

Buckland, MA Planning Board Meeting Minutes

AFD
MBH
JG

May 10, 2023

Buckland Town Hall, 17 State St., Buckland

Planning Board Public Hearing

The Buckland Planning Board will meet on Wednesday, May 10 at 6:30, at Buckland Town Hall, to conduct a public hearing on the application PB 2023-03, Clarence and Jennifer West, for a **Site Plan Review** under Section 12 of the Buckland Zoning Bylaws, to site a **ground-mounted solar array** meeting required dimensions and setbacks, at **17 Sears Street**, Buckland, Map 6-1 Lot 12-1, in the Village Residential district.

Attendees

John Gould, co-chair
Michael Hoberman, co-chair
Andrea Donlon, member
Jon Wyman, member
Clarence West, 17 Sears St., applicant
Jennifer West, 17 Sears St., applicant
Walter Earle, 10 Sears St., public
Cheryl L. Dukes, 9 Sears St., public
Kim Klein, 5 Wellington St., public
John Ward, Greenfield Solar, installer
Claire Chang, Greenfield Solar, installer

- I. Co-chair John Gould opened the meeting at 6:30 pm, and thus opened the Public Hearing:
 1. Read the legal notice for the Site Plan Review for a ground-mounted solar array at 17 Sears St., Buckland
 2. Introduced the applicants Jennifer and Clarence West
 3. Noted the Site Plan Review would be following the criteria as outlined in Section XII, which is required prior to a building permit being issued
 4. Noted the application had been appropriately filed with the Town Clerk
 5. Noted the legal notice had been duly published in the *Greenfield Recorder*, posted at Town Hall, and abutters had been notified
- II. The Planning Board walked through Section XII, f) Required Contents of a Site Plan

Items 1 - 3, 5. On the project plan, co-chair Gould requested the applicant append a note directly on the survey to the effect "this survey is being used for the purpose of a ground-mounted solar application." Applicant made the change.

Item 4. Co-chair Gould noted the maps submitted using the Buckland tax maps online tool sufficiently addressed the ownership of those within 300' of the property line.

Item 6. The applicant and Planning Board members noted there are several properties within 300' of the property line which are not in residential use: town-owned property, railroad, old fire station, and vacant/parking lot.

Item 7. New information: distance from the property line to the array is 20'.

Item 8. The Buckland Conservation Commission made a site visit, and sent an email to the Planning Board expressing no concerns about the application. This information was filed with FRCOG, with no additional comments from the Conservation Commission.

Items 9, 10, 11 - not required for this application

Item 12. There is no grading or landscaping anticipated by this project; however, a conversation between the Planning Board and abutting property owner Cheryl L. Dukes took place concerning the future stabilization of the embankment that will be behind the proposed array.

- Ms. Dukes offered that planning for the work is in a very preliminary stage:
 - the embankment is eroding, and needs to be stabilized
 - with an engineer, information is being gathered and costs estimated
 - the execution of any plan will be cost-dependent
 - there has not yet been any conversation with the applicant about a specific plan, although informal conversations have taken place over the past years.
- PB members expressed concern that the embankment, if not stabilized, could have an effect on the proposed array; and, should the array be built, access to address the condition of the embankment could be hindered.
- After discussion, it was concluded that the proposed array would not block access to the embankment for future work (as there are other access points available); and, given the location of the property line in relation to the slope and the array, there is no concern that a change in the embankment will affect the array.

Items 13 - 17. No changes/not applicable

Item 18. PB members noted a solar array presents a surface which creates run-off; the installers responded this was not an issue for an array of this size with plenty of drainable areas on the property.

Kim Klein asked what the overall size of the array is - the plans show 10'9" at the highest point, with the array itself 19' x 36'.

Items 19, 20. Ms. Klein asked how visible the array will be to neighbors. Installers noted views of the array from the road will be obscured by small structures already located on the property.

Item 21. No changes/not applicable

Item 22. PB asked if there were any trees located in a way that could fall and damage the array; both the applicant and the abutter replied there were none.

III. The Planning Board called for public comment and questions

Neighbors present at the hearing spoke in favor of the application. Ms. Dukes, an abutter, said she had no objection to the application. PB members noted and read correspondence received from members of the public, supportive of the application.

IV. Co-chair Gould called for any conditions to be included in the approval
None were offered.

V. Co-chair Gould moved that PB 2023-03, Application for Site Plan Review for a ground-mounted solar array at 17 Sears St., Buckland, Map 6-1 Lot 12-1, Jennifer and Clarence West applicants, be approved; co-chair Michael Hoberman seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, member Andrea Donlon, yes; co-chair John Gould, yes; co-chair Michael Hoberman, yes; member Jon Wyman, abstain.

VI. Co-chair Gould reviewed the timelines for writing a decision and submitting to the Town Clerk, as well as the appeal period

VII. Applicant initialed clarifications made to the narrative in the course of the hearing

VIII. PB members signed approval form

IX. Other Business

PB member recruitment update: there is a possibility of a new member joining the board this season, and another one at the end of the summer. A third individual has declined to be involved at this time.

Minutes of the April 27, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Member Wyman moved to approve the minutes as submitted; co-chair Hoberman seconded the motion; all

Buckland, MA Planning Board Meeting Minutes

voted in favor.

Next meeting will be June 8, 2023, 7:00 pm

- X. Co-chair Hoberman moved to adjourn the meeting; member Donlon seconded the motion; all voted in favor; meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm

Respectfully submitted, Alison Cornish, Boards Clerk

Documents Referenced

Application PB 2023-03