

NORTH BERWICK PLANNING BOARD

MINUTES OF PLANNING BOARD AUGUST 25, 2022

Present: Chairman Jon Morse Anne Whitten, Mark Cahoon, Scott Strynar, Scott Carpenter, Justin Perry

Absent: David Ballard

Also Present: Matt LeConte, Dwayne Morin, John Palmitessa, Abraham Vreeland, Ralph Guptill, Nancy Guptill, Carol Pearlman, Ed Ryan, Bryan Daniels, Orlando Durodemi

1. Call to Order:

Chairman Morse called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Acting Chairman Ballard moved Scott Carpenter up to full voting status.

2. Review Previous Minutes: August 11, 2022

Anne Whitten motioned to approve the minutes of August 11, 2022. Mark Cahoon seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

3. Current Business:

3.1 Public Meeting:

Town of North Berwick

220 Lebanon Road, Map 004 Lot 22-3

Conditional Use request for a 100' tall Communications Tower

Dwayne Morin, the Town Manager for North Berwick, who is representing the Town of North Berwick as well as the North Berwick Water District, regarding an application for a Communications Tower Conditional Use under Article 5.2.19. Dwayne stated that the current water tower has three antennas on top of the water tower, one for the sanitary district, one for police department, one for the fire & rescue for tone only. The sanitary district is a low band, the police is a DHF and fire & rescue is a UHF. The sanitary district's antenna will remain on the water tower. Dwayne indicated that they have been working on this project for about 7 years. There is a need for additional voice communication for fire and rescue. The antenna only tones out and our voice communication currently comes from Acton and Shapleigh using the towers on Blueberry Ridge and Port Ridge. Because Bauneg Beg Mountain is in the middle of North Berwick and the Acton/Shapleigh area, it casts a shadow primarily on the east side (Valley Road,

Governor Goodwin Road area) and is a dead zone. Dwayne indicated that we need to correct this problem and initially they wanted to just add another antenna to the water tower but it is not structurally sound to handle that. The water tank engineers would not allow the addition of another antenna on the water tower. The only other way to fix this communication problem is to erect another tower next to the water tower which will eliminate all the dead zones within the Town.

Dwayne stated that on February 8th, the Water District approved this tower on their property with the caveat that they wanted the tower to be placed in the right front corner of the property and they wanted separation between the water tower and the communications tower to allow for maintenance on the water tower. There will be a 28-foot separation between the two towers. Our dispatch is in Sanford and this will be ideal location for us to get line of site for dispatch. Construction will consist of a 100-foot tower with the end result being either four or five antennas on top of the communications tower. The first year we will move two of these antennas from the water tower over and will install one more for voice for fire & rescue. Dwayne indicated they will be building a small shed which will have all of the repeaters in that and automatic stand-by generator and a propane tank to feed the generator. Dwayne stated that the current shed on site will be removed and a new one put up and there is a generator there at the present time but every time the power goes out, the police department has to physically go up to the water tower and turn the generator on so that we have emergency communication. Once the new communications tower goes up, they will not have to do that anymore since there will be an emergency generator installed. That emergency generator will also power all of the water district's communication as well.

Dwayne indicated that it is a self-supporting tower so there are no guidewires. It is designed for 150 mile an hour winds and is currently hurricane proof. Dwayne stated that if you want to see what these towers look like, there are three in the surrounding towns, with one behind Sanford Police Department, one at the new Wells facility at the end of Route 109 and one at the York Public Works Department. The tower will be constructed by Southern Maine Communications. Dwayne stated they did receive contact from the immediate neighbor who requested that no construction would be started before 8:00 a.m. in the morning and that will not be a problem. Dwayne stated that once the tower is constructed, the amount of activity around the tower would be maybe two or three times per year as it runs on its own. Dwayne stated this communications tower will ensure that the Public Works Department will be able to communicate with the police, fire and rescue.

Anne Whitten asked who owned the land as there were conflicting owners listed. Dwayne confirmed that the North Berwick Water District owns the property and have given us a lease for the tower location. Anne inquired if we had to pay that lease and Dwayne stated that it was a free lease. Chairman Morse asked about a chain link fence around the tower and Dwayne stated everything will stay within the chain link fence with barbed wire on top.

Chairman Morse opened the public hearing at 6:44.

Ralph Guptill asked about the height of the antennas that are on the water tower currently. Dwayne stated the top of the current antenna is 329.5 feet. Ralph Guptill asked what

will be highest height of the antenna on the new tower and Dwayne stated it will be 336 feet. Dwayne stated we will pick up about ten feet of height, however the height is actually not the problem, it is that we have no voice sending towards the mountain.

Orlando Durodemi inquired if there were any health risks to these antennas. Dwayne stated they are radio antennas and there are no health risks and that cell phones put out more radiation than these antennas. Dwayne stated our highest megahertz is right around 400 and cell phones are typically in the 1,500 range. These antennas are no different than AM/FM radios. Dwayne stated there will be no cellular communications on this tower whatsoever and this tower is solely for the Town of North Berwick. Dwayne stated this tower would have been free if we used it as a cell tower also but we did not want that and this tower is for North Berwick only.

Nancy Guptill asked if there will be any interruptions at all in the area's cell phone or internet or streaming. Chairman Morse stated he did not believe there will be any interruption at all and the construction will be fairly quick. Dwayne stated there are two antennas on the water tower already and this will be no different.

Carol Pearlman inquired if the tower will be built on a secure cement pad. Dwayne stated that below the ground there is a concrete plate, it is shaped like a triangle and is only 12 feet between legs. Carol asked if the wind could tip it over and Dwayne indicated it is designed for 150-mile hurricane winds. Carol asked what the tower was anchored on. Dwayne stated that six feet below the ground will be a concrete pad which is a foot and a half thick. That is then compacted with gravel on top, the tripod of the antennas is each mounted to the sonotubes with very long bolts which are tightly secured. Carol asked if the tower will attract lightening and Dwayne indicated that is highly unlikely and the antennas are fiberglass. Carol inquired about vultures and wanted to know if that would interfere with anything. Dwayne stated that the bottom of the tower is 12 feet wide but the top of the tower is only 2 feet wide but they would not be able to nest on the top and nothing would be interrupted. Scott Strynar indicated that spikes could be placed on the tower if needed.

Orlando Durodemi asked that if for some reason the Town decided at a later date to install cellular antennas on top of the tower, if there would be a warning process or announcement made to the community. Dwayne stated there would be.

Chairman Morse closed the public hearing at 6:51 p.m.

Anne Whitten motioned that the Conditional Use request for a 100' tall Communications Tower for the Town of North Berwick, 220 Lebanon Road, Map 004 Lot 22-3 be accepted. Scott Strynar seconded the Motion. VOTE: 5-0

3.2 Public Meeting:

Abraham & Peggy Vreeland

32 Company Woods Road, Map 001 Lot 006-1

Conditional Use for In-law apartment over proposed new attached 2 story garage.

Abraham Vreeland stated that he and his contractor, John Palmitessa, from J.P. Construction had finished the plans and had an update from the last meeting. John Palmitessa stated that are looking to build a two-car garage with an in-law apartment above it for Abraham Vreeland's son. John Palmitessa indicated it would be 630 square feet and a one-bedroom. Chairman Morse asked if the new soil test was completed and John Palmitessa indicated that Mark Trueman completed that. John stated there will be an expansion done on the septic system when they complete the excavation. Anne Whitten asked if it was just an expansion of the leach field and not the system itself and John indicated that is correct. There is 1,000-gallon tank is currently there and the leach field will need to be expanded for the impact of the one-bedroom addition. Chairman Morse asked if the water supply was sufficient and John indicated that it was.

Scott Strynar stated that the plan now shows sufficient clarification as to the internal four steps into house.

Anne Whitten stated that there should be two egresses in the event of a fire and asked if a window was going to be used. John stated that a bedroom window is going to be an egress window and there is a direct entrance to the apartment from the back of the garage. Matt LeConte asked what the dimensions of the deck on the second floor would be. John stated there would be no deck. Matt made a suggestion to the Board that they require a walkway to the rear egress around the building that would need to be clear. John stated that there will be a dedicated walkway to the door and clarified that it is going to be the access and travel path into the apartment.

Anne Whitten motioned that the Planning Board accept the Conditional Use for In-law apartment over proposed new attached 2 story garage for Abraham & Peggy Vreeland, 32 Company Woods Road, Map 001 Lot 006-1 with the condition that the primary entrance have a dedicated walkway free of ice, snow and debris. Mark Cahoon seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0

4. Other Business:

Matt LeConte indicated that the Stub Marsh mineral extraction permit will be returning before the Board soon and Adeline's Way is also very close to returning before the Board as well. Matt also indicated that the next meeting will be a public hearing for the Patterson subdivision.

Mark Cahoon stated that there essentially were no guidelines regarding solar farms and where the location of them can and cannot be and he believes that something should be in place before all of North Berwick becomes primarily solar farms. Anne Whitten stated there is a tree ordinance. Mark Cahoon feels that the solar farms may be limited to abandoned gravel pits or open spaces instead of cutting more trees and placing them in farm and forest. Matt stated that the Board could propose an amendment that a Board Meeting be scheduled to address concerns and discuss potential changes and draft memos to the Town Manager.

Anne Whitten stated that at the last meeting, the acting Chairman, who was David Ballard, asked if an application should be found complete and Anne indicated that usually was only done on subdivisions and large projects and wanted to know if the Board will be voting on the application being complete going forward. Anne stated that the Board voted to find the application complete before voting to accept it. Matt stated that in his opinion he finds that it is complete but it is not his authority to approve it. Chairman Morse stated the Board only needs to approve the application or not.

5. Adjournment:

Scott Strynar motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 p.m. Mark Cahoon seconded the motion.
VOTE: 5-0

Matthew LeConte
Planning Coordinator

Respectively submitted,
Jennifer Berard, Stenographer

Chairman Jon Morse

Anne Whitten

David Ballard

Scott Strynar

Mark Cahoon

Scott Carpenter

Justin Perry