a Solar Farm developer told County Planning Board members that the panels they use on their projects are not toxic and contain no heavy metals. Mr. Kessler pointed out that, in the 1970's, some of the original solar panel models contained cadmium, which is no longer the case. He indicated that the Solar Farm company representative explained to the County Planning Board that the majority of the solar panels are made up of glass components. He indicated that he was informed that solar companies are now looking at more advanced ways to recycle the panels by removing copper from those units.

VI. CLOSE OF THE MEETING:

MOTION: To close the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

MADE BY: John Kessler

SECONDED: Richard Miles

VOTE: 5 in favor, 0 opposed