



# Zoning Board of Appeals – Town of Spencer

## *Minutes*

Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting  
**Tuesday, April 9, 2013 at 7:15 PM**  
McCourt Social Hall  
Memorial Town Hall

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The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m.

Zoning Board Members Present: Dee Kresco, Albert Drexler, Steven Rafer.

Zoning Board Member Absent: Chair Allan Collette

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

Mr. Collette opens the meeting at 7:15pm

**Special Permit**- Owner: Michael Ballou. Applicant: Carisbrooke Holdings LLC. Project Location: 22 Treadwell Drive. The applicant is requesting Special Permit to install a 6.0 M.W ground mounted Solar Farm. Jason Dubois and Mike Loin of Bertin Engineering are present to represent this project.

Mr. Drexler read the application and letter.

Mr. Loin explains the name of the applicant has changed. It was Carisbrooke Holdings when they filed this application but have since changed their name to Old Wardour Holdings LLC. This is going to be a 6 MW solar facility 2.8 MW will be on the Spencer side and 3.2 MW on the East Brookfield side. In East Brookfield to the west of this project there is a previously-approved solar facility on the old Treadwell gravel pit.

This site is the last property on Treadwell Drive. Currently there are portions of woods, fields and gravel driveways. There is also a slaughter house/butcher shop located on the property with multiple small storage buildings such as barns and sheds. They had New England Environmental locate the wetlands and they are working with Conservation. They also have a stormwater drainage plan to limit run off onto abutter's properties. The panels will face south and be on a racking system.

There is only one abutter's home at the end of Treadwell Drive that will have a view of the panels so they may build a 10 foot earthen berm with some vegetation on the top so the facility won't be visible to this abutter. This area at the end of Treadwell Drive is the only area that

would be visible; all other sides are abutting woods. The only thing the public will be able to see is a gate at the end of Treadwell drive.

There will be some traffic during the construction, after construction this site will be visited only for maintenance. Under the panels they will plant a seed mix that was developed specially for solar farms. The fence will be 6 inches off the ground so small animals can pass.

Ms. Kresco asks what the slope of the land is when you are looking at it from the end of Treadwell Drive. Mr. Loin says its flat then there is a dip before it rises up where the slaughter house is.

Mr. Drexler asks other than the house at the end of Treadwell, where is the next closest house? Mr. Loin says there is a house on the other side of Treadwell but it's abandoned and has a caved-in roof.

Mr. Rafer asks about noise. Mr. Loin says that after construction there will only be a pickup truck about once a week. There will be closed-circuit cameras to monitor the site. In the summer a washing crew may come and clean the panels with a power washer. He states that after the panels are installed there is very little required or needed maintenance.

Mr. Drexler asks where the transformers are located. Mr. Loin points them out on the plan; they are close to the middle of the arrays.

Mr. Drexler asks how wide the buffer is on the side that is close to homes. Mr. Loin says it's about 33 feet from the property line to the closest array and there are trees along the property line. Some of the trees belong to abutters and some are on their side.

Mr. Drexler asks if the grass will need to be cut. Mr. Loin says the solar farm seed mix they are using grows to about 16 inches they are unsure if it will need to be cut. If it does need to be cut it would just be once a year. They may need to use an herbicide to keep trees from growing.

Mr. Drexler asks if the transformers can be moved as far as possible from abutters. Mr. Loin says yes they could move them if they need to. If they move the transformers away from Treadwell Drive that will make it over 200 ft from abutters.

Mr. Rafer asks where is power is going. Mr. Loin says the power from this site will go directly to National Grid's substation and into a highline. How it works is that Old Wardour Holdings (owner of this solar array) will sell power, its energy credits, to a large company or municipality. Mr. Rafer says this is really only an alternative energy for the power company. Mr. Loin says it is an alternative/green energy tax credit for the company that buys the energy credits. This is a way for a big company to get alternative/green energy credits even if they don't have the space to build a solar facility on their own property.

Ms. Buck asks about the fence. Mr. Loin says it will be 6 feet high, black vinyl-coated chain-link. The gate will match. There will be no barbed wire.

Mr. Drexler asks other than the transformers will there be any other structures on site. Mr. Loin says no not on the Spencer side.

Ms. Kresco opens the hearing to questions from the public.

Cliff Huston of 6 Cornfield Road asks if they really think a 6 ft fence will keep deer out. Mr. Loin says the fence will have a 6 inch gap at the bottom for small animals therefore making the fence 6.5 feet. He knows deer can jump that high but an 8 foot fence will just be too high and look institutional.

Mr. Drexler asks if this company has bought the land yet. Mr. Loin says they are waiting for all the approvals to go through, but they do own land on the East Brookfield side.

Mr. Drexler asks how they stand with the other Boards in both Spencer and East Brookfield. Mr. Loin says they haven't gone in front of other Boards yet but the meetings are coming up. Graves Engineering is doing the peer review for both towns.

Ms. Kresco asks the Board if they would like to view the site. The Board discusses and would like to walk the site. They ask the property owner Michael Ballou for permission. Mr. Ballou agrees. The Board members will go on their own not as a group.

**MOTION:** Mr. Drexler makes a motion to continue this meeting to Monday May 13, 2013 at 7:15pm pending a site visit. Mr. Rafer seconds the motion.

**VOTE:** 3-0 in favor

**Adjournment:** Mr. Rafer makes a motion to adjourn. Mr. Drexler seconds the motion. Vote is 3-0 in favor. With no further discussion the meeting is adjourned at 7:55pm

Submitted By: Brynn Johnson, ODIS Junior Clerk

Approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals on May 21, 2013

**List of Documents used on April 9, 2013:**

Items mailed to ZBA members prior to meeting:

- Agenda
- Memo from Michelle Buck, Town Planner dated 4/9/2013
- Application and plans for 22 Treadwell Drive

Items submitted to ZBA members at the meeting

- Overview map of 22 Treadwell Drive