



**TOWN OF WINCHESTER  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

**Town of Winchester Town Hall**

**Held Remotely (Via Zoom)**

**and was streamed live on YouTube:**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCT1ffiBjMTBQM5OEXSgKlqg/videos>

**April 13, 2020 – 6:30PM**

**Regular Meeting Minutes**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman George Closson called the meeting to order at 6:40PM.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

Mr. Closson noted that the following individuals were present: Peter Marchand, Art Melycher, and Alternates John Cooney and Will Platt.

Mr. Martinez joined the meeting at 6:55PM. Mr. Sanden was absent excused. As Mr. Cooney and Mr. Platt had been seated for Mr. Martinez and Mr. Sanden prior to the arrival of Mr. Martinez, they remained seated for the duration of the meeting.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No comment was received.

**4. AGENDA REVIEW.**

No changes were made to the agenda.

**5. PUBLIC HEARINGS.**

None.

**6. OLD BUSINESS.**

**A. PZC#20-04 – Site Plan – 200 Old New Hartford Road Applicant: Scott J. Winn Owner: Robert Winn Proposal: Office, Business Small Format: Home Improvement Contractor Business Location.**

Mr. Winn participated in the meeting via telephone. Mr. Closson reminded the Commission that Old New Hartford Road was zoned Town Gateway which allows the proposed use via a site plan approval. He explained to the applicant that a survey was going to be necessary for consideration of this application.

Mr. Winn explained that his father had purchased the property in 2003 which at that time, had included a dilapidated house that was ultimately removed via a controlled fire as part of a training exercise for the local fire department. He noted that he has been operating his business from the remaining garage at this location ever since. Only recently, Mr. Winn learned that the town assessor's records had not reflected the property as commercial, he explained.

Mr. Closson noted that if there is an existing site plan in the Town's records, then that would be appropriate to submit for this application.

The application was continued.

**7. NEW BUSINESS.**

None.

**8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 9, 2020 Regular Meeting and April 8, 2020 Special Meeting.**

**MOTION:** Mr. Marchand, Mr. Platt second, to approve the March 9, 2020 regular meeting Minutes; Motion passed with Mr. Closson, Mr. Marchand, Mr. Platt, and Mr. Cooney voting aye while Mr. Melycher abstained.

**MOTION:** Mr. Melycher, Mr. Marchand second, to approve the April 8, 2020 regular meeting Minutes; unanimously approved.

**9. COMMUNICATIONS.**

**A. Solar Farm Project on Platt Hill Road (Trade Winds Parcel) – Petition to Siting Council.**

Mr. Closson reported to the Commission that a petition to the Siting Council had been made for a 1.99 megawatt solar project on Platt Hill Road. He explained that these type of projects are not subject to any local jurisdiction. He reminded them of a windmill farm that had been approved at the Klug Hill Farm but the developer had not finished, and the farmer wound up having to take it down. Mr. Closson noted that with that case the Town had to bear some of the cost of the removal.

Mr. Closson noted that one challenge that can sometimes present is with the removal of equipment after the life span of the equipment associated with solar panels expires. Mr. Marchand questioned whether the Town had been presented with a copy of the development plans. Staff noted that they had not. Mr. Marchand explained that he had questions on what type of plan there was for the site should lightning strike and cause a fire in the middle of the wooded area. Mr. Platt noted that he had received questions from neighbors regarding whether the project would be visible from Highland Lake. Mr. Melycher noted that the solar panels he has at his home are supposed to last only twenty years and that the responsibility to get rid of them lay with him at that point. Mr. Martinez noted that there is likely a lot of tree clearing in this area which could cause soil erosion during the construction project.

**MOTION:** Mr. Marchand, Mr. Melycher second, that the Town of Winchester file for Intervenor status in the Platt Hill Road Solar Project; unanimously approved.

**10. STAFF REPORT:**

Staff noted that there continues to be many building permits getting filed including ones for new homes. She also noted that in addition to Cumberland Farms proposing to raze their store and construct a new one, an application for 787 Main Street, another gas station to raze their store and build a new convenience store.

Mr. Closson questioned who was covering as the Zoning Enforcement Officer while Marc Melanson is recovering from an injury. Staff reported that currently we do not have anyone covering.

**MOTION:** Mr. Closson, Mr. Marchand second, to appoint Pam Colombie as Interim Zoning Enforcement Officer; unanimously approved.

Mr. Melycher questioned what was going on with the pellet stove business at 920 Main Street. Staff noted that the site had not yet been cleaned up, but that Attorney Kevin Nelligan had indicated that the matter must be handled through an enforcement action.

**11. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**A. POCD Discussion.**

Mr. Closson suggested that members, who had agreed to update various sections of the 2011 POCD, email their work so that the work can continue.

**B. Short Term Rentals Regulation Workshop – POSTPONED.**

As it was agreed that discussions would resume on regulating Short Term Rentals, Mr. Closson indicated that it should continue to be carried as an agenda item but that a workshop would be delayed until the Commission could meet in person rather than have the public try to participate on this via Zoom.

**C. Subdivision Expiration Discussion.**

Mr. Closson reminded commissioners that the publication by Mike Zizka, *What's Legally Required*, indicates that subdivisions expire after five years if there were improvements that were part of the approval and are unfinished. He suggested the Commission obtain a legal opinion from Attorney Mark Branse to what extent the improvements have to be completed, such as drainage improvements.

**12. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION:** Mr. Platt, Mr. Melycher second, to adjourn; unanimously approved.

The Commission adjourned at 7:20PM.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Pamela A. Colombie  
Recording Clerk**