

FARMINGTON PLANNING BOARD
153 Farmington Falls Road
January 8, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.
Minutes

Planning Board members present: Judith Murphy, Mike Otley, Lloyd Smith, Craig Jordan, and Jeff Wright.

Alternate members present: Michael Guerrette.

Members unable to attend: Clayton King and Gloria McGraw.

Others present: Code Enforcement Officer, Steve Kaiser; Code Assistant, Kate Foster; Applicant John Korkos of ReVision Energy Inc.

Ms. Murphy opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Designate alternate members, if needed

Ms. Murphy designated Mr. Guerrette as a voting member in the absence of regular members.

3. Review minutes of December 11, 2023

Mr. Wright made a motion to approve the minutes of December 11, 2023 as written.
Mr. Otley seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5 – Affirmative 1 – Abstained
Motion carried.

4. 23-SE-05

Troy Norton

112 Narrow Gauge Square / U15-058-D-003

20kW (AC) roof-mounted solar array

Ms. Murphy introduced the application and verified someone was present to represent the application.

Mr. Wright made a motion to accept the Solar Energy Systems application as complete for review.

Mr. Otley seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative
Motion carried.

John Korkos of ReVision Energy Inc. introduced himself and stated this application is for a roof-mounted solar array on top of the flat roof of Norton Eye Care owned by Troy Norton.

It is a 20kW system with 43 480-watt solar modules anchored to ballast blocks that rest in trays on the roof so there will be no penetrations. If it were to ever be decommissioned or taken down, it's only a matter of lifting it off the roof. The system is going to be offsetting the energy use of the building of the eye care business and any extra will be going to Mr. Norton's home on Granite Heights in Farmington.

Mr. Jordan asked if there are any precautions taken to make sure there is not any puncturing of the roof membrane during construction, adding it is a very old roof.

Mr. Korkos replied that typically with a larger project they would just place some pallets onto the roof, which they still might do for the modules – but they will also place 8' blue foam board sheets with plywood on top to stage work materials on. He added that there is not going to be a whole lot of equipment going up there where it's a very small system, and because the drip edge is only 10' from ground they'll probably pass all the gear up with a small forklift.

Mr. Jordan asked if this was going to be enough to satisfy the power needs of the facility.

Mr. Korkos replied it should, if we could put more we would but we are using all the space available.

Mr. Otley asked if the system had any type of battery.

Mr. Korkos replied, no – it's tied to the grid.

Mr. Guerrette said it looked good and saw it was certified for the added weight to the roof. He asked about the snow on the panels and snow removal where it's a flat roof.

Mr. Korkos said they don't calculate for any power being made during cloud and snow-covered days - basically the winter months. He stated that there are rows between the panels to shovel but they don't recommend it as the roof is calculated to hold the snow load and the panels - which are designed not to be cleared during the winter.

Mr. Wright asked since it's an older roof is there any prep that needs to be done prior to putting the modules on to protect the roof membrane.

Mr. Korkos replied they will put a sheet of EDPM under each ballasted plastic tray for extra protection.

Mr. Wright asked if the panels are angled, so if there there's any snow on them it would slide off.

Mr. Korkos stated yes – there's a slight angle so if there's some snow it would slide off, and as soon as the sun starts hitting them they will start creating heat and melting the snow from underneath.

Ms. Murphy asked about under "Wind Loading" in the engineer's letter, the word "assumed" is used a couple times. She read the engineers statement stating "The attachment for uplift at the heel is assumed to be adequate" and then further down the statement under "Conclusion" it states "This assumes that when reroofing is needed that the exiting membrane must be

removed before another membrane is added.” She asked if he could respond to this where it comes off as uncertainty.

Mr. Korkos stated this is from a third-party structural engineer and means that they didn't inspect the actual structure in person – they instead analyzed based on assumptions.

Mr. Korkos stated that for all commercial projects they do on buildings, no matter the size, they have a third-party engineer look at it and do the dead-load and wind uplift and that is sent to their company's lead engineer to review. If there were any red flags he would have brought it to the owner's attention.

Ms. Murphy asked about the updated dates for anticipated start and finish where they have been on hold.

Mr. Korkos stated they are hoping April, 2024.

Mr. Jordan asked how many roof-mounted systems the company has going.

Mr. Korkos replied that he personally does a few a year and the Portland branch probably does 10-15 a year.

There being no further questions or comments, Ms. Murphy called for a motion.

Mr. Wright made a motion to approve the application as presented.

Mr. Jordan seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative

Motion carried.

5. Other Business

Ms. Murphy stated she is signing a document for the Office of Community Development on behalf of the Planning Board stating that this notice serves to certify that on July 10, 2023 the Town of Farmington Planning Board approved the Avesta Housing/Edgewater project and found that it conforms to the Comprehensive Plan and local zoning ordinances.

Mr. Kaiser added that this form is part of the closing process to get this project going.

Mr. Kaiser stated he and Cindy Gelinis are in the process of modifying the current Downtown Tax Increment Financing [TIF] documents because the Avesta Housing/Edgewater site has to be taken out of the Downtown TIF maps due to it becoming a stand-alone Affordable Housing TIF district. He added they had a recent ZOOM meeting with Avesta Housing and MaineHousing, and they want to start in April 2024. He also added that two recently received funding commitment letters reveal the financing package is solid. It is estimated to be a nine million dollar project, and for comparison the Brookside development next door cost six million dollars 10 years ago.

Mr. Kaiser stated there are still several smaller housing projects going on and planned around town such as on School Street and Maple Avenue, which is good because the town desperately needs additional housing of all kinds.

Mr. Wright asked Mr. Kaiser about the current 25-unit building [Brookside Village] and if it was subsidized housing.

Mr. Kaiser replied yes.

Mr. Smith asked about the lighting he had complained about at the large storage units in the Falls and hadn't seen that anything had been done to fix this.

Mr. Kaiser stated he contacted the property owner who had his vendors come out and fix it immediately - but it needs to be checked at night.

Ms. Foster stated she has not noticed any light off the property line on her way home at night.

Mr. Smith asked about the lighting at the Elk's Lodge on School Street, where the lights seem to be affecting the people living across the road because they have their curtains pulled because the whole side of their house was lit up.

Mr. Kaiser stated he will check it out and have the Elk's Lodge contact their vendor to fix it if necessary.

Mr. Otley asked if there was a light ordinance and if all the lights had to point downwards. He added that all the new streetlights in town on Front Street and High Street are so bright and seem to point straight up.

Mr. Kaiser said the ordinance essentially says they aren't supposed to trespass onto other property or glare into driver's eyes. He added that if the lights are open domed on the top, they can have a reflector put in to bounce the light back down.

Mr. Wright asked if there were any updates on McDonald's opening.

Mr. Kaiser replied a couple of months is what he was told and they're probably waiting on estimates and insurance.

Mr. Smith stated Circle K has opened.

Mr. Kaiser said they checked with him and they can sell sealed food but nothing prepared until DHHS re-inspects.

Discussion continued about the Main Street businesses that were flooded, the state they are in, and their reopen status.

There being no further business or discussion, Ms. Murphy called for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Otley made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Ms. Murphy seconded the motion.

VOTE: 6 – Affirmative
Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kate Foster.

Planning Board

Date