

**TOWN OF STAMFORD**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**  
**September 11, 2023**  
**(UNAPPROVED)**

Planning Commission: Aaron Malachuk, Chair, Sheila Lawrence, Debra Burchard, Maura Hawkins, Carolyn Brooks and David Saldo.

Kurt Gamari, ex-officio member, and Jenifer Hughs, Energy Coordinator.

Daniel Potvin was not present.

Visitors: Cynthia Candiloro, Anthony Delorenzo, Diane Dupuis, Tammy Elias, David Fierro, Jr., John Gilmartin, Laura Gilmartin, Lisa Gramlin, Jedidiah Gramlin, Linda Hughs, Bill Levine, Dan Lovetere, Bruce Richardson, Debra Righi, James Righi, Denise Rondeau, and Richard Silc. James Merriam, Chief Executive Officer of Norwich Technologies.

Lori Shepard, Secretary.

Aaron Malachuk called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MINUTES**

MOTION by Deb Burchard to accept the regular meeting minutes of August 18, 2023 as written.

SECONDED by Aaron Malachuk. 5 in favor (Carolyn Brooks abstained). Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Deb Burchard to accept the public hearing minutes of August 21, 2023 as written.

SECONDED by Aaron Malachuk. 4 in favor (Carolyn Brooks and Dave Saldo abstained). Motion APPROVED.

**STAMFORD MAIN RENEWABLES WIND TURBINE PROJECT**

Aaron Malachuk suggested they compile a list of questions and comments to submit to the Public Utilities Commission concerning the project. After much discussion, the following statements will be presented:

1. The proposed windmill project is less than the 1 kilometer buffer from residences required by the Town Plan.
2. The project is not located in the preferred location identified in the Town Plan and is near a high residential area.
3. Right-of-way access to the lot needs to be figured out and may need permits.
4. Dave Saldo noted that there is a historic private cemetery very close to the Main Road entrance.
5. We would like to see the environmental, geohydrology and other impact studies.
6. Explain Act 250's involvement concerning road access, property remediation, etc.
7. Were other sites considered, and if not, why? If so, where?
8. This project will use 20 acres of a 250 acre parcel. What is the plan for the rest of the acreage?
9. The Planning Commission requests a site visit.
10. The parcel has an existing right-of-way so why are the project maps indicating they will request a new access point? The new access would require passing through wetlands.
11. What happened to the old Morrissey lot cemetery at the top of the hill?
12. What is the financial benefit to the town?
13. How was the \$30,000.00 in property taxes to the town calculated?

14. What is the anticipated full value of the windmill once completed?
15. How can we be sure that the amount reserved for the decommissioning will be enough 20 years from now? Who would be responsible if the reserved money is not enough?
16. Will hunting be allowed on the property near the windmills? Will flying sport ultralights be allowed near the windmills? What types of restrictions or regulations will be put in place if the windmill project goes through? Who makes these rules?
17. The Stamford Sportsmen's Club is located near the project. Will that be affected?
18. Will the light be illuminated all night or will it be intermittent?
19. Are there 4-wheeler/ATV trails in the area and will they be affected?
20. In the event of a serious fire emergency the local fire and rescue will not be enough. How will this emergency be handled?
21. We would like a current localized study on the windmill's effect of property values in the area.

Jim Merriam from Norwich Technologies suggested that the town contact the Public Service Department. He said they can provide guidance with the timeframe and can answer a lot of our questions. Aaron Malachuk was conflicted stating that the Planning Commission worked hard to retain people's rights to do what they want with their property, but this project will affect many people in town. No one has spoken in favor of the project. Aaron Malachuk stated that if another public hearing is needed and the Selectboard doesn't want to hold it, he is willing to do it through the Planning Commission.

It was noted that the Town Plan says wind energy projects must be 1 kilometer away from residences, it doesn't say may or should. Aaron Malachuk would like to see the Bennington County Regional Commission attending these meetings. Dave Saldo read facts from the U.S. Energy Administration, Vermont State Energy Profile. He feels we are saturated with windmills in southern Vermont.

MOTION by Maura Hawkins that once the application is filed, the Planning Commission applies for Intervenor status. SECONDED by Aaron Malachuk. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

Some residents felt the Planning Commission should be more forceful, saying no to the project and identifying how it is not in compliance with our Town Plan. Some felt sending in a lot of questions could sound like the town is interested. Maura Hawkins felt submitting questions now will just give the developer an opportunity to answer the questions early. She felt answering with our emotions is less effective than responding with facts. Dave Saldo suggested the board contact the town attorney. Jim Merriam recommended the town should contact the Public Service Department who can guide us through the process and make sure that we don't miss any deadlines or lose any of our rights.

MOTION by Maura Hawkins that Aaron Malachuk apply for Intervenor status now on behalf of the Planning Commission. SECONDED by Deb Burchard. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

Aaron Malachuk asked what the board should do with the 80 questions that were gathered at the public hearing. Are people expecting the board to submit the questions on their behalf? The Public Utilities Commission website isn't set up to allow that. Maura Hawkins felt the purpose of the public hearing was to gather information and the board has no obligation to do anything more

with the questions. The community members can submit their comments and questions individually through the PUC website. Dave Saldo wondered if holding a special town meeting and having the town vote on the project would be good.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, October 23, 2023 at 6 p.m.

MOTION by Aaron Malachuk to adjourn. SECONDED by Dave Saldo. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

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

Carolyn Brooks  
Planning Commission Clerk

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