

TOWN OF STAMFORD
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
August 18, 2023
(UNAPPROVED)

Planning Commission: Aaron Malachuk, Chair, Sheila Lawrence, Kurt Gamari, Debra Burchard, Maura Hawkins, Jenifer Hughs and David Saldo.
Carolyn Brooks and Daniel Potvin were not present.

Visitors: Nancy Bushika, Tammy Elias, Lisa Gramlin, Jedidiah Gramlin, Betsy Parrington, Lars Parrington, Debra Righi, James Righi, and Pamela Tworig.
Martha Staskus from Norwich Technologies.
Lori Shepard, Secretary.

Aaron Malachuk called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

MOTION by Aaron Malachuk to accept the regular meeting minutes of August 7, 2023 as written.
SECONDED by David Saldo. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP/QUORUM

Aaron Malachuk spoke to the Selectboard at their last meeting. The Selectboard voted to reduce the Planning Commission from a 9 member board to a 7 member board. Jenifer Hughs and Kurt Gamari are ex-officio, non-voting members.

STAMFORD MAIN RENEWABLES WIND TURBINE PROJECT

1. Aaron Malachuk will request that people submit their questions on index cards and he will read the questions during Monday's public hearing to keep things orderly.
2. Martha Staskus advised that she will have several staff members at the public hearing and will provide a full presentation. She gave an overview of the project. She has worked in renewable energy for 25-30 years. She worked on Searsburg and the Deerfield windmill projects. Many studies have to be done for this one turbine project and they have hired consultants for natural resources, biologists, botanists, sound analysis, historic preservation, visual assessment, transportation, environmental, and elemental studies. They are assisted by Arrowwood, Krebs & Lansing Consulting Engineers, and the Resource Systems Group. She explained that in 2013 the state legislature created the Standard Offer Program to create and deploy renewable energy across the state. This project qualifies for one 2.2 MW turbine through this program. This location was chosen due to its great wind resource and proximity to 3 phase power. The project will be located on private land and accessed by other privately-owned land. She believes there is enough wind resource there to move forward with the permitting process, get financing and feels the state will benefit from the power generation. They will have an emergency plan and a decommissioning plan in place and they will coordinate with local emergency departments. The blades will contain fire suppression. There will be a vault to contain any oil spill. Green Mountain Power will have an easement to the property and any road or other permits will be obtained. They expect the town will receive \$30,000.00 in tax money. Many felt the property values in the area would plummet at least that much. The contract will end after 25 years. The owner would

have to reapply to regenerate the system at that point. Martha Staskus stated that the landowner approached them for solar energy but they determined that wind energy would be much better. Dave Saldo felt there are enough windmills in southern Vermont and did not feel another was needed. He asked why there are no turbines in the Bennington, Manchester area. He feels those areas have money to fight these developments and Stamford is being targeted because we do not. Maura Hawkins was frustrated that they are using an Act 250 violation as an asset in order to claim the area is already disturbed land. Pam Tworig noted that it is very close to the only residential development in town and feels it will severely impact that area. Martha Staskus answered several other questions. Several in the room expressed strong views and opposition against the windmill project.

MOTION by Aaron Malachuk to adjourn. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

These minutes were prepared by Lori Shepard on behalf of the Planning Commission for its review and approval.

Aaron Malachuk
Planning Commission Chair, pro tempore

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