

**City of Newburyport
Planning Board
January 17, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

1. Roll Call

Planning Board Attendance: Brian Balcom, Jen Bluestein, Alden Clark, Bob Koup, Jamie Pennington and Heather Rogers

Absent: Beth DeLisle, Charlie Palmisano and Rick Taintor

Planning Director Andy Port and note taker Caitlyn Marshall were also present.

2. General Business

a) Request for extension – 36 Colby Farm Lane

Director Port showed the board a map of where 36 Colby Farm Lane is located. It is located where an old landfill is. A lack of responsiveness from the landowner went on for years. In 2019, it was presented to the board that Blue Wave wanted to put solar panels on the landfill. The deal fell out between Blue Wave and New Venture. The Department of Environmental Protection wanted a new company to come in. They asked if the city would be interested in taking the property by tax title. Director Port is asking the board to extend the permit for solar installation for another year to see if they can get another solar operator to do the project. The city and state want to see this go through.

Bob Koup asked if the landfill is capped.

Director Port stated that yes it is capped. New Ventures got post closure but didn't work it out with Blue Wave.

Bob Koup asked if this permit were to come back to the board within the next year, what level of detail would the Planning Board be involved with reviewing?

Director Port stated the Planning Board would review the permit again if there were a change. If there were no change they would be able to go ahead and do the project.

Brian Balcom asked if the applicant made a minor change, would it be considered a minor modification?

Director Port stated yes. If the changes were bigger changes they would have to come back to the board for a review.

Jamie Pennington asked if the applicant was Blue Wave.

Director Port stated Blue Wave asked for the permit. He is hoping they will not need to repeat the process for another applicant.

Jamie Pennington asked if the permit runs with the land?

Director Port stated this benefits the landowner.

Jamie Pennington asked if the permit is transferable to another applicant.

Director Port stated yes. They are running up against a deadline and he didn't want to lose the opportunity.

Brian Balcom asked for clarification on the permit because it is Blue Waves' work. How would this affect a new applicant?

Director Port stated that yes it is Blue Waves' work. With a new applicant it should be a formality at that point.

Bob Koup stated that they would be extending the permitting window for that project. If there were a different plan, the Planning Board would have to look at.

Jamie Pennington stated that this buys the city time.

Director Port stated the city benefits from green energy. The landowner is not doing anything.

Bob Koup stated the permit extension helps with a new company coming in.

Alden Clark made a motion to approve an extension to the Site Plan Approval decision for 36 Colby Farm Lane (2019-SPR-01) to 1/22/25. Heather Rogers seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

b) Approval of minutes

- ***12/20/2023***

Alden Clark made a motion to approve the minutes as amended from the December 20, 2023 meeting. Jamie Pennington seconded the motion. One member abstained. Five members voted in favor.

c) Discussion

- ***Storey Avenue Rezoning***

Director Port stated they are working on finding consultants for the Storey Avenue project. The Harvard Kennedy School stated they are interested in the project. It is not clear yet what they will be doing.

Director Port then showed images of a before and after of a strip mall converted to a mixed-use village area. They would like snapshots for the community to understand the purpose for this project. They would like to illustrate what it could look like.

Director Port then asked the board to look at 40R district and share their feedback on what they would improve upon or change.

- ***MBTA Communities***

Director Port asked the board where they would be comfortable having housing changes in that area.

- ***Business Park***

Director Port asked the board to think about what they would like to change in the business park moving forward. Changes would be to stimulate build out.

- ***Housekeeping***

Director Port stated they would need to clean up older language from ordinances that is not clear and may cause confusion.

- d) Election of Vice-Chair***

Alden Clark made a motion to nominate Charlie Palmisano for Vice Chair. Heather Rogers seconded the motion. All members noted in favor.

- e) Other updates from the Chair or Planning Director***

There were no additional updates from the Chair or Planning Director.

5. Adjournment

Alden Clark made a motion to adjourn. Jamie Pennington seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

Motion Approved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 PM

Respectfully submitted – Caitlyn Marshall