

GEORGIA PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

March 10, 2020

Board Members Present: Suzanna Brown, Greg Drew, Tony Heinlein, David Vincent, Emily Johnson, Maurice Fitzgerald

Members absent:

Staff Present: Lary Martell, Planning Coordinator.

Others Present: Eric Phaneuf, Gabe Trahan, Keenan Cota, Lara Bouchard, Brendan Malley, Jim Jones (LCATV videographer)

Planning Coordinator, Lary Martell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Planning Coordinator, Lary Martell, asked for nominations for the Planning Commission Chair. Greg Drew nominated Suzanna Brown as Chair, seconded by Maurice Fitzgerald. The vote was unanimous; Brown was elected Chair.

Suzanna Brown asked for nominations for Vice Chair. Maurice Fitzgerald nominated Greg Drew as Vice Chair seconded by Suzanna Brown. The vote was unanimous in favor; Greg Drew was elected Vice Chair for the ensuing year.

Suzanna Brown asked for nominations for Clerk. Greg Drew nominated Tony Heinlein as Clerk seconded by Suzanna Brown. The vote was unanimous in favor; Tony Heinlein was elected Clerk for the ensuing year

Public Hearing:

PC-03-20: Final Plat Amendment, Keenan Cota, Owner/Applicant, for a previously approved 7-lot subdivision, 236 Red Barn Hill Road in the AR-3 zoning district.

Chair Suzanna Brown read the project abstract into the record & swore the witness into the record.

- Keenan Cota presented the proposed changes which removed the boundary lines of the 7 previously approved lots. The parcel would revert to one 10.02-acre parcel. Keenan also asked for a waiver of the driveway over the current 60' right-of-way easement in lieu of the required road frontage to allow for access for a two-family dwelling.
- Lary Martell said that Cota indicated he has plans to construct a 2-family dwelling on the parcel. The parcel meets the current regulations as a permitted use for a two-family dwelling, however, because the lot is accessed over a 60' right-of-way approval by the planning commission is required in lieu of the zoning frontage requirements.
- Cota plans to build a two-family dwelling on the 10.02-acre lot. A two-family dwelling is a permitted use within the AR-3 zoning district; however, planning commission approval is required for access over a 60' wide right-of-way if the lot does not have the required road frontage. Cota asked the planning commission for a waiver of the required road frontage in order to access a two-family dwelling over the existing 60' right-of-way.
- There was general discussion regarding the construction of a duplex on the parcel including the possible size of the building, the location of the existing driveway and the need to amend the wastewater permit.

- Suzanna Brown asked if there were any other question or concerns. Gabe Trahan said based on the warning he was not aware of the possibility of Cota asking for approval for a duplex. Suzanna told Mr. Trahan he would have another chance to look at the proposed duplex when Cota applied for a permit to construct the duplex.
- **Greg Drew moved to close the hearing;** Maurice Fitzgerald seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of closing the hearing at 7:20 pm.
- **Aegis Renewable Energy, Inc represented by Eric Phaneuf** is proposing a 500 KW-AC net metered solar array on a portion of a parcel located at 1961 Ethan Allen Highway. The parcel, owned by Ann Rowley, is currently in agricultural use. Aegis Renewable Energy is requesting a letter designating the location as a “preferred site” by the Georgia Town Planning Commission and Selectboard. Rowley plans to continue the agriculture use on the remaining parcel. Access to the solar array is proposed over the existing agricultural access.

Mr. Phaneuf gave an overview of the proposal. Suzanna opened the floor to discussion.

There was general discussion of the site, including the distance to the road and neighbor’s house, location of tree lines, the forested portions of the parcel, and type, size and number of panels.

Mr. Phaneuf pointed out the locations of wetlands and the farm access. Suzanna asked if Aegis would be open to relocating the solar-array’s fence enclosure to include additional areas of wetlands. Mr. Phaneuf stated that they might be able to make some adjustments; however, Rowley wanted to be able to continue haying the open fields and needed to keep access to the hay fields.

Suzanna asked if the solar array access could be moved to lessen the impact to the class 3 wetlands.

There are several separate class 3 wetlands located on the site. Mr. Phaneuf indicated it was possible and he would investigate the change.

Lary asked if Aegis had applied to VTRANS for the road access. Mr. Phaneuf said they had not but would contact VTRANS.

Mr. Phaneuf gave a quick overview of the public warning process and a time frame for possible approval of the proposal.

There was additional general discussion of the type of equipment needed to complete the work and the time for work to be completed.

Mr. Phaneuf said he would discuss the planning commissions concerns with Aegis and Rowley and could be ready to answer questions by the March 24th meeting.

Suzanna said that the planning commission could continue the conversation at that time and looked forward to seeing the changes.

Mr. Phaneuf thanked the planning commission for their consideration and left at 8:10 pm.

8:10 pm, Brendan Malley representing Hemond Solar project located at 3128 Ethan Allen Highway came to the meeting to discuss possible extension for the solar array construction. Mr. Brendan gave an overview of the construction progress and explained that due to the abnormally warm winter season the ground frost developed late and thawed early. Unexpected ledge work also slowed the progress. Mr. Hemond told the board they were in direct contact with state wetland specialist and had an independent engineering firm overseeing the project. He asked the planning commission to be patient and allow work to continue.

There was general discussion about the site, equipment being used, and a timeline for completion.

Suzanna asked if the company could offer the town concessions such as a donation of seed to be used on Georgia conservation lands. Mr. Malley felt the donation of seed was a good idea and would discuss it with the company.

Mr. Malley thanked the planning commission for their consideration and left at 8:25pm.

David Vincent moved to enter deliberative session at 8:25, seconded by Maurice Fitzgerald. Approved unanimously.

Greg Drew moved that the Commission close its deliberative session at 9:05, David Vincent seconded. Approved unanimously.

Greg Drew made the motion to approve Keenan Cota's Amendment to Final Plat Plan with conditions, seconded by Tony Heinlein. The vote was unanimous.

The planning commission reviewed and approved John and Marguerite McCracken's Site Plan Amendment decision with corrections.

The planning commission accepted the sketch letter as written to Sandy Birch Road, LLC.

Susanna moved to request Greg Drew be nominated to the Georgia Industrial Development Board for consideration. Tony Heinlein seconded the nomination; the vote was unanimous.

Greg Drew made the motion to close the meeting at 9:25, seconded by David Vincent. The vote was unanimous.

Selectboard Concerns:

A nomination of Greg Drew to the Georgia Industrial Development Board.

The request by Aegis to meet with the select board to discuss the possibility of a joint letter of "Preferred Status" for the construction of a solar array located at 1961 Ethan Allen Highway.

The acceptance of continued construction on the Hemond Solar Array, original approved to be completed during winter months on frozen ground.

Next meeting date: March 24th, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lary Martell, Planning Coordinator