



Town of Newfield Planning Board

Meeting Minutes
November 4, 2020

Opening

The regular meeting of the Town of Newfield Planning Board was called to order by Chairman Leo Tidd at 7:00 PM. The meeting was held virtually via ZOOM.

Present

Planning Board: Chairman Leo Tidd, Vice Chairman Jacob Marnell, Randy Brown, Brenda Lapp, Jim Haustein; Town Board: Heather McCarty; Resident and Newfield Representative to Tompkins County Environmental Management Council: Michelle Henry; Resident: Garrett Janda; Nixon Peabody (Attorney for Verizon Wireless Monopole Project): Robert Burgdorf; C&S Engineering (Engineering Firm for Verizon Wireless Monopole Project): Brett Morgan.

Privilege of the Floor

No items of discussion.

Approval of Minutes

The October 7, 2020 Minutes were reviewed and approved.

Open Issues

Verizon Wireless “Millard Hill” Monopole Project

- To remediate capacity limitations of existing wireless telephone service infrastructure at a location denoted as the “Millard South” site, Verizon Wireless is proposing a 155 foot high monopole (plus four foot antenna) and additional site improvements to a .25 acre portion of tax parcel 4-1.23.22, to be leased from Thomas Brown. Currently, capacity is being exceeded in neighboring cells and Verizon will split an existing cell to handle some of the traffic.
- Though Verizon is using the name “Millard Hill” in referring to this project, the actual proposed monopole will be on the east side of West Danby Road.
- The monopole design has been selected for this site rather than a larger, less aesthetic lattice structure. As the structure is under 200 feet in height, it will not require FAA lighting or striping.
- The facility will be enclosed with a chain link fence; a permanent gravel access road will be constructed from Danby Road to the monopole. Though some removal of existing trees is required, remaining trees between the monopole and road will obstruct the view of the lower portion of the tower.



- Project start to cell tower activation is estimated at two months. The path for access easement and a 75 x 75-foot pad will be constructed. Soil core samples will be made to design the concrete foundation. The first section of the monopole will be bolted to the foundation, the second will be sleeved over. A crane will be used for the actual monopole installation and completion time for this task is estimated at a half day or less. Though some trees will be removed, remaining trees should shield the view of the lower portion of the monopole from West Danby Road.
- Michelle Henry noted some concerns regarding the proposal monopole installation: nearby natural areas and wetlands, removal of trees, gravel access road not following the lay of the land (may impact drainage), endangered species within the monopole “fall zone.”
- Anticipation of Verizon is that the project will commence as soon as possible.
- A motion was made by Leo Tidd, seconded by Jim Haustein and agreed to unanimously by the Planning Board that contingent upon the applicant providing the requested clarifications related to environmental issues, the site plan review application is deemed complete. The applicant requested the Planning Board to provide the environmental-related comments in writing and this was done via a letter on November 13, 2020.
- ACTION ITEM: Leo Tidd and Jim Haustein will prepare the General Municipal Law (GML) 239 Planning and Zoning Action Referral Form to be submitted to Tompkins County (completed subsequent to the meeting on November 6).
- The Town Board will need to decide if a legal requirement needs to be made at this time for future tower removal; some municipalities do require a bond (generally in the range of \$45,000).

TJA Energy Solar Farm Project Update

- TJA Energy is tentatively planning to attend the December 2020 meeting of the Newfield Planning Board to discuss their proposed project for a solar farm on 1246 Elmira Road. The current plan is for a solar farm of approximately 25 acres supplying 5 megawatts of power. Copies of applicable Town ordinances and required forms have been forward to TJA Energy.
- Jim Haustein viewed a previously recorded webinar from the University of Buffalo 2020 Learning Series entitled “How do I develop a good solar project in my community?” By 2025, New York State hopes to have 6000 megawatts of solar power installed and NYSERDA (New York State Energy Research & Development Authority) is a resource for communities to begin looking into permitting, local solar laws, various considerations, etc. Brenda Lapp recently provided a news article to Planning Board members regarding a 1000 to 1300-acre solar farm in the Lansing/Groton area.



- Given that TJA Energy is proposing an additional solar farm in the Millard Hill area where there are existing solar farms and another is under construction, the potential exists for more and larger solar installations within Newfield. Though Newfield does have a solar law (Local Law 4 of 2017: “Large Scale Solar Energy Law”), does this law cover all the bases for major solar development within Newfield? Also, what could Newfield anticipate as a possible maximum amount of acreage for solar farm development? **ACTION ITEM:** Jim Haustein, with assistance from Randy Brown, will investigate upper limits to solar farm installation within Newfield based on current electrical substation and transmission line capacity.

Burdge Hill/Millard Hill Solar Project

- The Planning Board is actively monitoring work on the Millard Hill/Burdge Hill Solar project. Bi-weekly reports are being provided to the Planning Board for information and review.

Newfield Hamlet Revitalization Plan (NEWHARP)

Cornell Design Connect

The Cornell College of Architecture, Art & Planning - Design Connect Program has elected to reduce the total number of Fall 2020 projects. Previously, the Design Connect Program advised the Planning Board that the proposed project for Newfield would be postponed. The Planning Board has received correspondence from the Design Connect Program indicating that Newfield is currently on the list of projects planned for Spring 2021.

The Planning Board previously agreed that they would begin preliminary work on the project.

Hamlet Revitalization Thoughts

Suggested first steps for NEWHARP which have been summarized in a working document and salient points from the Cornell Design Connect application have been added. To help facilitate proposed Spring 2021 work, the Planning Board agreed to begin looking at project stakeholders. **ACTION ITEM:** Jim Haustein, with assistance from Randy Brown, will begin to compile a list of NEWHARP stakeholders with emphasis on property owners within the draft proposed section of Main Street that will be the focus of this project.

New Business

Site Plan Reviews

Except for the Site Plan for Verizon’s proposed wireless telecommunications monopole, no new Site Plan Reviews have been received or are pending.



Review of Building Permits

The Planning Board had no concerns or comments on any of the other Building Permits issued during October 2020.

Miscellaneous

Newfield Climate Smart Committee

Leo Tidd is representing the Planning Board on the Newfield Climate Smart Committee. The Committee has had their second meeting; Kitty Gifford will act as coordinator for the Committee.

Training Reminder

Planning Board members were reminded of their annual requirement for four hours of training. Documentation regarding training taken should be forwarded to Jim Haustein.

Agenda for Next Meeting

- Verizon Wireless Millard Hill Project
- TJA Solar Energy Farm Project
- Newfield Hamlet Revitalization Plan (NEWHARP)
- Review of Site Plan and Subdivision Review Applications Received
- Review of Building Permits
- Miscellaneous

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Leo Tidd and seconded by Randy Brown. The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Leo Tidd at 8:29 PM. The next general meeting of the Newfield Planning Board will be at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, December 2, 2020. Venue (via ZOOM or at the Town Hall) to be determined.

Submitted by Jim Haustein