

Montague Planning Board

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September 22, 2015 7:00 PM

Town Hall – Upstairs Meeting Room

One Avenue A

Turners Falls, MA 01376

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Ron Sicard – Chair, Fred Bowman, Bruce Young and George Cooke.

Members Absent: Bob Obear

Staff Present: Walter Ramsey AICP- Town Planner

Ron Sicard opened the meeting at 7:03 PM.

Approval of Minutes: July 28, 2015

Motion by, Bruce Young to accept the July 28, 2015 minutes. Seconded by Fred Bowman. **Motion passed.** George Cook Abstained.

Approval of the August 25, 2015 minutes were tabled to the next meeting.

Briefing: Landscape Partnership Program grant application proposed by Mt. Grace Land Conservation Trust to protect 500 acres of land in Montague and Wendell.

Guests: Jamie Pottern and Jay Rasku – Mount Grace Land Trust

The Landscape Partnership Program is with the towns of Wendell and Montague Massachusetts. Mr. Jay Facey of Sugarbush Farm helped to rally his neighbors/landowners to form this partnership for the grant application process. This Program will empower Montague to implement three primary objectives in the Montague 2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan:

- Encourage permanent protection of large blocks of contiguous forest and establishment of corridors between existing protected forest parcels.
- Encourage permanent protection of land along the banks of the Connecticut and Millers Rivers.
- Revise Montague Zoning Bylaws to direct development to appropriate areas without devaluing the land and, where possible, allow clustering of homes on smaller lots to protect the open space.

The Conservation Commission has sent a letter of support of the partnership on September 10, 2015 to the Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs in Boston. The Montague Board of Selectmen also sent a letter of support to that agency on September 14, 2015.

It should be noted that all the parcels are active and working farms already in 61A or 61 Chapter designations. In this partnership, both Sugarbush, and Diemand Farms are included in this effort to have forest and farm components protected. This land is very vital to preserving rural heritage and the surrounding communities.

Motion by, Bruce Young to sign and support the grant, as well as send a letter of support of the Landscape Partnership Program protecting 840 acres in Montague and Wendell Massachusetts. Seconded by George Cooke. **Motion passed.**

Discussion: Landowner request for zoning change to permit large scale solar facilities in the General Business Zoning District.

Guests: James and Bob Daddario and David Jensen – Building Inspector

James and Bob Daddario are the owners of the property identified as Map 14 Lot 214. The parcel is 6.0 acres located to the rear of the Park Villa Apartments that they own. The landowners are requesting a change to section 7.9.4 of the Town of Montague Zoning Regulations. Currently, Solar Energy Facilities are allowed in the ID (Industrial Districts) and are permitted in the HI (Historic Industrial), RE (Recreation Education), and UN (Unrestricted Districts). They are requesting this change so they can install a solar generation facility on their parcel which is located in a general business district. The power from the solar array could be used to lower the utility costs for their residents at Park Villa. The Daddario's goal is to install a solar energy facility to supply clean, sustainable, zero emission energy to the local power grid load zone. Given as solar generation is passive, noise free, and emission free, homeowners would not be affected by solar electric generation on this parcel. If additional screening or plantings are needed to create a buffer zone from the apartments and neighbors they would be willing to do that.

Next Step: File petition, Selectboard, and then public hearing.

Planner Report

- Church Street Zoning Map Amendment will be on the Special Town Meeting Warrant 10/1/2015. The applicant will attend the Town Meeting and Walter Ramsey will also be available to answer any questions if they arise.

Next meeting: October 27, 2015 at 7:00 PM

Motion by Bruce Young at 8:02 PM to adjourn the September 22, 2015 Planning Board Meeting. Seconded by George Cooke. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Approved by: _____ Date: _____