

**WESTMORELAND PLANNING BOARD**  
**March 19, 2018**

**Call to Order, Seating Members**

Present: Lauren Bressett, Bruce Smith, Tim Thompson, Jim Starkey, Steve Houle, Alison Fissette -Alt, Elaine Moore-Alt, Frank Reeder - Selectmen's Rep.

Excused: Mark Hayward. Alt. Alison Fissette sat in for Mark Hayward.

**Attendees:** David Wirth and Larry Siegel

**Review of Minutes:** Tim Thompson moved to approve the minutes with the following changes:

Paragraph two - line 5 - *change of to off. line 7 change questions to questioned.*

Paragraph three - line 3 delete the word to

Paragraph three - line 5 change removed to remove

All in favor, so voted.

**Old Business:** Lauren informed the Board all ordinances were approved except the Solar Ordinance.

Lauren invited David Wirth to speak regarding his concerns. He asked if a building permit was needed to install solar panels and stated that Eversource will not allow solar to be connected until a Building Permit has been signed off. Larry Muchmore, building inspector for Westmoreland, does not want to sign off on a solar structure unless a licensed Electrician also signs off. Lauren noted that without voted in ordinances, the Planning Board has no authority to act on this and that all permits other than Building Permits are under the authority of the Selectmen or a designated authority. More dialogue with the Board of Selectmen is needed regarding this process and meeting Eversource requirements. Bruce Smith stated whoever installs solar should have a licensed electrician sign off even if it means the owner of property needs to hire a qualified electrician to do so. Frank Reeder agreed to inform the Selectmen about this issue.

Mr. Wirth was asked his thoughts on a reasonable size for residential use. He feels it should be 10 to 15 kWh. Eversource requires a review and approval by them for anything above 10 kwh. Over 30 kwh would need infrastructure not available in most of the town. In discussing size Lauren noted that one way to address those wishing larger size could be to allow it by special exception from the Zoning Board.

Regarding screening, Mr. Wirth noted that with the varying contours of Westmoreland it would be difficult to address this. It would be almost impossible to screen from an abutter that is located at a higher elevation from the installation.

Mr. Wirth also brought up the issue of tiny houses in Westmoreland. He noted that there seemed to be two places in the ordinances that might apply but seem contradictory. The Board agrees tiny houses need to be clearly defined and other possible regulations be considered.

Mr. Wirth also made the suggestion regarding the bridge on River Road near the County Farm that needs to be repaired. His suggestion was to reroute River Road to pass over the cornfield on

Partridge Brook Road and come out on the north side of the brook, thereby eliminating the bridge. It was noted that this had been suggested by a former Road Agent years ago but was voted down. He also noted that it would be desirable to have river access across county property, perhaps where the eliminated bridge was. It was noted that this was considered a few years back. That the county was considering it but abutters were strongly opposed. Access cannot be any further south due to distance limitations from existing access – the West Chesterfield landing is just over 2 miles south so Westmoreland access would need to be either at the Partridge Brook location or further north.

Larry Siegel wished to inform the Board he would like to become a Board member if ever there is an opening. He stated he is very interested in town affairs and feels he would like this position. Lauren stated that this would be shared with the Selectmen, who do the appointments.

Mr. Siegel also stated he would like to set up an Ad-Hoc Committee to gather information from town residents about how they feel about solar, and Westmoreland's rural character and perhaps other items as time goes on. Lauren noted the Board of Selectmen must make the decision if an Ad-Hoc Committee can be formed. If the Selectmen approve, the Planning Board should come up with a formal statement of focus for the committee.

Bruce Smith made a *Motion to request the Board of Selectmen authorize the Planning Board to establish an Ad-Hoc Committee to research the town residents' views on alternative energy.* Seconded by Jim Starkey. All in favor, motion passed.

#### **New Business:**

Alison Fissette made a motion to nominate Lauren Bressett as Chairperson and Bruce Smith as Vice-Chair. Seconded by Bruce Smith. All in favor, motion passed. Steve Houle and Jim Starkey's terms are up for reapproval for a 3 year term and the board would like them to continue. They were asked to let the Town Administrator know their intentions.

Homework for the Board is to review the pending ordinance items and research the definition and installation of "Tiny Houses". Lauren will send out the list of ordinances we previously marked for review.

New Selectman Frank Reeder is taking over the position on the Board previously held by Clay Stalker. Mr. Reeder discussed the issue of how townspeople are being informed of what is happening in their town. At this time the Selectmen's Office sends out information regarding meeting dates and some minutes of various boards. Mr. Reeder stated he would like to see other ways of communicating also.

Industrial Park: A new business has gone into the park. Mr. Wirth signed the paperwork as Zoning Administrator. Jo Ann LaBarre noted she and the fire department have concerns regarding the town being informed of what businesses were starting in town as there could be issues that require town response to and asked why the Planning Board wasn't involved in a review. Lauren noted that it was the Zoning Administrator that would direct the need for a site plan or Zoning review, that even if a site plan was not needed by ordinance, all businesses in the CI zone do require a special exception. Some discussion ensued. Lauren noted that this could be

addressed by a business permit process set up by the Selectmen, agreed to review the information previously received from the Local Government Center on this, to get further information if necessary and pass it on to the Selectmen.

Motion to Adjourn was made by Steve Houle, seconded by Jim Starkey. Meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Moore - Clerk

DRAFT