Town of Leyden, MA

Planning Board

Minutes of Meeting: 10/14/20

Attendees: Art Baker, Jim Brodeur, David Curtis, Warren Facey, Emily Yazwinski

Absent:

Call To Order: Chairman Brodeur called the meeting to order @ 7:05pm.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: Minutes of the last meeting held on 9/9/20 were passed out and read. Art made a motion to accept the minutes as read. Warren seconded. No discussion occurred. Motion passed 4-1 with Emily abstaining since she wasn’t yet on the Board.

Green Communities Program: Alyssa Larose, FRCOG planner (present) and Mark Rabinsky, Regional Coordinator (by phone) and Will (ICF) (by phone) were in attendance.

Criterion #5, they explained the Stretch Energy Code must be adopted at a Town Meeting by simple majority vote to qualify as well as a zoning bylaw change for zoning to meet Criteria 5. They also discussed base/prescriptive and performance paths indicating that Leyden would go the performance path. 284 of 351 MA municipalities have adopted Stretch Code and have not backed out. Leyden is the only Franklin County town that hasn’t adopted Stretch Code. Can add about $1,600-$3,000 to a new residential building. Can be offset by $1,500 through MassSave program and remaining cost is usually offset in 2 years through Eversource incentives and then lower utility bill leads to overall savings. For example, R-21 wall insulation required in new walls. House has to be built to air test which sometimes requires venting/fan for outside air exchange that runs 24/7 and can’t go in basement or attic – usually goes into living space. Builder works with Home Energy Rater before and during the building permit application. Home energy rating certificate is required. Log homes can not meet the Stretch Code typically without significant modifications/upgrades. Although there are significant upfront costs, the belief is that the payoff is only a short term due to significant savings in utility bills. You have to follow the stretch code regulations, or you will not get your permit or certificate of occupancy.

Criterion #2 is expedited permitting relating to solar zoning showing that the town would be able to permit a project within 1 year. Usually met with a letter from legal counsel explain that our process already meets that requirement.

Criterion #3 is energy use baseline and energy reduction plan. Energy use in Town owned Buildings, vehicles, streetlights, etc. have to be documented (oil, propane, gas, diesel) which Alyssa and FRCOG help through Mass Energy Insight. 20% reduction is the goal but is difficult to meet mainly from vehicles that typically don’t get replaced very often. Lighting and HVAC are much easier.

Criterion #1 is Solar Zoning. This Board previously voted at their 3/11/20 meeting to designate parcel #44.1, a 7.85 town owned parcel. The electrical service would have to be upgraded to 3-phase power. Only 3-phase currently known is Greenfield Road to Mid County to West Leyden Road. Minimum 250 kw DC (about an acre in size).

Criterion #5 is fuel efficient vehicle policy. Inventory of all town owned vehicles and understanding miles/gallons. Emergency response is exempt including DPW. There is alternative compliance if all vehicles are except. When purchasing new vehicle, you have to purchase fuel efficient vehicles with miles/gallon minimums as established by the program.

Designation Grant is awarded of around $125k once approved and must be spend on energy conservation efforts. Program gives initial disbursement of 25% of initial project. Then 50% and final 25% upon final inspection. There are restrictions on what it can be spent on. For example, a hybrid police vehicle qualifies for only $5k. Building weatherization (roof, windows, insulation, etc.) must be done before any HVAC work. After Designation Grant is spent, you can apply for yearly competitive grants up to $250k for other specific energy projects.

The Board discussed and showed some concern that they didn’t feel the benefits outweighed the additional costs of the program, especially when it came to log homes, and some were not in favor of the program, however some seemed to be in favor. Alyssa mentioned that she thought there may be exemptions in some cases and they would look into it.

107 Brattleboro Road, Elizabeth Tubegan – in attendance to discuss her renovations. Since the auto repair use (Bartons Garage) was abandoned over 2 years ago it reverts to residential zoning and a building permit. However, she needs a special permit from our Board to alter a non-conforming building on a non-conforming lot converting to a studio. A special permit was submitted by Elizabeth to the Board but it has not been stamped and accepted by the Town Clerk yet and fees have not been paid. Elizabeth will submit to Town Clerk and pay fees next week. Due to Veterans Day falling on the next scheduled meeting date, Art made a motion to schedule the next regular meeting of the Planning Board on Wednesday, 11/18/20 @ 7:00pm, seconded by Emily and a unanimous vote volowed. Art made another motion to schedule the public hearing for 107 Brattleboro Road on 11/18/20 @ 7:05pm, seconded by Emily and a unanimous vote followed.

Review Correspondence: City of Greenfield special permits 95 Lunt Drive, 87 Thayer Road, 18 Shattuck Street. Gruber & Trip Attorney intent to sell 2.2 acres estate of David DeLauretto also know as Adam Troy, 136 South County Road, 61B land so town has right of refusal on $115,000 offer. Colrain ZBA hearing for 3 variances, 87 Van Nuys Road. Greenfield public hearing for ZBA bylaws.

Other Business Not Reasonably anticipated: None

Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 @ 7:00pm @ the New Town Hall/old Pearl Rhodes School on Brattleboro Road.

Adjournment: A motion was made by David and seconded by Warren to adjourn at 9:05pm and a unanimous affirmative vote followed.

Respectively Submitted, Art Baker, Clerk