

Town of New Haven Selectboard Meeting
7:00 pm
Tuesday, September 16, 2014
Town Offices

Present: Chair, Kathy Barrett, Vice Chair, Roger Boise, Carole Hall, Doug Tolles,
 Treasurer, Barb Torian and Clerk, Pam Kingman

Absent: Charlie Roy

Visitors: Outside Appraiser Kermit Blaisdell, Rod Viens from GroSolar, Jon Christiano, Rodney Lowe, Tom Sawyer, Suzanne Sawyer, Timothy Sawyer, Dale Hasting, Jess Whitney, Christine Clark, Ed Gomeau, Taborri Bruhl, Susan Smiley, Rob Litch, Harvey Smith, Denis Mailloux, Sally Mailloux, Michaela Granstrom, Jim Doyle, Maura Lester, Sam Lester, John Herrick, Benj Putnam, Melvin Simmons, R.J. Adler, Heather Morse, Jim McClay, Gary Sundstrom, Rick Shappy and Tim Bouton

AGENDA RESULTS:

VISITORS BUSINESS:

1. Outside Appraiser, Kermit Blaisdell – Taxation on Solar Farms and VT Gas.

Solar Farms: Kermit started out by talking about the Solar Farm on Route 7, commonly known as Cross Pollination. This was the original solar farm installed in New Haven 2 years ago. The value of Cross Pollination Solar Installation is five million dollars; their Municipal Taxes on the solar farm assets only for 2014 is \$19,250. This will change next year because the State has now worked with the solar companies to devise a new system that will yield three appraisals, high, medium or low, which contains a flat 30% depreciation rate for the life of the solar farm (25 years). After talking with the state, the Listers expect the appraisal of Cross Pollination to be reduced to \$3.5 million. This would reduce the municipal tax on the solar farm only to drop to \$13,475, using 2014 tax rates. Rod Viens from GroSolar said Vermont is the only state that has adopted the "Sandia" model, which was created for residential solar installations, but it is not intended to be applied to commercial installations. The solar farms will pay \$4.00 per kilowatt hour of electricity generated directly into the State Education Fund.

VT Gas: Taxes have varied from Town to Town. Property Valuation and Review took the model for electric power to use for the gas pipelines. Every year the cost of the pipeline increased by industry standards; then reduced by depreciation. The pipeline then gets adjusted for the town's common level of assessment. This is the same as power lines throughout the state; they use the same standard reporting, same standard value so it is consistent reporting. The base values are set by the state, taking into consideration the cost per mile, installation and the

depreciation method. Discussed what other states use on income producing properties and if Kermit thinks the model Vermont is using is equitable. At this time, Kermit is unsure what the taxes will be on these megawatt arrays, due to the uncertainty of the income stream. Kermit added that this way is consistent; it gives people the right to go to appeal to the State Appraiser. But this would be very costly for a town. The Towns get the Municipal side of the taxes, it's not the best but it's ok. Rod Viens said he has worked with VLCT, and the Sandia model takes cash flow into consideration. So there are fixed prices with no escalation. Kermit said the Lister's have the right to pick and choose how to value power, gas, and solar any way they want, but it may cause trouble later on for the town. Kermit said the solar arrays under 50kw, which are net metered, are tax exempt. Arrays generating more than 50kw, that is a business, and are net metered are not taxed on the first 50kilowatts, and are taxed for anything generated over that.

2. **Rod Viens from GroSolar** – Proposed two Solar farms, one on the Sawyer Farm and the other on the West side of Route 7 on the Sarah Virginia De Ganahl Venture, LLC parcel. (North of Lee's Small Engines). Both Solar Farms would be considered megawatt facilities, consisting of 40 acres of tracking solar panels, that track east to west, and would be a maximum of 10' high. Both facilities would be 2 to 3 times the size of Cross Pollination. The PSB has required solar farms to add a decommissioning fund to each project; which is controlled by the PSB in order for these arrays to be dismantled and recycled. Some of the land for the arrays is leased, and some are purchased by the solar company. The lease agreements between the property owner and solar company are not public information. Leasing is usually a minimum of 25 years. Harvey Smith is a town representative for the Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC). He said Adam Lougee is more than willing to work with New Haven on any of these solar arrays. Taborri Bruhl asked if these are in – state generation or is someone buying the Renewable Energy Credits (RECS). Rod said he thought most of the RECS would stay in state. Kathy Barrett pointed out the one proposed for Route 7 is considered a 'view shed" in our Town Plan. She read from the Town Plan regarding setbacks and view sheds. Discussed how to mitigate the visual significance these will have on the town. Doug Tolles suggested the best avenue for these projects is to approach the Towns Planning Commission. Selectboard Chair, Kathy Barrett took a straw poll to see how many are in favor of the site on Route 7 – very few. She then conducted the same poll for the Sawyers site – most were in favor. Although some folks didn't raise their hands for either. Rod Viens says Gro Solar believes in getting feedback from the Towns; so this was their first step. They have not approached the PSB or started any permits.

TOWN OFFICE BUSINESS:

1. Roger Boise made a motion to approve the Town Hall Application for the Girl Scouts, Troop 30335, leader Rachael Clodgo to use the Town Hall Cafeteria on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month from 4 - 5 pm. The Fee has been waived, and security deposit has been received. Motion seconded by Carole Hall. **Doug Tolles recused himself from this motion, as there is a personal conflict** 3 yes / 0 no
2. Roger Boise made a motion to sign the building permit for the New Haven Fire Department to install a new antenna on Town property (behind the Fire Station). Motion seconded by Kathy Barrett. 4 yes / 0 no
3. Carole Hall made a motion to regretfully accept the letter of resignation from Rod Case from the Planning Commission, seconded by Doug Tolles. 4 yes / 0 no

TREASURER'S REPORT:

1. Roger Boise made a motion to approve payroll for the week ending 9/8/14, in the amount of \$4,465.55, seconded by Carole Hall. 4 yes / 0 no
2. Doug Tolles made a motion to approve payroll for the week ending 9/15/14, in the amount of \$3,676.65, seconded by Roger Boise. 4 yes / 0 no
3. Roger Boise made a motion to approve the pay orders for the week ending 9/16/14, in the amount of \$38,460.56, seconded by Carole Hall. 4 yes / 0 no
4. Roger Boise made a motion to approve the August Financial Statements for the General and Road Fund budgets, seconded by Kathy Barrett. 4 yes / 0 no

ROAD COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:**1. Road Update:**

- All our winter sand is done; the bulk of it is in the shed. Roger said they have left enough space to put the salt in there. Salt this year is up \$10.00 per ton.
- We traded 2000 yards of stone for some sand from Case St. Redi Mix; this trade was of complete equal value.
- The Road has also been working on replacing signs and filling potholes.
- Road side mowing will start again next week.

2. Equipment Update:

- There was a recall on the new truck; Eric took it to Burlington to be serviced.

- Recently purchased cutting edges for the grader and plows, we will be over budget on these items, but underbudget on the road fund in total.
 - Cat Loader has been repaired; it is running ok now; but Roger isn't sure how much longer it will last.
3. Right of Way – Four Hills update: the Four Hills Farm has been mailed two letters asking them to remove the fill and debris from the Towns Right of Way on Leduc Cross Rd. Four Hills graded the area after the first letter. The second letter, they uncovered the culvert they had buried, but all the fill and debris remain in the R.O.W. Kathy Barrett made a motion to authorize the Road Crew to mark the Towns Right of Way on Leduc Cross Rd, and remove the debris Four Hills Farm has put in there. The Town will then charge Four Hills Farm for the time and expense of the Town having to move said fill and debris. Motion seconded by Doug Tolles. 4 yes / 0 no
 4. The Gentleman who gave us an estimate on the Riverside Cemetery work has never done the work, nor has he been in contact. Roger will call him to see if he is still interested in doing the work.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Beeman School / Town Agreement – Deferred until the October 7, 2014 meeting. Kathy Barrett will make some adjustments; run them by the Town attorney in time for the next meeting.
2. Discuss VELCO payment and status of legal action. Legal action at this point is void. According to Lister, Susie Leonard, the Town is looking at a payment from VELCO upwards of \$27,000.
3. Proof Read the “Dupoise” warning for Public Hearing on October 23, 2014. Not all of the members had chance to proof read. Pam Kingman would like to put it into to the October Newsletter.
4. North South Highway - Nothing new.
5. Ancient Roads – Nothing new.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Future meeting Schedule – October 7, 21, 23 & 28, 2014. November 18. The schedule has been modified slightly because of the upcoming General Election and Veterans Day both fall on Tuesdays.
2. Kathy Barrett made a motion to authorize the Conservation Commission to use up to \$35.00 out of the Community Projects Fund to purchase a membership to the Vermont Trails and Greenways if they wish to become members. Motion seconded by Roger Boise. 4 yes / 0 no

REGULAR BUSINESS:

- 1. Doug Tolles made a motion to approve the minutes from September 2, 2014 seconded by Roger Boise. 4 yes / 0 no

MISC. CORRESPONDENCE:

- 1. Planning Commission letters to the Public Service Board – Re: Norris Solar Farm (Campground Rd); Gervais Solar Farm (Field Days Rd.) and Norris, Jr. Solar Farm (Ethan Allen HWY)
- 2. Addison County Sheriff's Dept. Activity Logs

Adjourn: 9:55 pm

Respectfully submitted:

Pam Kingman

Approved:

Kathleen Barrett

Chair, Kathy Barrett

Vice Chair, Roger Boise

Carole Hall

Carole Hall

Doug Tolles

Doug Tolles

