



Town of
North Stonington, CT

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2019 - 7:00

**New Town Hall
Conference Room
40 Main Street
North Stonington, CT 06359**

MINUTES APPROVED ~ NOVEMBER 7, 2019

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER:** Secretary Siner called the Regular Meeting of the North Stonington Planning & Zoning Commission to order on Thursday, October 10, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at the New Town Hall, Conference Room.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Joseph Siner, Secretary, Wayne Wilkinson, Connie Berardi

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Lou Steinbrecher, Chairman, Ann Brown, Vice-Chair, & Alternate Members Rod Porter & Pat Lewis

STAFF PRESENT: Planning, Development & Zoning Official Juliet Hodge and Administrative Assistant Cheryl Konsavitch

2. **ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:** None

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

4. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

A. SPP #19-070 (*Special Permit/Site-Plan*) Application of Pine Gate Renewals LLC, 130 Roberts St., Asheville, NC 28801 requesting a Site-Plan/Special Permit for a solar energy system on property owned by Arie-Chelsea Farms, Inc. at 89 Providence-New London Trpk. In an R-40 Zone. Tax Map #121, Lot #4830 (*PH scheduled to open on 10/10/19; Commission received on 09/05/19; & PH must close on or by 11/13/19*)

Secretary Siner read the application into the record.

Seated: J. Siner, W. Wilkinson, C. Berardi

Ellen Bartlett, Engineer of CLA Engineers, Inc. and Erich Miarka, Development Project Manager of Pinegate Renewables were present for this application.

Ms. Bartlett presented the site-plan to the Commission and stated the 1 megawatt solar project will be located on a 32-acre parcel in an area approximately 1400 feet from the road. Ms. Bartlett added there will actually be a decrease in stormwater runoff from the site. Ms. Bartlett stated the Inland Wetlands Commission was concerned about the erosion & sediment control measures and had the project reviewed by Boundaries LLC who had some comments and questions which have all been addressed and incorporated into the revised plans. Ms. Bartlett stated the Wetlands Commission has approved this application at their October 9th meeting. Ms. Bartlett provided a bond

estimate for the proposed soil and erosion control and stormwater control measures and asked that the Planning & Zoning Commission review the adequacy of the bond.

Mr. Miarka stated they will sell the power to Eversource. He described the project as consisting of 4.8 acres which will include the road, transformers and panels. The solar panels will take up less than 50% of the site. Mr. Miarka stated he has spoken to the abutting property owners who asked that the 7ft. chain link fence around the property be coated green to blend in better with the vegetation. Mr. Miarka also discussed providing a decommissioning plan and stated the life of the solar panels is 35 years.

The Commission asked questions pertaining to the decommissioning plan, and the E&S bond.

Secretary Siner asked if there were any questions or comments from the public pertaining to this application. The following people spoke:

- Ed Learned
- Robin Hall
- Nita Kincaid
- Gayle Chappell
- Vincent Champlin

Ms. Bartlett stated that DEEP will be monitoring the site weekly during construction and after every storm.

Secretary Siner asked if there was anyone speaking in favor of this application. The following people spoke:

- Robin Hall
- Anne Nelson
- Vincent Champlin
- Nita Kincaid
- Vincent Champlin

Secretary Siner asked if there was anyone speaking against the application. No one spoke:

J. Hodge went over her memo pertaining to this application and stated most of the plan errors or corrections have been made.

The Commission evaluated the merits of the application with respect to the following Special Permit criteria and provided the following for the record:

A. The application is materially in conformance with all applicable provisions of these Regulations, including, but not limited to, the Site Design Requirements in Chapter 11, and that the standards for approval of any accompanying Site Plan application have been met;

B. The transportation services will be adequate and the use will not have a negative impact on the welfare or the safety of the motoring public. Once construction is completed, there will be minimal traffic to the site. The site will be inspected once a week for operational issues. And the site will be mowed 3 or 4 times a year, depending on the weather and growing conditions. That will be the typical traffic to site.

C. That the proposed uses and structures will be in harmony with the appropriate and orderly development of the zoning district in which they are proposed to be situated, and that the use would not be noxious, offensive, or detrimental to the area by reason of odors, fumes, dust, noise, vibrations, appearance, or other reasons. The solar project is set approximately 1,400 feet back from Providence-New London Turnpike, therefore it will not be seen from the road. A vegetated buffer will be left along all property lines to keep the

solar panels from being seen from the neighboring properties. The solar panels will not result in odors, fumes, dust, noise or vibrations.

D. That no adverse effect would result to the character of the district, property values, or historic features of the immediate neighborhood. As stated in C, the solar project is set approximately 1,400 feet back from Providence-New London Turnpike, therefore it will not be seen from the road. A vegetated buffer will be left along all property lines to keep the solar panels from being seen from the neighboring properties.

E. The solar project will not impact the immediate neighborhood, based on the reasons stated in C.

F. In accordance with CGS 22a-19, the solar project will not cause any pollution, impairment or destruction of the air, water and other natural resources of the state. In addition to the water quality basins proposed for the project, there will be a vegetated buffer of 100 feet between the solar farm/basins and the wetlands on the site.

G. The solar project will be consistent with future development as identified and envisioned in the Zoning Regulations and the North Stonington Plan of Conservation and Development. The solar project is set approximately 1,400 feet back from Providence-New London Turnpike, therefore it will not be seen from the road. A vegetated buffer will be left along all property lines to keep the solar panels from being seen by the neighboring properties. A soil and erosion and sediment control plan has been provided as part of the site plans, in accordance with the provisions of the Zoning Regulations and the Connecticut E&S Guidelines.

MOTION by C. Berardi, SECOND by W. Wilkinson to close the Public Hearing on application #19-070. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

B. SPP #19-066 (*Special Permit/Site-Plan*) Application of Michael & Wanda Breidinger, 125 Fowler Road, North Stonington, CT 06359 requesting an Event Barn as accessory to an existing agricultural use on property located at 125 Fowler Road in an R-80 Zone. Tax Map #71, Lot #8047 8047 (**NO ACTION NEEDED**; *PH opened on 09/05/19 & continued to 11/07/19; Commission received on 08/08/19 & PH must close on or by 10/09/19; 30-day Extension granted until 11/08/19*)

5. PENDING APPLICATIONS:

A. SPP #19-070 (*Special Permit/Site-Plan*) Application of Pine Gate Renewals LLC, 130 Roberts St., Asheville, NC 28801 requesting a Site-Plan/Special Permit for a solar energy system on property owned by Arie-Chelsea Farms, Inc. at 89 Providence-New London Trpk. In an R-40 Zone. Tax Map #121, Lot #4830

Seated: J. Siner, W. Wilkinson, C. Berardi

The Commission finds that:

1. the Special Permit Application is in conformance with the applicable provisions of these Regulations;
2. the applicant has demonstrated, in the sole discretion of the Commission, that the application as proposed satisfies the applicable Special Permit criteria in Section 1303.4 of these Regulations; and
3. the Special Permit Application is in harmony with the purposes and intent of these Regulations.

MOTION by C. Berardi, SECOND by W. Wilkinson to approve Special Permit Application #19-070 with the following conditions:

1. Final Plans and Mylars shall have live signatures/seals
2. Stormwater management systems shall be maintained for the entire time the Special Permit is in effect.
3. Proposed fencing shall be coated green to better blend in with vegetation.

4. Applicants shall provide a Decommissioning Plan and Decommissioning Bond in a form acceptable to the Town Attorney.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

B. SPP #19-066 (*Special Permit/Site-Plan*) Application of Michael & Wanda Breidinger, 125 Fowler Road, North Stonington, CT 06359 requesting an Event Barn as accessory to an existing agricultural use on property located at 125 Fowler Road in an R-80 Zone. Tax Map #71, Lot #8047 (**NO ACTION NEEDED**)

6. PLANNING ISSUES & DISCUSSION:

7. SENIOR PLANNER & ZONING OFFICIAL'S REPORT/ISSUES:

8. NEW APPLICATIONS: None

9. OLD BUSINESS: None

10. NEW BUSINESS: None

11. REVIEW MINUTES:

Review minutes of Regular Meeting of 10/03/19. The Commission accepted the minutes of 10/03/19 as written.

12. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION by C. Berardi, SECOND by W. Wilkinson to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cheryl Konsavitch

Cheryl Konsavitch, Administrative Assistant
Land Use Office