

Lyme Planning Board Minutes
06/08/23

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

Board Members Absent: David Kahn, Select Board Representative;

Members of the Public Present: David Roby, David Perlman, Sue Mackenzie, Mark Bolinger.

Item 1: Acceptance of minutes from 5/25/2023

John Stadler moved to approve the minutes as amended by Tim Cook.

Tim Cook seconded the motion.

John Stadler called for a vote and the motion passed with a 3-member vote.

Vicki Smith abstained as she was not at the meeting.

Item 2: John Stadler report of meeting with former NHEC representative.

John Stadler reported on his discussion with Brian Callnan and Stephen Doig. Brian is the new CEO of the Community Power Coalition of NH. They discussed the current Community Power Aggregation program, grid capacity, the use of batteries in the electrical grid and power aggregation.

NHEC's wires can support the addition of about .5 megawatts, but it is unclear how many connections could be supported.

NHEC is starting to promote the use of large battery banks to provide power during times that solar systems are not producing. It was noted that NHEC was working with a company that leases battery systems and who are responsible for the maintenance and care of the batteries.

Item 3: Solar amendment discussions.

With input from the community members present, the Board continued their discussion of a solar energy system zoning amendment. Opinions of the community members were varied. For some, allowing large systems even if they did not directly benefit the residents was important. They believed that it was for the greater good. Some felt that large systems are not needed in Lyme because Lyme residents now have the opportunity to purchase green power. Some felt that if larger systems are allowed then they should be located outside of the Town Zoning Conservation Districts and be well screened so that they are not visible. Others wanted the ordinance to allow for group net metering size systems.

The Board discussed system size and noted that a one-megawatt system, which is the maximum size allowed under Group Net Metering, would require at least 5 acres of disturbance. A five-megawatt system, which is the largest allowed for Community Solar Systems, would require at least 25 acres of disturbance. It was clarified that large commercial systems are not limited in size by the state.

Rich Brown made a suggestion, in order to move forward, that the Board could make changes to the size limitations of the original amendment and then send it to Town Meeting. Concurrently, the Board could ask the Town for input regarding larger systems and propose a second amendment at a later date to address them.

The Board decided to review the original amendment with the intent of sending it to Town Meeting in March 2024 and solicit information from the residents as to whether larger systems would be appropriate for the Town and, if so, how large and where.

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm.

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