

Lyme Planning Board Minutes
3/10/2022

Board Members and Staff Present: John Stadler, Chair; Tim Cook, Vice Chair; Vicki Smith, Member; Eric Furstenberg, Rich Brown, Alternate; David Robbins, Planning and Zoning Administrator.

Board Members via Zoom: John Stadler, Chair

Board Members Absent: David Kahn, Select Board Representative; Rich Menge, Alternate.

Members of the Public Present: Mark Bolinger

Item 1: Acceptance of minutes from 2/24/2022

Vicki moved to approve the minutes with corrections from Tim.

Eric seconded the motion.

Tim called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 2: Solar Energy Zoning Amendment Discussions.

The Board continued working on an outline of regulations for Solar Energy Systems. The outline will be used to solicit input from residents.

For the purposes of the outline the Board settled on the following:

Total panel area will be measured at the drip edge of the installed panels
Panels installed vertically would only be measured by the thickness of the panel.

If the system is a tracking system, then the panel area will be 70% of the physical panel area.

Panels installed on an existing structure do not add to the total panel area.

Panel area must adhere to the footprint and lot coverage requirements for a lot.

Total panel area will be used to categorize systems.

Solar Energy Systems will be classified into two categories, small and large.

Small solar energy systems will have total panel area of not more than 2000 square feet.

Large solar energy systems will have not more than 26,000 square feet of total panel area.

Both small and large systems will have a maximum height restriction of 18’

The Board discussed where large systems would be appropriate, the consensus of the Board was that the Rural, Lyme Common, Lyme Center and the Commercial district were appropriate. East Lyme, the Mountain and Forest, Skiway and Holts Ledge districts were not. Several Board members expressed concern with the need to expand utilities lines and the visual impact the expansion.

John noted that the Board must strike a balance between the need for the clean energy produced by Solar Energy Systems and protecting the natural areas in Lyme that actually store carbon. The need for biodiverse ecologies and the protection of unfragmented forest must be considered as part of the equation and solution when determining where it is appropriate to locate Solar Energy Systems.

The Board discussed the Scenic Roads and concluded that lots served by a Scenic Road should also be excluded as the expansion of utility lines would contrary to the intent of Scenic Roads.

John suggested that the Board consider the criteria for conditional Use Permits for discussion at the March 24th, 2022. He proposed the following items for the Board’s consideration:

- Public notice.
- Setbacks.
- Visual buffer/screening.
- Spacing between rows of panels.
- Minimizing site disruption.
- Lighting.
- Fencing.
- Decommissioning/abandonment.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
David A. Robbins
Lyme Planning and Zoning Administrator.