



The
TOWN OF
MONTAGUE
MASSACHUSETTS

TOWN HALL
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PLANNING BOARD
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**Tuesday, June 24, 2025 PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

The Montague Planning Board
Tuesday, May 27, 2025. This meeting was recorded.
ZOOM Opened by the Chair. 6:35pm

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ron Sicard, Sam Guerin, Bob Obear, George Cooke, Sage Winter. ABSENT: Elizabeth Erving. STAFF: Maureen Pollock, Town Planner and Conservation Agent
Also in attendance: Justin Demers (Abutter) Jeff Singleton (Montague Reporter), Scott McBrayne (Peak Power), Dmytro Gladyshevskyi (Peak Power), Anthony Fernando (Judd Wire), Melinda Costello (Weston & Sampson)

The minutes for April were tabled.

PUBLIC HEARING: SP/SPR 2025-02 – PowerBESSCo 2, LLC - Request a Special Permit with Site Plan Review approval to construct a 0.990 MWAC / 2.7 MWh Battery Energy Storage System (BESS); and to request a reduction of the minimum front yard setback requirement from 25 feet to 5 feet on Sandy Lane, under Sections 5.5.3, 8.9.5, 9.1, and 9.2 of the Zoning Bylaw, at Judd Wire Inc. property located at 124 Turnpike Road (Parcel #14-0-162), Industrial Zoning District (ID).

Guerin, Sicard and Pollock conducted a site plan visit. The Planner points out the public hearing requirements of Mass General Law, including the legal ads in the Greenfield Recorder and abutter notification. One abutter responded via letter.

The applicants introduce themselves, Scott McBrayne from Peak Power starts the presentation. Peak Power provides energy storage solutions and has 89 sites under management. Anthony Fernando of Judd Wire (facilities) describes the proposed system which would be located facing the FRTA building on Sandy Lane. Fernando comments that Judd Wire spends nearly \$150,000 a month on electrical costs. Their parent company, Sumitomo Electric (Japan) prioritizes conservation efforts. This project will support Judd Wire and the Eversource and the New England grid more broadly. Melinda Costello covers the existing conditions of the site. The proposed .99 megawatt, 2.7 megawatt hour battery energy storage system would be located within Judd Wire's 3.1 acres Industrial Zoning District. The proposed system would be located on the existing impervious paved lot near the employee entrance. An 8-foot-tall chain link fence on all sides and bollards would protect the system from vehicular traffic. The interconnection from the battery storage system to the building will be underground through the parking lot area. The total area within the fence is approximately just over 2,000 square feet. The fenced area has no interruption to emergency service vehicles.

The Planner asks about the bollards. Costello responds 5 feet on center along Sandy Lane, four along the northern corner, and then 2 along the southern corner. There is a basin network within the parking lot

that drains into a retention basin on site which directs stormwater to the southeast. 9-10 spots will be eliminated, but no ADA parking will be removed. The location was selected based on the electrical room in the Judd Wire facility.

The Planner asks about emergency precautions. Costello located the hydrants for the group. There is no proposed lighting. Signage (high voltage/no trespassing/emergency phone number) is required. Costello does not anticipate any additional noise. An emergency response plan will be created with the local fire department. Judd Wire already has an emergency response plan, which will be updated to include the battery storage unit.

The battery will be charged at night, and electricity dispatched during peak times.

Ron Sicard asks about plowing. Costello responds that the proposed site is behind the frontage of the grass median. The Planner asks about the curbing on Sandy Lane. Fernando responds "asphalt." The Planner wonders if a granite curb would be better than asphalt.

Sam Guerin asks about the size difference between solar field battery storage and this proposal. (It's about the same.)

The Planner asks about the operation, maintenance, and decommission plan. The system is operated remotely and continuously. Peak Power will fix most problems remotely. There will be regular checks, quarterly inspections, annual inspections. Decommissioning is part of the performance analysis at the end of the contract.

A stormwater report was submitted. (no change to stormwater)

Jeff Singleton asks where the electricity comes from? From the he grid? Scott Mc Brayne responds "yes" they are forecasting what Judd Wire is going to use the next day....and if there is a stress on the grid Judd Wire can reduce their usage. Scott responds "yes."

Singleton has safety concerns for the employees, as the proposed site is next to the entrance to the building. Singleton asks about the maximum size of battery storage. The Planner reads from the bylaws "For the purpose. It says, the last line of the definition "for the purpose of this bylaw, the rating of the facility shall exceed 80 kilowatt per hour. Dmytro Gladyshevskyi (Peak Power) informs the group that the unit has a built-in fire suppressant system, and an emergency plan will be determined with the Turners Falls Fire Department and Montague Police. Final approval will come from the Montague Building Inspector. The Planner comments that emergency training for the Fire District (paid for by the applicant) could be added to the order of condition.

David Jensen asks about the life cycle of the unit. What is the contract length with Judd Wire? Gladyshevskyi answers 15 years for both questions- with an expectation to continue. There is no expiration of the Special Permit. Jensen comments that after 15 years there should be a review considering advances in technology. The Planner discusses possible conditions for review by the Planning Board regarding changes of equipment.

The Planners ask about the timeline for construction, building permits and other scheduling information.

Sage Winter asks if there is a minimum landscaping buffer. She thinks the chain link fence within 2 feet of the road is oppressive. Costello responds that there are no residential abutters and the area is

Industrial. The grass around the fence can be maintained with a weedwhacker.

David Jensen asks about heat buildup is a concern. Shade trees might be an advantage to safety and efficiency.

Bob Obear asks why is so close to the road. What's the advantage? Costello responds that the location is close to the electrical room and maintains space for an emergency aerial lift truck to operate. The Judd Wire parking lot is big enough to accommodate employees; losing these parking spots for the energy storage unit is not an issue. Bob Obear asks "Couldn't the parking area be reconfigured, even just restriped, to shift some of the parking, to enable to accommodate a correct setback?" Costello responds "The answer is, no ...if you picked up that battery system and shifted it to the east, closer to the building, your drive lane is to the west of the building, and there's not enough access for a drive lane for a fire truck and parking to allow the drive through-we would have to create a turnaround." Training templates were done in association with the project.

George Cooke asks "Is there a code of how close that can be to a building?" McBrayne answers it depends on the wall, maintenance and fire suppression requirements.

The Planner reads comments from the Heath Director, Ryan Paxton. He has concerns about the personal health of the firefighters responsible for suppressing a fire, how this site might interact with the dump in the event of a fire, and vehicle collisions resulting in fire. The letter is entered into the records. The Turners Falls Fire Department find the location acceptable and request updates. Gladyshevskyi reiterates that the unit has a built-in suppression system, which prevents fire from spreading. Chemicals spread through runoff would be contained. Costello continues that the landfill currently has a solar battery storage unit, which is monitored by the DEP and common on capped landfills in Massachusetts. This system is more than 300 feet away from the landfill. Peak Power reiterates that the proposed location is the best option taking everything into consideration.

Bob Obear thinks that there is significant oversight from the DEP, State, and the power companies..." it's well covered."

Sage Winter wishes the chain link fence wasn't in the landscaping. The Planner sees Judd Wire as a "hot spot" so maybe trees on the other side of the road.

*MOTION by Bob Obear to CLOSE the public hearing and to APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS **SP/SPR 2025-02** – PowerBESSCo 2, LLC - Request a Special Permit with Site Plan Review approval to construct a 0.990 MWAC / 2.7 MWh Battery Energy Storage System (BESS); and to request a reduction of the minimum front yard setback requirement from 25 feet to 5 feet on Sandy Lane, under Sections 5.5.3, 8.9.5, 9.1, and 9.2 of the Zoning Bylaw, at Judd Wire Inc. property located at 124 Turnpike Road (Parcel #14-0-162), Industrial Zoning District (ID). Seconded by. VOTE Ron Sicard (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE), Bob Obear (AYE), George Cooke (AYE), Sage Winter (AYE) MOTION PASSES (5-0) 7:30pm.*

DISCUSSION ITEMS: Review and discuss draft Accessory Dwelling Unit regulations with possible vote to refer to the Selectboard

The Planner emailed the latest revised draft of the Montague ADU bylaws, which were based on the State model bylaws. The draft includes general requirements for all ADUs, clarifying definitions, lighting and parking requirements. Local ADUs require permits. ADUs under 900 square feet are "by right" do not require special permits. One parking spot per ADU unit is required. The Planner will email

the AG the Montague draft for initial review. KP Law will also inform the document. The Planning Board will update the draft after the Attorney General and KP Law make comments.

Ron Sicard will sign on behalf of the Planning Board.

TOPICS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED WITHIN 48 HOURS PRIOR TO MEETING:

MOTION to ADOURN by R. Sicard to ADJOURN. Seconded by Bob Obear. VOTE: Bob Obear (AYE), Ron Sicard (AYE), George Cooke (AYE), Sam Guerin (AYE), Sage Winter (AYE). (5-0) MEETING ADJURNED. 7:40pm