

Worthington Planning Board working Meeting:

August 25, 2025

In Attendance:

Bart Niswonger
Kate Bavelock
Kathy Ford
Nestor Matthews
Anna Maunz
Brianna Fortmuller
Aaron Simms

Agenda:

• Discussion with BlueWave Solar regarding two large scale solar projects under consideration for Worthington

Project Proposals are Dual Use: Designed to allow farming to continue under the panels.

Agrovoltaics: Keeping the farmland in active farming
Land must be in 61A or farmland soils and be in continued agricultural use - within the past 5 years.

Two Proposed Projects at:

190 Ridge Road Worthington MA

105 Old Post Road Worthington MA

Blue Wave is aiming to submit applications by October/ November

Construction in 2026

Operation by 2027

Nestor asks about Batteries and safety- they will send along more information.

Blue Wave Solar can do training with the Fire Department as part of criteria for Special Permit.

- the batteries are considered 'inert'
- short duration batteries
- Aaron will send resources about fire/ toxicity

Kate asks about Taxes: Up to the town to decide about taxes

A Pilot: an agreement of the amount for a specific length of time. vs an upfront amount: What does that look like for Palmer?

- local tax

- business taxes
- 53 G account? Clarification on what this is. Blue Wave Solar mentioned this being better for the Town's interests.

Bart asks about Decommissioning: There is a decommissioning plan that is a part of a site plan review process.

40 years is the typical lifespan. Blue Wave would come and take it away in 40 years.

Aaron: Would like to not have a "de-commissioning bond" - where money just goes to insurance agent.

- hoping to not have to have screening - as it will take up agricultural use. Fencing is usually: 7' fence to surround the property with mesh wire. Bekert classic field fence
- panels rotate from dawn- dusk

Bart: asks about usage of land

1/4 acre concrete pad/ lot. Everything else is pounded in posts. 26'-30' posts with 1/2 of them embedded.

Planning Board: Discussion about how the Site Review Process will apply in this situation..

Blue Wave can help recommend a consultant and recommends having a consultant.

Bart asks if there is any plan to have an public education sessions.

Kathy recommends: Public Meet and Greet with community.

Special Permit for Ridge Road? If there is no Special Permit there is no hearing
Assuming no special Permit: do we still have a hearing?

We all agree there should be public input.

Decision should be made within 65 days

Deem Complete: 35 days after Public Listening session/ Getting Feedback from other departments. Following meeting within 30 Days

Interest in visiting Palmer: September 8th: Planning Board Palmer Field Trip

Plant to Move Forward:

- Visiting Palmer: September 8th

Possible Drive By's of other Solar Projects at:

- Shattuck Road, Hadley Ma
- South Lane, Granville, MA
- Questions sent to Town Council
 - Water supply protection district
 - Do they need to be listed as a permitted use to be able to build?
 - Is a Special Permit necessary for Ridge Road/ either property.

- Contacting the Assessors/ Select board
- Notifying other Departments
 - *Notify Tax assessors about the project so they can have the heads up about this project- Pilot Programs. Expectation of Application in the Fall.
- Forward Information to the Fire Chief
- All Planning Board: Re-read ByLaws

• **Discussion of Safe Routes to School and other walkability grants**

No New Info

• **ADU Regulations Update and discussion**

- Nestor Presentation: Using Model Law
 - Will go over in the next week and email to all of us to review.

• **Discussion of fall 2025 meeting, larger planning process**

Kathy: re-framing as community development. Kathy will send a pdf of 'Creating a Village Center for Aquinnan'

- Affordable housing: Starter Homes/ ADUs.
- Walking Paths
- COA

Kate contacted a friend at PVPC - but they recommended that we apply for LTA funds so we can get in touch with Ken: "*Village Center Plan*" to apply for DLTA

Kate: "Technical assistance for creating one or more new zoning districts of denser housing developments"

• **Approval of past minutes**

To Dos:

Bart: Email Ken to ask about "Technical assistance for creating one or more new zoning districts of housing zoning developments": What can we do with Zoning to create a village center?

Ask Selectboard about Carpooling to Site Visit

Important Dates:

-Palmer Planning Board Field Trip: September 8th meet at 12:30. Meet around 2 p.m. in Palmer
-18 acres

-Next Planning Board Meeting: September 17th @ 6:30 p.m

[Handwritten signature: J. May]

[Handwritten signature: Kate B]
[Handwritten initials: TBW]

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