

Town of Jackson Planning Board
Minutes – August 11, 2022 – Regular Meeting
- UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED

Call To Order: Vice Chairman Scott Badger called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M. Attending were Members David Campbell, Sarah Kimball, Selectmen's Representative John Allen, Alternates James Wasco, Huntley Allan, and Dick Bennett. Chairman Bill Terry, Members Kathleen Dougherty and Chris McAleer were unable to attend. Public attendees included Hank Benesh, Kate Richardson, Project Manager Bergeron Technical Services. Audio and video recorded by Hank Benesh will be made available on Jacksonflicks.com. Vice Chairman Badger moved to have Alternates Wasco, Bennett, and Allan as voting member. Secretary Campbell called the roll of all members.

Approval Of Minutes: Minutes from the meeting on July 14, 2022, were reviewed. Alternate Wasco moved to approve the minutes and Member Kimball seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Public Comment: Kate Richardson presented the plans for a land swap with the town of Jackson and the Helfrich Family related to their property on Vista Way. Kate explained it was to clear up to an encroachment on the property. This land swap was approved at the Town Meeting in March of 2022.

2022 Initiatives – Vice Chairman Badger stated that on the agenda for tonight is the new ordinance regarding solar panels. Vice Chairman Badger opened discussion regarding what is the goal of the ordinance, there are a lot of sections that we need to discuss and agree upon to move forward. Member Kimball addressed the issue of what do we want to see in the Town, like the growth of solar farms in other towns, do we limit the size of systems, do we even want solar farms, what should be the physical appearance of the panels and what type of buffers to use on private property. She also raised the concern of locations within the Town and what can be limited. Alternate Wasco stated that the terms of definitions is a good place to begin especially the types of solar we want in Town. Alternate Bennett suggested that we think about the future, as solar panel technology is enhanced it will change in the future, so our ordinance must be flexible to change. Vice Chairman Badger said this is start and the ordinance can be change as rules/regulations change. Member Campbell reminded that this ordinance would place structure and guidance for solar systems, but not restrict implementation of solar systems within the Town, considering that there is no structure/guidance for the installation of solar currently in place. Member Kimball raised do we just want to say it is okay to install solar or do we want to require a conditional use permit, so we can have control on what individual do with installation. Alternate Bennett asked do we want to limit the amount of land that can be used, Vice Chairman Badger pointed out the in the Town there is limited space available anyway so not sure if that is

necessary. Vice Chairman Badger talked about a couple of locations within the Town that could house large solar farms, so also not a major issue. Vice Chairman Badger brought the discussion back to the definitions with regards to location/types could be residential solar, community solar, accessory agriculture solar, which the Board agreed. Alternate Allan stated that as technology changes the required space can be reduced and allow for more energy, so should that be factored into the ordinance. Member Kimball and Alternate Bennett shared the cost benefit to homeowners for installing solar, so this is positive move for the Town. Member Campbell reminded that at our last meeting we wanted to review the sample document to determine what we want within our ordinance so we can keep the processing moving since this will take a while to develop. Vice Chairman Badger than asked the board do we want commercial solar within residential rural district. There was discussion on how to manage commercial solar. The decision for commercial solar will need to be addressed within the ordinance. Member Kimball stated that the definitions in the sample document are suggestions only and that we can change them as we determine appropriate. If we want to limit the size, we can change the size of the acreage to a number or percentage of the property. Member Kimball suggested that if someone is requesting something different that they bring the plan to the Planning Board for review and get a conditional use permit, Member Campbell stated that in the last meeting it was agreed that the Planning Board would not be involved in the approval process, but it would go the Building Inspector be the oversight identity. Member Campbell pointed out that in the sample ordinance talks about site visits, which the Planning Board does not do, but the Building Inspector can conduct these visits. Vice Chairman Badger agreed that a conditional use permit should not be necessary. Member Campbell pointed that if commercial solar was being considered then a conditional use permit might be necessary if it was planned for rural residential area just like we use it for Short-term rentals. Alternate Bennett suggested that we include wording about non-conforming commercial property needs approval. Member Kimball suggested that we stay away from terms like residential or commercial and design the ordinance based on size, placement, and type of solar panels to be installed. Alternate Wasco said that we can structure the ordinance for building the panels but there need to be allowance for neighbors to have a voice. Vice Chairman Badger and Alternate Wasco discussed making sure there are parameters regarding height requirements, visibility limits and limits on land usage. Board discussed options for private residents with roof mounted panels to be allowed within the roof size. Vice Chairman Badger raised the question about cluster housing and ground mounted systems. Alternative Allan said the green space needs to be protected along with common area. Board discussed the size and wattage levels and what do indicate now, knowing that as technology improves the limits we establish today can be changed in the future. Selectman Allen said we should be more concerned with size and not wattage. Member Kimball stated that we should not focus on categories but by size, height, square feet of coverage since are not bound by the sample ordinance definitions. Vice Chairman Badger questioned us only using size, height, and land use as this only applies to residential usage, and we need to consider the businesses in the Town using solar for commercial purpose and how do we define those parameters. Member Campbell raised the question about

what the limits should be for commercial use, as the size and wattage varies by the size of the organization, and would this fall under a conditional permit requirement, Vice Chairman Badger clarified that conditional use permit requirements are defined by the State, and we would need to follow those rules. Member Campbell stated we need to define commercial guidance to protect the Town. Vice Chairman Badger suggested that we set up the guidelines and parameters and turn it into a building permit requirement for both residential and commercial use. He finally stated that we establish both residential and commercial, but for now we focus on residential guidelines. Vice Chairman Badger questioned if the limits for wattage and square footage are appropriate and asked if we can check with Kevin Bennett the Building Inspector. Member Campbell will connect with Kevin to see what he can tell us about electrical limits and his knowledge of solar systems. He will also ask if he can come to the next meeting to talk with the Board. Member Kimball suggested we do not limit roof mount solar panel by square footage but by the side of roof and put limits on the size/acreage on ground mounting solar systems. Alternate Wasco suggested that the big question for the next meeting is the purpose/goal of the ordinance and Alternate Allan suggested we define residential and commercial usage. Member Campbell reminded that we discussed talking with Building Inspector about his knowledge and see what can be done to enhance his knowledge. Alternate Bennett said that Kevin has been looking at the building's structure, like the roof and electrical work before and after the work is completed. Board agreed that solar power needs to be allowed but we need to maintain the beauty of the Town. Member Kimball pointed out that the sample ordinance has a lot of the work done already and suitable place to start the process. Especially in the design layout, height limits, land coverage are some of the examples, and Member Campbell said the one thing that is missing is disposal process/requirement within the sample document and should look at either the State or Federal requirements to see what is written.

Alternate Bennett motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Alternate Allan seconded. The motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by David L. Campbell, Secretary