

# Planning Board – Town of Spencer

## *Minutes*

Regular Planning Board Meeting  
Tuesday, June 19, 2012 at 7:00 PM  
McCourt Social Hall  
Memorial Town Hall



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The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM.

**Planning Board Members Present:** Mary Stolarczyk, Ralph DiChiara, James Whalen and Robert Ceppi (note Robert Ceppi was Chair)

**Planning Board Members Absent:** Shirley Shiver Chair, and Jonathan Viner, Associate Member

**Staff present:** Michelle Buck, Town Planner and Brynn Johnson, ODIS Clerk

### 1. New Business:

**A. 7:00 pm Discussion** - Central Mass Regional Planning Commission - CMRPC is embarking on a collaborative effort identify regional and local priorities for growth, development, and land preservation, as well as worker housing opportunities, transportation and other infrastructure investments in 13 Central Mass Communities. Present representing Central Mass Regional Planning Commission is regional planner Trish Settles.

Ms. Settles explains she is interested in hearing the Board's ideas and opinions regarding areas in Spencer that should be invested in. She has a list of 7 different possible preservation and development areas and 2 significant infrastructure update project areas. She wants the Boards input on these 9 areas.

1. **Route 49 and Route 9** industrial PDA priority development area number one. This area includes both industrial and commercial zones and has vacant land. It would be a good area for future business growth and development.

2. **Route 9 East of Paxton Road to Leicester line.** Mr. Ceppi points out most the south side of this area includes the Sibley-Warner Farm area which is already under preservation. Ms. Settles refines number 2 to focus on the North-side of Route 9, East of Paxton Road.

3. **Spencer Town Center** this is an area with many mixed use buildings that would benefit from modernizing and updating. Mr. Whalen feels this is a top priority area. If there isn't a large amount of funds for a full scale revitalization project, maybe just fresh paint to brighten the area up would help.

4. **West of Town Center North of Route 9**, this is a mix of commercial and residential use so it would be good for small start up business development. Mr. Ceppi says Pleasant Street/Rt. 31, was intended for and is more likely for small businesses such as doctor/professional offices.

5. **Wilson Farm**, this is an area with potential for land preservation. The land owner Mr. Wilson explains he is in the application process now to place 126 acres of the 169 acre farm under an APR. Ms. Settles asks should Wilson Farm be taken off this list since Mr. Wilson is already in the process of preserving the land. Mr. Wilson and Ms. Buck feel it should stay on the list for now until decisions on both the solar farm and the APR have been made.

6. **Wire Village and Turkey Brook**, this is a potential area for preservation.

7. **St. Joseph's Abbey**, this is an area for preservation and development, preservation of the Abbey and development of the brewery. Ms. Buck explains the Abbey is very interested in protecting the vast majority of their land holdings. The development of the brewery will help sustain the Abbey over time.

8. **Main Street transportation improvements**, this is an area that would benefit from transportation infrastructure updates.

9. **Sewerage system improvements**, increasing the sewer capacity would help foster and promote sustainable development.

Ms. Settles asks if anyone has an idea that should be added to this list. There are no additional ideas added to the list at this time.

**B. 7:15 pm Public Hearing – Major Site Plan Review**, Cistercian Abbey of Spencer, Inc (owner and applicant), the Spencer Brewery, LLC (tenant and applicant), 167 North Spencer Road, Spencer. This site plan application is a modification of a previously approved Trappist Brewery and bottling facility on the site. The modification is to change the location of the retention basin and to change roadway configuration. The property is located within the Rural Residential Zoning District. Present representing the applicant are Fr. Isaac Keeley, Bill Doyle (Doyle Engineering).

Mr. Ceppi opens the hearing.

Mr. Doyle explains the site design has been revised from the previously approved plan based on a more advanced building design and the desire for the site and landscaping to compliment the rest of the Abbey. The building has been changed from 30,000 sq. ft. to 40,000 sq. ft. this size building is larger but still under the size the 43,000 sq. ft. approved by the ZBA. The location of the retention basin and the configuration of the roadways have also been changed. The road will be curved and winding to make it more like a country road. The retention basin has been relocated from the southside of the building to the eastside of the building. The basin is currently

proposed as a wet basin, creating a permanent pond. The pond is a feature the Abbey wanted showcased. The parking maybe moved to the sides of the building so the main windows will have a view of the woods rather than the parking lot. The amount of parking spaces has not been changed but some of the parking spaces maybe left as grass. He will discuss this with Graves Engineering.

Mr. Ceppi asks if they have responded to the peer review comments from Graves Engineering. Mr. Doyle says he hasn't had time to make a written response to the letter but has reviewed all the comments and will address them. He will provide a response to the Board as soon as it's been completed. The Board discusses this and agrees a decision cannot be made until they have responded to the peer review and a revised plan has been submitted.

Ms. Buck says this site plan revision was reviewed at the last Technical Review Committee meeting and all other department heads had no concerns, the only area of substance is addressing the stormwater issues. Mr. Doyle says they are working to clear up any stormwater concerns.

Mr. Doyle says he understands that this hearing will have to be continued however the contractor is eager to get started. Can they start grading and clearing of trees in accordance with the previously approved plan? They are not looking to do any building just some site prep work while waiting for the final vote and building permits.

Mr. DiChiara feels if it's a matter of a vote the Board should do all they can to support the Abbey.

Mr. Ceppi asks if they have approval from the Conservation Commission. Mr. Doyle says they did not need the Conservation Commission to approve this plan there are no conservation issues.

Mr. Ceppi asks if there are any comments for the public.

Warren Bock representing the Treasure Valley Trustees says they support the Abbey and all the work they do, as an abutter they will continue to support the Abbey.

Ms. Buck says they can work from the old plan that was previously approved, but the Board should vote on it.

**MOTION:** Mr. DiChiara makes a motion to allow site work such as trees clearing and grading to start at the Spencer Brewery site. Mr. Whalen seconds the motion.

**VOTE:** is (3-0 in favor) Due to a conflict of interest Robert Ceppi recused himself from vote.

**MOTION:** Mr. Whalen makes a motion to continue this hearing to the next meeting on July 17, 2012. Mr. Stolarczyk seconds the motion.

**VOTE:** is (3-0 in favor)

## 2. Old Business:

**A. Continued Public Hearing – Major Site Plan Review, Barrego Solar Systems, Inc.** (applicant), Carl Wilson (owner). Project Location: 115 Wilson Street. The site Plan review application is for the construction of a large-scale ground mounted solar facility. The property is located within the Rural Residential Zoning District. Present representing Barrego Solar are Roy Smith (Vice President of RJ O’Connell & Associates, Inc.), Scott Lacy of (Prince Lobel), Carl Wilson (land owner), Charles Barbanti (Borrego Solar, Project Manager) and Jared Connell (Sr. Project Developer).

Ms. Buck gives an update on the progress with other Boards. The ZBA continued their public hearing to 6/26/2012 to allow time for a site visit to the abutting properties on Paxton Road to view existing vegetation along the property line. The Conservation Commission continued their public hearing to 7/11/2012 so that plans would reflect any potential changes made by the Planning Board.

Mr. Lacy goes over the updates made to the plan. They have moved the construction access road from Paxton Road to Wilson Street to ease abutter concern of construction vehicle noise. They have submitted a revised plan to reflect this change. Also they will be adding a noise screening fence around inverter number 2 only. This is a three sided solid metal fence that helps buffer sound. It will be around inverter number 2 because this inverter is closest to abutters and cannot be moved.

Mr. Connell explains they did look into moving this inverter further away from abutter but moving it would cause a voltage drop and would not significantly affect the noise level.

Mr. Ceppi asks how tall and what color is the fence. The fence will be about 10 ft high and the color hasn’t been decided yet.

Mr. Connell gives an update on the ZBA’s visit to abutter properties on Paxton Road. At the site visit with the ZBA the abutters had concerns with the views and narrow buffer. Mr. Connell shows photos from the Hook property on Paxton Road it shows the dense vegetation 25 ft. of which is on Mr. Hook’s property and the 25ft. that would be left untouched on the Wilson side leaving about a 50 ft natural vegetation buffer.

Mr. Ceppi asks about the temporary access road off Wilson Street. There seems to be a curve in the road will cars have enough time and room to stop for construction vehicles moving in and out of the access road. Ms. Smith says there is about 200 ft. from the access road to the curve in the road. People should have no problem stopping for construction vehicles.

Mr. Whalen asks if they have a plan for snow removal. Mr. Smith says they will most likely leave snow where it falls. Once built, they will only be visiting the site 2-4 times a year so the road should not need to be plowed.

Mr. Whalen asks if they will be doing additional soil testing. Mr. Smith says they have already done one test pit for each detention basin. In the review letter from Graves they recommended supplemental soil testing to confirm the original test results. If it varies they will raise the bottom of the basin. If it’s necessary to reconfigure the basins this may be a condition of approval. The

Board adds this as a condition. Prior to the issuance of the building permit, the Applicant shall test the soil at the southern ends of Detention Basins #1 and #2 to confirm the design assumptions made that the bottom of the proposed dry detention basins do not intercept groundwater. If the detention basins intercept groundwater, the basin design shall be modified to raise the level of the detention basin. Revised design plans and test results shall be submitted to the Town of Spencer.

Mr. Ceppi asks if anyone from the public has questions. There are no questions from the public, no abutters are present.

Mr. Ceppi asks who witnesses the soil testing. Mr. Smith says a certified Massachusetts soil evaluator will witness the testing.

Mr. Whalen asks about condition 19 regarding warning signage, how far apart should warning signs be. After some discussion the Board decides they want signs warning of voltage every one hundred feet (100 ft).

**MOTION:** Mr. Whalen makes a motion to approve the certificate of decision of the site plan with conditions, traffic waiver and stormwater permit. Ms. Stolarczyk seconds the motion.

**VOTE:** is 4-0 in favor

## **2. Approval of Minutes:** from May 22, 2012.

**MOTION:** Mr. DiChiara makes a motion to approve the minutes for May 22, 2012. Ms. Stolarczyk seconds the motion. **VOTE:** is 4-0 in favor.

## **3. Town Planner Report:**

Mr. Buck explains the Open Space Plan has been approved. For the next meeting Candle Wood Estates has paved the road and will be seeking road acceptance from the town. The other project for next month's meeting will be Deer Run phase II.

## **5. Adjournment:**

**MOTION:** With no further discussion Mr. Ceppi makes a motion to adjourn. Mr. Whalen seconds the motion. **VOTE:** is 4-0 in favor.

**Submitted by:** Brynn Johnson, ODIS Clerk

**Approved by the Planning Board on:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **List of Documents used on June 19, 2012**

### Items sent to Planning Board prior to Meeting:

- CMRPC Flyer
- Agenda
- Spencer Brewery plans revised May 15, 2012
- Spencer Brewery site plan review from Graves Engineering dated June 14, 2012
- 115 Wilson St. Site Plan review letter from Graves Engineering dated June 7, 2012
- Department of Energy study regarding EMF's dated November 12, 2009
- SMA noise study dated May 5, 2012
- 115 Wilson St plans revised June 6, 2012
- Memo to Planning Board from Michelle Buck, Town Planner dated June 14, 2012
- Draft Decision Barrego Soar

### Items Submitted at Meeting:

- Equipment pad fencing handout
- Photo of Mr. and Mrs. Hooks back yard
- Colorado Spruce tree handout