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Carrabassett Valley Planning Board

Thursday, September 17, 2020 at **4:30 P.M.**

Meeting to be held at Sugarloaf Outdoor Center Lodge

Agenda

1. Discuss Chair and Vice-chair positions
2. Review the Minutes of the August 27, 2020 Planning Board Meeting.
3. Conditional Use & Site Plan Application for Solar Project on Sanitary District Land, Tax Map 1A Lot 6
4. Adjourn

TOWN OF CARRABASSETT VALLEY
MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD MEETING
August 27, 2020
Via “Zoom” Meeting

Members Present: Brian Demshar Alan Sleight
 John Slagle Dave Corrow
 Tim Flight Jim McCormack

Others Present: Chris Parks Annie Twitchell
 Chris Dwight Ted Small
 Sean Murphy Ron Kelly
 Scott Hughes

Brian Demshar opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. and welcomed those present. This meeting was held via Zoom.

The first order of business was to review the minutes of the June 25, 2020 Planning Board Meeting. Tim Flight made a motion to accept the minutes. John Slagle seconded the motion. Motion approved via roll call.

An application for Conditional Use for a cell tower on part of Map 1B, Lot 1 at the Smc Maintenance Garage. AT & T is looking to replace the existing pole with an 80’ pole with a new antenna on top. This would help close some coverage gaps in the area, and it’s part of AT & T’s “First Net” program. Legislation created this First Net system, which provides dedicated service to first responders, so there’s guaranteed means of communication. There was an on-site meeting last week to get an idea of what the site of the new tower would look like. The new tower will be a little more visible from a couple of locations, and it will provide increased service. John Slagle asked about the new 16 x 19’ fenced in area, but there’s another document that indicates 16 x 16’. Also, there was no elevation drawing in the package, though there is a photo simulation. Lastly, John asked, where this is going on Sugarloaf’s property, has Sugarloaf consented to this application yet. A letter of authorization has been provided and should be in the packet that was provided last Thursday night. Chris Parks said the lease agreement is negotiation at this time, but the applicant does have title right interest through that document. There was an elevation plan provided in the application package. Alan Sleight asked, when the tower goes up, with others be using it or will it be limited to just AT & T and First Net. The tower will be co-locatable, so any additional equipment would require the carrier to negotiate with Sugarloaf. 67’ (lower than the AT & T antenna) would be available for another carrier, if so negotiated. Alan asked about the fence, since it indicates a wood fence. Ted Small said there’s likely some flexibility, if there’s a certain look desired. Alan said that, so long as it’s attractive, that’s acceptable. Ted Small explained that there will be regular maintenance, though that wouldn’t create much traffic. Alan asked what happens to the pole at such time that it becomes obsolete.

Ted Small said it can be taken down. Chris Dwight explained that a term of the lease requires them to remove it if it becomes obsolete. Chris Parks asked for a quick overview of what's being proposed for a tower. Ted Small said it's a "mono pole", which is in the shape of a telephone pole, but a different material (galvanized steel) and taller. There will be an equipment pad on the ground next to it. Alan asked about the antennas and what material they are. Ted Small said they are plastic in an off-white color, so they do not reflect. John Slagle asked about the mono pole, and how much higher the antenna will be. Ted Small said the antennas don't extend up, so there will not be any additional height; they wrap around the pole. The fence is a 16 x 16' but there's a 3' gate swing, with a left entrance and metal stairs leading to the platform. Chris Dwight suggested that Page C-2 as a reference for the sake of the approval. Brian Demshar asked about the option for multiple carriers. Where there's a tower at the Transfer Station and also on the mountain, he wondered what is the push to be a service provider rather than using the existing infrastructure at these other locations. Ted Small said that due to terrain reasons, there are gaps in coverage. In order to close those gaps, they propose this facility. To use other towers won't fill those gap issues. Also, with the First Net program, they need to close any gaps. They don't expect that this will close all gaps in the area, but it will close those within a certain distance of the facility. Scott Hughes added that the other towers on the mountain would be ideal in order to provide service to areas behind the mountain, but this tower will provide the right kind of coverage. Also, maintenance of the tower is much more accessible at this site, since the top of the mountain is so challenging. Dave Corrow asked if this tower will benefit just AT & T or others. Scott Hughes said AT & T carriers will benefit. Ted Small said another carrier could negotiate to provide service from this tower. Scott Hughes explained that the current pole is providing 2 carriers of service to the area. AT & T is looking for capacity to serve more people. In order to accomplish this with the existing pole, they would need to add guide wires, which was not acceptable to Sugarloaf, since it would require so much more square footage. They arrived at a height of 80' to get the maximum coverage that they need, without needing to go any higher. Alan Sleight asked about the First Net with 700 megahertz. Scott Hughes said it gives a 700 band for commercial use, as well as first responder use. In an emergency, the commercial use is shut down, and the usage is for first responders only. Alan Sleight asked if all the first responders would need to be members of First Net and AT & T. Scott said it's already on the area and has been for a couple of years. Users would need to subscribe. John Slagle asked what the visual impact will be from the Sugarloaf Access Road. Ted Small said the only two places this can be seen would be from a parking lot and from a chairlift. Chris Dwight said he doubts that there would be any visual from other areas besides the parking lot area. When the leaves are off the trees, it may be more visible, however. John Slagle asked if it would be visible for people living at the Timbers (First Tracks Drive, Hardwood Ridge and Timbers Drive). Ted Small said that it will likely be impossible or difficult to see the tower from those vantage points, due to the terrain. Brian Demshar expressed concern if the tower doesn't look the way they anticipate, and he's concerned about complaints about the visual impact, since the Town works hard on scenic appeal. Chris Dwight said the height could be lowered, but it does come with the compromise of less coverage. They like the site they are on right now at 60', and they feel it's more ideal at 80'. Alan Sleight said that owners at the Timbers are accustomed

to galvanized poles, due to the proximity of chair lifts in that area. He wonders if painting the pole would help to camouflage it, but again, he said the lifts have always been part of the landscape up there. Scott Hughes said the pole could be made brown, just like the existing pole. Tim Flight asked if it's possible to quantify what the difference is added coverage with the added height. Scott Hughes said they're getting 70% of what they're able to cover. With the additional 20 feet, they'd add 25-30%. Chris Parks asked if anyone from Sugarloaf had comments. Crusher and Karl recognize that it may be more visible, but understand customers need the coverage. Sugarloaf will be installing a dispensing station for printing ski passes, and SMC's legal staff is still working on the lease agreements with AT & T. The Brian Demshar led the group with the Findings of Fact: the Planning Board agreed that, with proper work to blend in with the surrounding area (painting of the pole) the visual condition (Section 1) and buffering/screening condition (Section 5) would be met. Alan Sleight made a motion to accept the conditional permit plan as proposed by AT & T, with the addition of painting the pole to blend in with the surrounding area, with the exact color being determined by the landowner. Jim McCormack seconded the motion. Motion approved via roll call.

Chris Parks discussed a Solar Project on Sanitary District land. A DEP hearing was held last month, and Chris is in possession of a draft application, but there is nothing yet ready to present to the Planning Board. Ron Kelly, developer, said they began this project back at the beginning of the year. They just got their interconnection approval with CMP, but they have additional permitting to get through. Part of their permitting process has included view shed review. This project will not be visible from the Appalachian Trail. From Bigelow, there will be a view of this project (40 acres roughly). In hoping to stay on schedule, they hope to get on next month's Planning Board agenda. All these projects are predicated on tax credits, which sunset, so they hope to get the site work done in November/December. They hope to be online this time next year. They anticipate getting a package to the Planning Board members in the next couple of weeks. They are also willing to provide the view shed information as part of their presentation to the Planning Board. Chris Parks said he will need to look closer at the impact in resource protection zone for the roadway widening involved with this project.

Chris Parks updated the Planning Board on the Judson's property. Adam Platz acknowledges that he's not going to complete anything before the life of the approval will expire. Adam plans to fill the foundation hole and remove the chain length fence, and likely remove the sign. Chris believes the sign is in MDOT's right of way. Chris said that he could ask Adam to come back to the Planning Board, or he can work on this directly with Adam. Planning Board members feel that they've allowed ample time, since Adam first came to the Planning Board in 2016. Chris will continue to communicate with Adam. If the chalet is to be used for single family residential, it does not need to go before the Planning Board.

Chris Parks discussed that the TDS building, across from CVA will be tabled until a future meeting. It's a non-conforming existing lot that had been used for telecommunications and for a school previously. There's no well or septic at this time.

Chris Parks reported that Deirdre Frey has submitted a resignation from the Planning Board. Chris will ask the Selectmen if they want to appoint another alternate. Where Deirdre was Vice Chair, another Vice Chair will need to be elected. That will be done when there are more members of the board present.

The next meeting will be held tentatively on September 17th, likely at 4:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn M. Schnorr

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