

WISCASSET PLANNING BOARD
SEPTEMBER 22, 2008

Present: Al Cohen, Tony Gatti, Steve House, Peter McRae, Lester Morse, Karl Olson and Ray Soule

Absent: Jill Lorom and Jackie Lowell

1. Call meeting to order

Chairman Steve House called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. Consideration of August 11, 2008 minutes

Ray Soule moved to accept the minutes as written. Vote 5-0-2.

PUBLIC HEARING

3. Town of Wiscasset - Amendments to Article II (Building Laws), Section 3.2.3 (Height) and Definitions

Town Planner Jeffrey Hinderliter introduced Matt Manahan of Pierce Atwood who is also a representative of the Maine Power Reliability Project (MPRP). The MPRP includes improvements to Maine's electrical transmission and distribution system so that it will provide more reliability and handle future demand. The work in Wiscasset associated with the MPRP will include the construction of new towers, removal of towers and relocation of electrical lines. No right-of-way expansion is proposed, but some clearing within the existing ROW will take place.

In order for MPRP to proceed in Wiscasset, the height ordinance would have to be amended. The current height limit for transmission towers is 60 feet. The proposed towers will range from 75 to 80 feet. The existing steel towers are approximately 125 feet.

The Ordinance Review Committee has proposed an amendment that would establish a height limit of 130 feet for non-habitable structures that transmit electrical power so that if one of the existing towers needed replacement, it would be allowed without another amendment to the ordinance. The amendment restricts structures covered by this amendment to the existing transmission rights of way owned or operated by a public utility company for the purpose of providing electrical service to the public.

Jeffrey Hinderliter said that his intent was to place the amendment on the November ballot if the public hearing is successful. He pointed out that electrical upgrades would eventually be considered under the Site Plan Review Ordinance.

The public hearing was closed at 7:10 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING

4. Town of Wiscasset - Amendments to Article II (Building Laws), Section 3.2.3 (Height) and Definitions

Matt Manahan explained the Maine Power Reliability Program and the bulk electrical transmission system that carries bulk electricity from generating plants to areas where electricity is needed. The 345kV backbone of this system was placed in service in 1971, and other than a small system connected to New Brunswick, no improvements have been made since that time. Demographics, however, show a 32% increase in population since 1971. A needs assessment group was formed to forecast the peak load in 2017 and resulting power needs. The study predicted a failure of the 345kV line between Orrington and Windsor with the result that central, midcoast, northwestern and downeast Maine would experience blackouts. The alternative is a new 345kV line and upgrades to the Wiscasset system to eliminate two lines on one tower (so that if a tower went down, it would affect only one line). The regulatory schedule calls for filing of a MPUC petition (filed July 1, 2008), an MDEP filing in late 2008, local permitting in 80 municipalities and an ISO-NE filing in 2008. Many towns will require ordinance changes in order to approve the permit.

In response to questions, Mr. Manahan said that the program addresses power needs in Maine although power will be transmitted from New Brunswick to Boston and other areas; that although many blackouts are local, they are usually caused by a tree falling on a line, the type of blackout the MPRP foresees is where whole regions are blacked out because of insufficient power; there will be no new lines in Wiscasset, only new towers to separate those lines which now on the same tower; and underground transmission lines are not feasible because of the cost involved.

Jeffrey Hinderliter recommended that the Planning Board approve placing the amendment on the November 2008 ballot. Karl Olson moved to place the amendments on the November ballot. Vote 7-0-0.

5. Stephen J. Wood, Sunset Ridge Subdivision - Request for extension on subdivision approval, Sunset Ridge Road, Map U23, Lots 3-1 - 3-10

Jeffrey Hinderliter said that Mr. Wood had purchased the subdivision that was originally approved in 2004. Mr. Wood is requesting an extension until October 1, 2010 to complete the subdivision. Al Cohen moved to grant the extension to October 1, 2010. Vote 7-0-0.

6. Riverbank Power - Site Plan Review pre-application for 1,000 MW pump hydro facility, Old Ferry Road, Map R8, Lot 6

John Douglas, President and CEO of Riverbank Power based in Toronto, Canada, presented plans for a \$2 billion, 1000 megawatt underground hydrogenation facility called an Aquabank. If built, the plant would go into service in 2014 and would generate more power than the Wiscasset Nuclear Power Plant. Wiscasset is one of 14 sites being investigated by Riverbank Power. The Maine Yankee site has good geology, suitable hydrology, an environment that the plant will not impact, and adequate transmission lines. The proposal will need community support.

The plant will provide clean carbon-free generated power during peak hours. In the company's material, the process is described as utilizing hydro pump storage in a new and environmentally responsible manner. Pumped storage is proven technology and consists of two water reservoirs -- an upper and a lower one. In Wiscasset, the upper

reservoir will be the Back River, providing a natural tidal and renewable source of water. The lower reservoir and powerhouse will be built 2,000 feet below the ground. The limited ground level facilities consisting mainly of a substation, water intake and control building, will be developed on less than 10 acres, thereby avoiding any surface level disruption and visual impact. After a two-year permitting process, the project during the four-year construction period will employ 1000 workers; there will be approximately 50 to 75 full time jobs once the facility is operational.

Douglas said Riverbank has an option on former Maine Yankee land now owned by Natural RE/sources.

Jeffrey Hinderliter said it is important for the community to be open-minded and to educate itself on the project and its technology. The power generated will be more than was generated by Maine Yankee.

A motion was made to approve the pre-application. Vote 7-0-0.

7. B2 Group, LLC - Three-lot minor subdivision, Review of Findings of Fact, Old Bath Road, Map U15, Lot 7

The Findings of Fact for this three-lot subdivision were presented. Ray Soule moved to approve the Findings of Fact as presented. Vote 6-0-0 (Karl Olson recused himself).

8. B2 Group, LLC - 25-lot subdivision, preliminary plan review, Old Bath Road, Map U15, Lot 7

Jeffrey Hinderliter reviewed the comments he had made in his memo to the Board dated September 22, 2008, and outstanding items are as follows:

With regard to the New England Telephone Company easement, Karl Olson said had been advised orally that NET has no problem with the project and no record of the easement.

With regard to municipal services, letters had been received from the Road Commissioner and Superintendent of Schools. The Police Department had expressed some concerns and the Fire and Ambulance services had not yet responded. The police concerns will be looked at when a site walk is done.

DEP permits have not yet been received.

Sidewalks are not planned.

Water quality analysis of several wells will be provided to the CEO.

Final subdivision plan will include engineer's seal.

Any potential problem with test pit 103 will be resolved before system is designed.

Final plans will show test pits 7, 8 and 22 in changed locations if necessary.

Jeffrey Hinderliter said the application was complete with the exception of letters from the ambulance and fire departments and a letter from the Fairpoint attorney. He suggested a second site walk and scheduling a public hearing. A site walk by Tony Gatti, Ray Soule and Steve House was scheduled for October 20 at 4 p.m. The public hearing will be held on October 20 at 7 p.m.

Ray Soule moved to accept the preliminary application as complete with the exception of letters from the fire and ambulance departments and a letter from the Fairpoint attorney regarding the easement. Vote 7-0.

9. Other Business

10. Adjourn

Al Cohen moved to adjourn at 8.35 p.m. Vote 7-0-0.