

2 **TOWN OF HOPKINTON**  
4 **PLANNING BOARD**

6 **Wednesday, March 6, 2019**

7 **7:00 P.M.**

8 **Hopkinton Town Hall**

9 **One Town House Road, Hopkinton, Rhode Island 02833**

10 **CALL TO ORDER:**

11 The March 6, 2019 meeting of the Hopkinton Planning Board was called to order at  
12 7:00 P.M. by Chair Al DiOrio.

14 **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

15 Planning Board members Al DiOrio, Amy Williams, Tom Holberton, Ronald Prellwitz, and  
16 Keith Lindelow were present.

18 Also present were: John Pennypacker, Conservation Commission; James Lamphere, Town  
19 Planner; and Kevin McAllister, Town Solicitor.

22 **PUBLIC HEARING:**

24 **Advisory Opinion to Town Council – Request to amend Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map**  
25 **from Low Density Residential to Commercial and Zoning Map from RFR-80 to Commercial-**  
26 **Special to allow for the installation of a ground-mounted solar array – AP 2 Lot 32 –**  
27 **201 Chase Hill Road – Centrica Business Solutions, applicant**

30 MS. WILLIAMS MOVED TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING.

31 MR. PRELLWITZ SECONDED THE MOTION.

32 MR. DIORIO, MS. WILLIAMS, MR. HOLBERTON, MR. PRELLWITZ, AND MR. LINDELOW  
33 VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

34 MOTION PASSED 5-0.

36  
37 Attorney Steven Surdut, office at 15 Franklin Street in Westerly, appeared for the applicant.  
38 He presented that, while solar projects and opposition to the projects have both increased in  
39 recent years, he believes that this project does not represent an industrial-sized project. The  
40 request is to re-zone a property that is currently used by a single-family home and has a small  
41 family farm on-site to Commercial Special zoning and to limit the allowed uses to only the  
42 Photovoltaic use. The applicant believes that the project is consistent with the Comprehensive  
43 Plan. The surrounding area contains single and multi-family homes, but there is also an RV  
44 and boat storage facility in the area, as well as a recently constructed electrical substation

2 adjacent to the property. The Comprehensive Plan states an aim to utilize nearby  
4 infrastructure, which has been brought to the site as a result of the construction of the  
6 substation. The project will not have any adverse effects to wildlife or to the aquifer. The  
8 engineer will explain the buffer areas of the project, which will minimize or eliminate the view  
10 of the project from nearby properties and from all roads. Additionally, the Comprehensive  
Plan encourages the Town Council to look for new commercial areas in town based on lot size  
and access to dirt roads. By limiting the allowed use on the property to only Photovoltaic, the  
project will ensure that the property will remain compatible with the surrounding uses of the  
area.

12 Jason Gold, project engineer for ESS Group, described the existing conditions of the site. It is  
14 a 23 acre property that is mostly wooded. There is a single family home with a family farm  
16 on the premises. The topography slopes to the northeast, which reduces the need for grading  
the property. There are no wetlands known to be on the property based on GIS maps. The  
18 solar array is estimated to generate 3.3 MW DC of power. The fenced area will be  
approximately 12.6 acres of the 23 acre property. The area within the fencing will be grass.  
20 Certain shade trees will need to be cut, but the vegetative buffer will remain. Interconnection  
will take place from Chase Hill Road where there is already three phase power. The project  
22 meets the Town’s solar ordinance and all zoning setbacks. The fence is proposed to be 7’ high  
and raised 6” from the ground. No exterior lighting is proposed. There may be some  
24 stormwater controls needed on the southern side of the site. There would be several holes in  
the vegetation between Chase Hill Road and the site, which will be addressed in detail at a  
future stage.

26 Questions from the Planning Board:

28 Mr. Holberton: The Town welcomes solar arrays as a manufacturing use. I don’t think it  
belongs in a residential neighborhood. Being near a substation is not redeeming enough.

30 Ms. Williams: I thought the drone video was helpful, but the concern of the view aren’t from  
above, but from across property lines. You mentioned that the property contains a small  
32 family farm. Why didn’t the applicant pursue solar under the Farm Viability Ordinance?

34 Mr. Surdut: The farm does not meet the Town’s requirements for the filing of a specific type  
of tax return to be eligible for the Farm Viability Ordinance. For some small farmers who don’t  
seek the tax benefits, it’s not worthwhile to file that kind of tax return.

36 Mr. Prellwitz: I don’t believe that this project meets the standard to change the zoning for that  
area.

38 Ms. Williams: Is the plan that the existing home would remain on the same parcel as the solar  
array?

40 Mr. Surdut: We are discussing that currently with the zoning official, but that is one option.

42 Mr. Lamphere: I have a concern about two uses being on the same property. If the zone change  
goes forth, I’d like to see how the zoning official interprets that.

44

**2**            Questions from the public:

**4**            Mr Cherenzia: The property owner for the project, he is only before the Board because the  
**6**            substation is now located in his backyard. The substation was constructed without concern  
**8**            for his property value. He hopes the Board can consider his position and why he is  
              considering solar.

**10**           Mr. Joe Moreau, Old Depot Road: Mr. Moreau stated his concerns of the property being  
**12**           located in wellhead protection zones and in an area of prime farmland. He said he  
**14**           sympathizes with the property owner for his situation, but that the area should remain  
              residential and that there is a house already located on the property. He also cited the  
              Comprehensive Plan’s Land Use Goals #1 & #4, and Housing Goal #1, and believes that  
              residents are opposed to zone changes for solar from Residential to Commercial.

**16**           Mr. Clifford Hale, 211 Chase Hill Road: An adjacent property owner, he was concerned with  
**18**           the scale of the project and its proximity to his property. The existence of the substation does  
              not provide validation for the solar project, and could lead to others in the future.

**20**           The Planning Board was provided a letter by Wentdell Crothers, neighboring property owner,  
              opposing the project.

**22**           Ms. Nicky Grills Scoot, abutting property owner, said that she and her family were opposed  
**24**           to the project.

**26**           Mr. Jeff Light, 43 Forest Glen Drive, said that he recognizes the position of the property owner  
**28**           with regards to the substation, and recognized that the attorney and engineer did their best  
**30**           to present the proposal to the Planning Board. Despite this, rezoning the property from  
              residential to commercial is not the community’s vision for the area. He said that the Planning  
              Board has been very diligent with the solar projects that have come before them.

**32**           Ms. Carolyn Light, 43 Forest Glen Drive, provided the Planning Board with some information  
**34**           about National Heritage areas, within which this property is located, and said that she would  
              like to see applications that enhance the town’s Comprehensive Plan, rather than just  
              complying with it.

**36**           Mr. Dana Nugent, abutting property owner, said that he moved to Chase Hill Road 23 years  
**38**           ago and is a great place to live because of the quality of life. He opposed the project because  
              it would negatively impact the community’s quality of life.

**40**           Mr. Michael Grills, abutting property owner, opposed the project. He said he has respect for  
**42**           the Cherenzia family and they have been great neighbors. But he does not support making  
              these changes to the area and has been trying to maintain the rural character of the area.  
**44**

2 Ms. Carol Derouchers, neighboring property owner, said that she feels that the neighbors feel  
4 about the solar project likely how the Cherenzia family feels about the substation. She noted  
that the solar project does not conform to the Town’s new solar ordinance.

6 There was no further comment from the public.

8 Mr. Surdut closed his presentation by informing the Planning Board that the applicant plans  
to buffer the project by more than 100’ on all sides.

10

MR. PRELLWITZ MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING.

12

MS. WILLIAMS SECONDED THE MOTION.

MR. DIORIO, MS. WILLIAMS, MR. HOLBERTON, MR. PRELLWITZ, AND MR. LINDELOW VOTED IN  
14 FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

MOTION PASSED 5-0.

16

The Planning Board discussed the application.

18

Ms. Williams moved to advise to the Town Council that the Planning Board does not  
20 support the proposed Zoning Map and Future Land Use Map amendments, based on  
a lack of consistency with Hopkinton Comprehensive Plan’s Natural Resource Goal  
22 #1 (NR-1), to preserve, conserve, and protect the significant natural resources of  
Hopkinton as an endowment for the future of the town, Land Use Goal #1 (LU-1), to  
24 protect the quality of life and rural character of Hopkinton; Land Use Goal #4 (LU-4),  
to preserve existing working farms, wildlife, and wildlife habitat, and the Future Land  
26 Use Map.

28

MR. HOLBERTON SECONDED THE MOTION.

MR. DIORIO, MS. WILLIAMS, MR. HOLBERTON, MR. PRELLWITZ, AND MR. LINDELOW  
30 VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

MOTION PASSED 5-0.

32

34 **OLD BUSINESS:**

None

36

**NEW BUSINESS:**

38

Development Plan Review – **Pre-application meeting** – Camp Yawgoog Improvement Plan –  
40 AP 16 Lot 27 – 61 Camp Yawgoog Road – RI Boy Scouts of America Camp Yawgoog, applicant

42

John Patrick Walsh, registered architect, presented the application. He explained that Camp  
Yawgoog was established in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and that many of the buildings were  
44 coming to the end of their useful life, having been built in the 1920s. The Boy Scouts have been

2 making improvements, starting the prior year with a new shower facility and this new  
4 building. The plan is to keep the aesthetic similar to the existing cabin look. The next project  
6 proposed is a staff cabin to replace the small one that has already been demolished. There is  
8 also a new shower facility proposed at the Sandy Beach camp site, with a planned conversion  
10 of the old shower facility to a staff cabin. The final proposal in the plan is to replace the Camp  
12 Three Point dining hall with one that is handicap accessible, a safer environment for the  
14 scouts, and additional staff space on the second floor. This project merits development plan  
16 review because of the size of the new facility, whereas the prior projects were replacements.  
18 The applicant is seeking input from the Planning Board as to how much review is desired  
20 from the Town.

22 Questions from the Planning Board:

24 Mr. DiOrio: Given the unique nature of the site, he expected that there could be a Master Plan  
26 approved by the Planning Board, but the remainder of the review could be approved  
28 administratively by the Town Planner.

30 Mr. Holberton: I agree with Al. If you've been going to the Town for all of the building  
32 permits and DEM has reviewed everything, I don't think the Board needs to see it.

34 Mr. Prellwitz: Going through the other state and federal regulations, and since it's built to the  
36 building codes, I think it is ok to proceed.

38 Ms. Williams: How much do we need for a Master Plan approval?

40 Mr. Lamphere: I think the materials that they've submitted would satisfy the Master Plan  
42 stage.

44 Ms. Williams: Are the buildings heated?

Mr. Walsh: They have hot and cold water as required by building codes, but the building does  
not have a heating source. They are typically used from June to mid-August.

Mr. Brandon Blanchard, Pare Corporation, has been working with Camp Yawgoog since 2005.  
He worked on previous improvements to the Camp's OWTSs. He explained the layout of the  
camp locations, and that the improvements are not intended to increase the amount of scouts  
that use the camp. In making upgrades to the camp facilities, they have already consulted  
with DEM for the OWTS upgrades.

Mr. Marc Cardin, Narragansett Council of BSA, also offered to answer questions from the  
Planning Board. He noted that girls will be camping at Yawgoog in all-girl troops, contrary  
to reports that there would be coed campsites.

Mr. DiOrio said that he would like to see the applicants do what is required by the Town's  
regulations, but not add additional burden to the applicant. Several Board members agreed  
that they were amenable to administrative approval throughout the rest of the Development  
Plan Review process.

There was no adverse comment from the public for this application.

**2** HAVING FOUND THAT THE IMPACTS FROM THE PROPOSED APPLICATION ARE TOO MINIMAL TO WARRANT  
FURTHER REVIEW, MS. WILLIAMS MOVED TO WAIVE FURTHER REVIEW BY THE PLANNING BOARD UNDER  
**4** DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW.

MR. HOLBERTON SECONDED THE MOTION

**6** MR. DIORIO, MS. WILLIAMS, MR. HOLBERTON, MR. PRELLWITZ, AND MR. LINDELOW APPROVED.  
MOTION PASSED 5-0.

**8**

**10 SOLICITOR'S REPORT:**

None

**12**

**PLANNER'S REPORT:**

**14**

None

**16 CORRESPONDENCE AND UPDATES:**

None

**18**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**20**

None

**22 DATE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING:** April 3, 2019

**24 ADJOURNMENT:**

MR. PRELLWITZ MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

**26**

MR. HOLBERTON SECONDED THE MOTION

MR. DIORIO, MS. WILLIAMS, MR. HOLBERTON, MR. PRELLWITZ, AND MR. LINDELOW APPROVED.

**28**

MOTION PASSED 5-0.

**30**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 P.M.