

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

6 **Wednesday, August 7, 2019**
7 **7:00 P.M.**

8 **CHARIHO MIDDLE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM**
9 **455B SWITCH RD**
10 **WOOD RIVER JUNCTION, RI 02894**

12 **CALL TO ORDER:**

13 The August 7, 2019 meeting of the Hopkinton Planning Board was called to order at
14 7:01 P.M. by Chair Al DiOrio.

16 **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

17 Al DiOrio, Amy Williams, Ron Prellwitz, Keith Lindelow, and Carolyn Light were present.

18 Also present were Emily Shumchenia, Planning Board Alternate; James Lamphere, Town
20 Planner; John Pennypacker, Conservation Commission; and Sean Henry, Planning Clerk.

22 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

23 MS. WILLIAMS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 3RD, 2019 PLANNING
24 BOARD MEETING.

25 MR. PRELLWITZ SECONDED THE MOTION.

26 MR. DIORIO, MS. WILLIAMS, MR. PRELLWITZ, MR. LINDELOW, AND MS. LIGHT APPROVED.
27 MOTION PASSED 5-0.

28 **PUBLIC HEARING:**

29 Consider amendments to the Hopkinton Comprehensive Plan (Public Services & Facilities
32 Recommendations #14 and #19), and amendment to the Hopkinton Zoning Ordinance District Use
33 Table to prohibit Wind Turbines in all zones.

34 MS. WILLIAMS MADE A MOTION TO OPEN A PUBLIC HEARING.

35 MR. PRELLWITZ SECONDED THE MOTION.

36 MR. DIORIO, MS. WILLIAMS, MR. PRELLWITZ, MR. LINDELOW, AND MS. LIGHT APPROVED.
38 MOTION PASSED 5-0.

39 Town Councilor Sylvia Thompson introduced the proposal for the Planning Board. She
40 explained that Planning Board will hear a variety of information about the Town's zoning
42 ordinance. The Tax Assessor had identified 133 potential properties that could house a wind
43 turbine according to the proposed ordinance created by the Conservation Commission. She
44 said that there are too many unknowns regarding potential risks from wind turbines to

2 residents, and suggests that the Planning Board send an advisory opinion to the Town
Council prohibiting wind turbines in all zones.

4

Comments from the public:

6

J. Moreau: I have a friend that has a great piece of property on Quidneck Reservoir that now
8 has seven wind turbines near it. There are aesthetic and health concerns with wind turbines.
Instances of these projects would be cases of spot zoning. Connecticut has enacted a
10 moratorium on wind turbines, as have several towns in Rhode Island. Wind turbines would
be in opposition of Land Use Goal #1: Protect the rural character of Hopkinton. Mr. Moreau
12 also cited several local news articles from Cape Cod regarding negative effects of wind
turbines that had been proposed and installed there.

14

H. Buford: The Conservation Commission has been in existence for 50 years, and I have
been a member for over half of it's existence. Mr. Buford described the mission of the
16 Conservation Commission, and commented that many groups support the use of wind
turbines in towns like Hopkinton. Keeping Hopkinton country means preventing suburban
18 sprawl. Wind energy supports farmers, supports the environment, and creates revenue. The
Hopkinton Land Trust and Conservation Commission have purchased and preserved over
20 1,000 acres of property in Hopkinton. Wind energy will support land preservation into the
future. The Conservation Commission has participated in several workshops with the Town
22 Council and has amended the proposed wind ordinance with their support. Each turbine
powers 350 homes, and all of the homes in Hopkinton could be powered by ten turbines.
24 Wind is free, unending, clean power to help keep Hopkinton country.

24

Ms. Light: Did the Conservation Commission's ordinance reflect any of the content of the
26 State's model wind ordinance?

26

Mr. Buford: The ordinance was put together through the effort of multiple groups, like the
28 Town Council and Conservation Commission, and worked with some restrictions.

28

Ms. Light: There were definitions in the model ordinance that were missing from the
30 Conservation Commission's ordinance.

30

Ms. Williams: There seems to be a difference between the two proposals with respect to the
32 number of properties in town that could support wind turbines.

32

Mr. Buford: The Conservation Commission in their proposed ordinance identified parcels at
34 least 50 acres in size that aren't already being preserved. There are 10-20 parcels, not 133.

34

Mr. Prellwitz: Could you describe the sunset clause?

36

Mr. Buford: The purpose was to give reassurance to the Town and to residents. After 1-2
years, the ordinance would cease to exist and would require action of a future Town
38 Council to restart or continue.

38

C. Derouchers: After looking up the effects of wind turbines, I have concern for the
40 residents. Turbines negatively affect neighboring residents. Sound and low-frequency
emissions impact neighbors. Our town's rural character would not be preserved by adding
42 wind turbines. Infrasound, which is sound that cannot be heard, but can affect people's
bodies, resonate in their homes' walls and floors. It's called Wind Turbine Syndrome.

42

E. Bibler: I am opposed to wind turbines and solar generation as they are manufacturing
44 uses. Wind development projects are of regional impact, not just local impact. Even solar

44

2 developers note the problems that would arise in attempting to install wind turbines in
Hopkinton. It is inappropriate for the Conservation Commission to be drafting regulations
4 for industrial facilities. The Comprehensive Plan’s goals for renewable energy don’t note
that most of the wind resources in Rhode Island are off-shore. With a capacity factor of 20%,
6 capacity credit is very low. Revenue to the Town outside of one-time permitting fees is
restricted to \$5,000 per MW, so a 1.5 MW turbine would generate just \$7,500 per year.
8 Farmers who don’t own the systems will get an annual lease payment in the few thousands
of dollars. Decommissioning costs are greatly understated by developers. There are annual
10 wind turbine noise conferences that share data on noise generated by turbines.

S. Rittling: I support the concept of wind power. We face the problem of climate change. I
12 expect the Town’s leadership to craft an ordinance that accounts for negatives affects of
wind turbines.

14 L. McCormick: Many people are uninterested in living near wind turbines due to their
negative effects. The trajectory of the town is not good for the future.

16 S. Aharonian: According to a local article, “Turbine neighbors are fed up” regarding wind
turbines in Western Coventry. Their Town Council member gets complaints daily. Residents
18 that live over 2,000 feet away complain of noise. I don’t believe that siting of these projects
will stop with working farms. I support Councilor Thompson’s proposed amendments to
20 prohibit wind energy production in Hopkinton.

J. Light: Regarding an earlier statement from Mr. Buford, organizations support wind
22 energy where siting concerns have been properly addressed; not in all cases. They say it
should be sited away from rivers, streams, and historical sites.

24 T. Walsh: I have read that environmental organizations do support wind energy, but only if
it’s sited appropriately. The technology can clearly be detrimental to people that are a great
26 distance away. I do not support passing something, and then figuring out how to remediate
it after the fact.

28 G. Williams: The location of a proposed wind turbine site is in my back yard. The potential
location for the wind turbine is in a Manufacturing zone. I encourage the Board to gather
30 information prior to deciding their opinion on this matter. For example, estimates heard
about effects on animals from turbines cover a wide range. Statistics can be alarming when
32 presented without context.

34
36 There was no additional comment from the public.

38 The Planning Board deliberated on how they would advise the Town Council. Some
members were supportive of the Thompson proposal to explicitly prohibit wind turbines.
40 Mr. Lindelow agreed with the proposal that there were too many negative effects of
turbines for them to be allowed in Hopkinton. Ms. Light noted that wind power is desirable
42 when sited correctly in industrial areas, away from residents, and that the negative effects
outweigh the power that would be generated by Hopkinton’s limited wind resources. Other
44 board members noted that the Town currently does not allow wind turbines in any zone
because it does not have an assigned use in the Town’s District Use Table, and felt that the

2 proposal to prohibit was redundant, and possibly unnecessary. They thought that
preserving the current regulations would be preferable outright prohibition. Ms. Williams
4 confirmed that the use is currently not allowed under current zoning regulation, therefore
the Town is not at risk of a wind turbine being permitted should the Town not take any
6 action. Mr. DiOrio echoed that wind turbines are currently not allowed in Hopkinton, and
that the Town Council retains the power to prevent any potential zone changes from being
8 approved, should one be proposed that the Town would rather not see executed. He
thought that the regulations do not need to be amended, and that the proposal is redundant.
10 Mr. Prellwitz said that prohibition without getting more information would be hasty and
short-sighted, and that the Board didn't have enough information before them to make an
12 informed decision. Mr. Pennypacker agreed that more information is needed in order to
make the best decision for the Town. Ms. Shumchenia asked that the Board make it's
14 decision explicit so that the Board's intentions are clear to people that will later read it.
Many Board members agreed that Hopkinton lacks significant wind resources that would
16 be worth the detrimental effects that would be felt by residents and abutting property
owners. Mr. DiOrio polled the Planning Board: He, Ms. Williams, and Mr. Prellwitz were
18 comfortable with the current zoning regulation as-is. Mr. Lindelow and Ms. Light were in
favor of Councilor Thompson's proposal to add wind energy to the District Use Table and
20 explicitly prohibit it in all zones.

22 AFTER A LENGTHY PUBLIC HEARING WHERE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PROVIDED COMMENT, MR.
PRELLWITZ MADE A MOTION TO ADVISE THE TOWN COUNCIL THAT THREE PLANNING BOARD
24 MEMBERS WOULD LIKE TO PRESERVE THE CURRENT ZONING REGULATIONS WITH RESPECT TO
WIND ENERGY BECAUSE WIND TURBINES ARE ALREADY NOT PERMITTED UNDER THE TOWN'S
26 CURRENT ZONING REGULATIONS BY VIRTUE OF BEING ABSENT FROM THE TOWN'S ZONING
ORDINANCE DISTRICT USE TABLE, WHILE TWO PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS SUPPORTED THE
28 PROPOSAL BEFORE THE BOARD TO EXPLICITLY PROHIBIT WIND TURBINES IN THE TOWN OF
HOPKINTON.

30 MR. LINDELOW SECONDED THE MOTION.

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

34 MOTION PASSED 5-0.

36 MS. WILLIAMS MADE A MOTION TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING

38 MR. PRELLWITZ SECONDED THE MOTION.

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

40 MOTION PASSED 5-0.

42 **OLD BUSINESS:**

44

2 Advisory Opinion to Town Council – **Request from Town Council for clarification of Zoning**
4 **Ordinance District Use Table regarding the Art Studio/Gallery (caustic and/or hazardous**
4 **materials) Use in Manufacturing-zoned parcels.**

6 Town Planner James Lamphere provided a summary of the reason for the reappearance of
8 the request from the Town Council. The Planning Board had already provided an advisory
10 opinion for the application before the Town last month, but the Council had asked that the
10 Planning Board re-examine the Studio/Art Gallery use being permitted in Manufacturing
10 zones, which was not included in the applicant’s original request.

12 Ms. Williams said that she had looked at the District Use Table for consistency between this
14 use and other uses. There are more intensive uses that are allowed in Manufacturing zone,
16 but what’s not permitted are uses where members of the public would be travelling to and
16 gathering. She thought it would be more consistent with the zoning ordinance if the use
16 remained not allowed.

18 Comment from the public:

20 B. Capalbo: I brought up the issue for the Studio/Art Gallery use with caustic materials
22 because of the size of some of the caustic activities. Some artists use things like massive glass
22 furnaces and huge buildings where industrial arts might be done.

24 The Planning Board discussed with members of the public the proposal of expanding the
26 caustic materials use into Manufacturing-zoned parcels. Mr. Pennypacker noted that
26 Manufacturing zones are a good place for more intensive materials to be used.

28 MS. WILLIAMS MADE A MOTION TO ADVISE THE TOWN COUNCIL THAT THE PLANNING BOARD
30 SUPPORTS THE STUDIO/ART GALLERY USE CATEGORY 762 (CAUSTIC OR HAZARDOUS
30 MATERIALS USED) BEING LOCATED IN RFR-80 ZONE WITH A SPECIAL USE PERMIT, PROHIBITED
32 IN R-1 ZONE, REQUIRING A SPECIAL USE PERMIT IN NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS, COMMERCIAL,
32 AND MANUFACTURING ZONES, AND WOULD REQUIRE AN AQUIFER PROTECTION PERMIT IN
32 BOTH THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY AQUIFER PROTECTION OVERLAY ZONES.

34 MR. PRELLWITZ SECONDED THE MOTION

36 MR. DIORIO, MS. WILLIAMS, MR. PRELLWITZ, MR. LINDELOW, AND MS. LIGHT APPROVED.
36 MOTION PASSED 5-0.

38 **NEW BUSINESS:**
40 None

42 **SOLICITOR’S REPORT:**
42 None

44 **PLANNER’S REPORT:**

2

Dickinson North Road Administrative Subdivision was approved since last meeting.

4

CORRESPONDENCE AND UPDATES:

6

None

8

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

10

DATE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING: September 4, 2019

12

ADJOURNMENT:

14

MR. PRELLWITZ MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

MR. LINDELOW SECONDED THE MOTION

16

MR. DIORIO, MS. WILLIAMS, MR. PRELLWITZ, MR. LINDELOW, AND MS. LIGHT APPROVED.
MOTION PASSED 5-0.

18

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 P.M.