

Lyme Planning Board Minutes
1/12/2023

Board Members and Staff Present: John Stadler, Chair; Tim Cook, Vice Chair; David Kahn, Select Board Representative; Vicki Smith, Member; Richard Menge, Member; Rich Brown, Alternate; Hebe Quinton, Alternate, David Robbins, Planning and Zoning Administrator.

Board Members Absent: None

Members of the Public Present: David Roby Via Zoom, Mark Bolinger, Ross McIntyre, Nat Niles

Item 1: Public Hearing. Proposed Solar Zoning Amendment

John opened the hearing at 7:00 pm and asked the members of the public if they had any comments.

Ross McIntyre, referencing the latest rate increase on electricity rates, said the cost of electricity is going up and people are looking for alternatives to buying power from the current utilities. Solar is currently the best option and the Town should be careful to avoid creating regulations that may unintentionally prohibit solutions for residents. He noted that he had been approached by a solar developer from Utah about leasing 25 acres of land for a solar energy project.

Mark Bolinger cited the vote at a previous Town Meeting when Lyme voted to increase the Town's reliance on renewable energy by 2030. He felt that the maximum of 20,000 square feet for Large Solar Energy Systems was arbitrary and may not meet the needs for community systems. He suggested that the Board consider not sending the amendment to the Town for a vote at this time, in part, because some significant new information would become available this year. He believed that the Board should review the proposed ordinance and the ever-evolving solar technology to ensure that the ordinance will provide for the needs of community-based systems.

John asked the individual Board members how they felt about sending the amendment to the Town. Some members and alternates believed that the Board should move forward with the amendment but revisit the regulations for Large Solar Energy Systems during 2023. Some members expressed concern with trying to update the regulations at a later date. It was noted that Small Solar Energy Systems would continue to be allowed if the amendment was held back for another year.

After much discussion, David Kahn moved to not send the amendment to the Town for a vote.

Vicki seconded the motion.

John called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

John volunteered to write a communication to the Town to explain the rationale for holding back Solar Energy Zoning Amendment for the 2023 Town Meeting.

Item 2: Acceptance of minutes from 12/16/2022.

John moved to approve the minutes as amended by David Kahn.
Vicki seconded the motion.
John called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 3: Other Business.

The Board discussed the date (1-26-23) of the next meeting. Three members and the two alternate members were not available on that date. Due to not having a quorum, the Board re-scheduled the meeting for February 2nd. At the February 23rd meeting, the Board will meet with members of the Energy Committee and the Lyme Energy Aggregation Committees. In order to avoid having an un-noticed meeting for either of the Committees, the Planning and Zoning Administrator will notice the meeting for the Planning Board and the other two Committees.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.

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