

DRAFT
Pittsford Planning Commission Meeting
August 22, 2024

Board Members Present: Rick Conway, Kevin Blow, Mike Norris, Chuck Charbonneau, Donna Wilson, Mark Pape

Others Present: Jeff Biasuzzi, Alicia Malay, Mark Winslow

1. Meeting - Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:01PM by Kevin Blow – Chair.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

A motion was made by Rick Conway and seconded by Donna Wilson to approve the agenda, as amended. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Kevin Blow stated the review of the draft document of the Energy Plan and the historical marker discussion are to be held under Old Business and the discussion of the proposed solar project is to be moved to New Business.

3. Approval of Minutes

. June 27, 2024, and July 25, 2024

A motion was made by Donna Wilson and seconded by Mike Norris to approve the June 27, 2024, and July 25, 2024, Planning Commission meeting minutes. **The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Public Comment

There was no discussion held.

5. Old Business

. Review Draft Enhanced Energy Plan from Jeremy Gildrien of RRPC

It was noted Jeremy Gildrien of the RRPC had asked the Planning Commission to review the Brandon Enhanced Energy Plan. Mr. Gildrien had also provided the Commission with a proposed draft of an energy plan. A decision was made to complete the review of the Brandon plan and provide a marked-up version and the meeting minutes associated with the review to Mr. Gildrien for development of a draft Enhanced Energy Plan for Pittsford. Mr. Gildrien will be present for next month's Planning Commission meeting to discuss the plan. Mark Winslow stated the Planning Commission should do what they think is best for Pittsford. Robb Spensley created an Introduction and Donna Wilson created a Transportation Section for the Commission's consideration. Rick Conway stated there are a couple of items; Known Possible Constraints and maps relevant to Pittsford that will need to be inserted, as well as a review of the preferred locations.

Continued review of the Brandon Enhanced Energy Plan:

Pages 20 – Electric Sector Pathways – Allow Select Board to decide.

Pages 21 thru 24 – Maps – Ask Mr. Gildrien if maps for solar potential and rooftop solar potential are for commercial and municipal projects. Also, it was the assumption that the rural areas and Pittsford village would be mapped separately. It was noted that a Wind Energy Potential map would not be included for Pittsford, but the Geothermal Potential map would be included.

Page 25 & 26 - Appendix A: Renewable Energy Developer questionnaire – it was noted that Pittsford has a solar checklist and Mr. Norris thought it could be expanded upon and will provide the Planning Commission with the template from the PUC.

Page 27 - Appendix B: Preferred Solar Locations - Kevin Blow stated previously the RRPC had provided a map of preferred solar sites for the area. Mark Winslow noted concern that the prior map was created by individuals at the State level who were unfamiliar with the local properties. Rick Conway questioned the need for the map as it was thought that Pittsford had already met its energy goals. Chuck Charbonneau stated there are four solar projects that have been approved but not completed. Alicia Malay reported Jeremy Gildrien had met with the Select Board and advised there is a chart that indicates Pittsford has far exceeded its requirements for solar. Mike Norris stated he has worked with different towns and a solar preferred map sets a precedent for a town to indicate there are preferred areas where sites will be. There is a lot of criteria required and it is complex to establish the criteria. Mr. Norris noted concern in deciding what property owner has a preferred site over another's property. The reason solar developers talk with towns is to request a letter of support for their project as that will provide them with more money per kilowatt. As a town, to determine what person's property is preferred over another person's property is wrong. Chuck Charbonneau agreed and indicated Pittsford could not afford litigation if there is an issue with this type of map. With the Town at, or over the required amount of solar, it could be indicated that solar will not be promoted anymore. Mr. Norris stated having an Enhanced Energy Plan will provide substantial deference to projects that will have more weight with the State. Mr. Norris advised when an application is submitted for a project, GMP reserves the amount required for a substation and the State honors that request. It was suggested to include a map of solar projects currently in place. Mr. Norris stated when the substations' capacities are met, GMP is the first non-State entity that has veto power. Mr. Conway requested Ms. Malay send the Planning Commission what Mr. Gildrien had provided to the Select Board. It was questioned if a preferred solar map was required for an Enhanced Energy Plan. Mr. Blow suggested including a map of what the Town currently has for solar and the substations. Jeff Biasuzzi noted that VELCO is currently updating their substations and Mr. Norris advised those are totally different from GMPs. Donna Wilson reported there is criteria for preferred sites at RRPC. Mr. Biasuzzi suggested it may be less complicated to define what a preferred solar site is and provide a descriptive checklist rather than a map. It would then be up to the Planning Commission to determine if it is an acceptable site. Mr. Norris noted a proposed project has to clear all State requirements and in having this information, the municipality could then determine if it agrees with the location, rather than identifying preferred sites on a map.

Donna Wilson provided the following Transportation Section:

Pittsford residents travel an average of ___ miles to work each week, which accounts for the second largest use of energy in the town. There are several ways to decrease vehicle miles traveled (VMT). One goal is to encourage people to carpool and use public transit. Another goal is to switch to more efficient hybrid vehicles. Finally, as infrastructure for electric vehicles (EV) in Rutland County increases, we will encourage EV use. Through the use of shared transportation, public transit and EV's, Pittsford can decrease the use of fossil fuel in the transportation sector.

Action: provide information about public transit and ride sharing at Pittsford Days, town office and Maclure Library.

Rick Conway stated it would be good to have more realistic data for Pittsford and suggested it would be helpful to separate Omya's usage from the rest of the town due to their high electrical usage. Mr. Conway also noted concern about battery issues with regard to EVs as they will eventually become an issue.

The following Introduction provided by Rob Spensley was reviewed and edited by the Planning Commission:

The town of Pittsford has written this Enhanced Energy Plan to create a pathway for the town to encourage appropriate growth, save money, and improve quality of life for residents. This plan is designed to keep us in compliance with the State energy statutes required by Act 174. Our plan is required to be updated every 8 years. With ever changing regulations and technologies, we will review our plan and progress at least every four years. The main focus of the State of Vermont, and of our Enhanced Energy Plan is to decrease total energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

All residents should have access to reliable and affordable sources of energy; should be protected from the deleterious effects of energy production and distribution; and should share equally in distribution of the benefits provided by town-supported generation and conservation projects.

Our town's residents were given the opportunity to provide input on this Enhanced Energy Plan. The town will further work to improve our future outreach efforts. Through our communications and efforts to educate the public, such as at public community activities and events, we aim to increase engagement with all residents, businesses, and community partners.

We have been working to develop programs to provide more inclusive opportunities because participating in major infrastructure changes is not always an option for people with limited income. The town will consider adding EV chargers in the future. Information and materials about energy alternatives and new technologies are available on our Town website and social media pages, as well as at the Maclure Library and Pittsford Village Farm.

Alicia Malay advised that money is attached to EV installation, but there are no locations other than the municipal offices in town. Mr. Norris suggested it could be the intention of the town to add a solar charging station at some point.

. Information on Historical Marker

Donna Wilson reported Laura Treischmann has advised that the marker is in production and should be available sometime in September or October. There is discussion of holding some kind of grand opening to celebrate the installation of the marker that will be temporarily placed on Rick Conway's property. Mr. Conway noted he has offered to prepare the property for the installation but details are still to be figured out.

6. New Business

. Discussion of Solar Project on Furnace Road in Roger Rowe's Pit

The Planning Commission members reviewed a map of the proposed solar project on Furnace Road. Kevin Blow stated most of the project will be located in a pit and all members were in agreement that it is a good project. Mike Norris stated it will likely be a 3-megawatt project on the 18.8 acres. Mark Winslow noted when it was originally brought to the Select Board, it was thought to be a fairly large project. Alicia Malay stated the Select Board had reviewed this project previously and thought it was a perfect site for a solar project.

Jeff Biasuzzi reported the Planning Commission will be receiving an application for a subdivision request at a subsequent meeting. The family previously did a simple subdivision of the family farm in March. They have evicted a tenant and want to do an additional subdivision of the Louise Giddings' property. The Zoning Administrator does not have the authority to approve two subdivisions within a 365-day period which is why it will be coming before the Planning Commission. This will need to be warned and placed on the agenda as a public hearing for a site plan review. Mr. Biasuzzi stated the participant may use the Zoom approach as it will be a simple item.

7. Next Meeting

September 26, 2024 @ 7:00PM at the Pittsford Town Office

9. Adjournment

A motion was made by Chuck Charbonneau and seconded by Rick Conway to adjourn the meeting at 8:45PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant
Recording Secretary

Approved by,

The Pittsford Planning Commission