

**AMHERST PLANNING BOARD**  
**Wednesday, February 17, 2016 – 7:00 PM**  
**Town Room, Town Hall**  
**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Stephen Schreiber, Chair, Rob Crouner, Bruce Carson, Richard Roznoy (7:05PM), Greg Stutsman and Christine Gray-Mullen

**ABSENT:** Pari Riahi

**STAFF:** Christine Brestrup, Interim Planning Director

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Mr. Schreiber opened the meeting at 7:03 PM.

**I. MINUTES**

Mr. Carson MOVED to approve the Minutes of February 3, 2016. Mr. Stutsman seconded and the vote was 5-0-0.

**II. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME – Temporary Town Manager Peter Hechenbleikner to meet with Planning Board members**

Mr. Hechenbleikner thanked the members of the Planning Board for the invitation to meet with them. He noted that he had been a practicing planner for eight years before becoming a manager. He has a lot of admiration for the work of the Planning Board and Planning Department. Mr. Hechenbleikner will be working in Amherst for about five to six months, during which time he will help the town to look for a permanent town manager. He is retired and does not plan to apply for the permanent position. He is enjoying working in Amherst so far. Amherst has many dedicated staff, board and committee members. His role is to support the Select Board. He does not plan to make major changes. He noted that two seats on the Planning Board are currently vacant and he plans to establish a process to fill these seats.

Mr. Crouner welcomed Mr. Hechenbleikner, noting that he was glad to have a fresh perspective on what Amherst is doing, especially from someone with a planning background. He invited Mr. Hechenbleikner to let the Planning Board know about anything that he noticed that could be changed for the better. Mr. Hechenbleikner plans to write a memo to the next town manager with his ideas about things that may need attention.

**III. ZONING**

**A. Zoning Subcommittee Report**

Mr. Crouner presented the ZSC report. The ZSC had a lively discussion about Mixed-use Building Standards and the ZSC members hope to bring this zoning amendment to Town Meeting.

Ms. Brestrup explained the proposed schedule for public hearings over the next two months. Rather than holding four meetings in March and two in April, she proposes to hold three in March and three in April. The meetings would be held on March 2, 9 and 16 and April 6, 13 and 20. Mr. Crouner noted that this schedule meant that the Planning Board would be meeting for “three weeks on, three weeks off and three weeks on”.

Planning Board members agreed by consensus to the proposed schedule.

Mr. Schreiber noted that Ms. Riahi would be returning to the Planning Board in March.

**B. Public Comment Period – none**

#### IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS – ZONING AMENDMENTS

##### **A-03-16 Zoning – Separate B-L & COM Districts in Dimensional Table (Planning Board)**

To see if the Town will amend Article 6, Table 3, Dimensional Regulations and its Footnotes, of the Zoning Bylaw, with respect to dimensional requirements for the Limited Business (B-L) and Commercial (COM) Districts, by establishing separate columns for the dimensional requirements of the two districts, and revising Footnote “j” accordingly

Mr. Schreiber recited the preamble and opened the public hearing.

Mr. Crouner described the proposed amendment. It is a simple article having to do with the dimensional table and dimensional standards. The dimensional requirements for the Limited Business (B-L) and Commercial (COM) zoning districts are listed in the same column in Table 3, Dimensional Table. The dimensional requirements are the same for both zoning districts. If the town wanted to propose a change for one or the other of the districts it would have to change them for both the way the table is currently structured. Separating the two districts would allow them to be changed separately. No change to the dimensional requirements is proposed at this time. The Planning Board was advised by Town Counsel that it was necessary to bring this proposed change to Town Meeting. The only dimensional requirement that is different for the two zoning districts is maximum lot coverage. When the zoning districts are separated into two columns it is easier to show maximum lot coverage for each district separately. Footnote “j” will only be needed to apply to the B-L district, since the maximum lot coverage in the COM district is 70% in all COM districts. Therefore the reference to the COM district in Footnote “j” is not needed.

The Zoning Subcommittee recommends that the Planning Board recommend to Town Meeting that this zoning amendment be adopted.

Pam Rooney of 42 Cottage Street appreciated receiving the notice for the public hearing. It is important for residents to understand what is being proposed. The mailed notification went above and beyond what is required by law. Ms. Rooney fully supports the separation of B-L and COM in the dimensional table. The two districts are different in nature. She recommended correcting the other problems with footnotes (such as Footnote “n”, which refers to a Section of the Bylaw which no longer exists) as part of this zoning amendment.

Ms. Rooney noted that Footnote “a” is important. It requires that the Planning Board consider a Special Permit under Footnote “a” in the context of the patterns of the same dimensions established by existing buildings and landscape features in the surrounding neighborhood. All of the B-L zoning districts around the B-G district are transition areas from business to neighborhood. The Permit Granting Authority can consider waivers but needs to consider the context of the neighborhoods in which those waivers are requested.

Ms. Rooney stated that a 3-story maximum height in the B-L zoning district is appropriate.

Mr. Crouner acknowledged that there are three footnotes that refer to either to the wrong section of the Bylaw or to a section that no longer exists. The ZSC prefers to propose correcting these problems via a separate zoning amendment in the future.

Mr. Crouner MOVED to close the public hearing and that the Planning Board recommend to Town Meeting that the proposed zoning amendment to separate the B-L and COM zoning districts in Table 3, Dimensional Regulations, be adopted. Mr. Stutsman seconded and the vote was 6-0-0.

**A-04-16            Zoning – B-L District Dimensions & Footnote “b”  
(Planning Board)**

To see if the Town will amend Article 6, Table 3, Dimensional Regulations and its Footnotes, of the Zoning Bylaw, with respect to Limited Business (B-L) Districts by adding the B-L District to the districts listed under Footnote “b” and by adding Footnote “b” to the additional lot area/family requirement for the B-L District, so as to remove the requirement for basic minimum lot area and additional lot area per dwelling unit from the B-L District dimensional requirements.

Mr. Schreiber recited the preamble and opened the public hearing.

Mr. Crowner described the proposed amendment. The article is presented at the request of the downtown community. The impetus is the Master Plan which calls for increased density in the downtown. To accomplish that the town needs to promote residential use in the downtown. Allowing residential use in the downtown supports the businesses in the downtown. There are three B-L (Limited Business) districts surrounding the downtown (B-G) General Business district. Most of the lots in the B-L abutting the downtown are not large enough to accommodate residential use. Most of the existing residential use in these districts is non-conforming. We are unlikely to have any new residential use unless we change the dimensional requirements. The B-L zoning district also exists along University Drive and on Dickinson Street. The B-L districts that the business community would like to change are the ones abutting the downtown. They are: an area north of Triangle Street, an area west of North Pleasant Street and an area on the east side of South Prospect Street, from Amity Street to the Amherst College properties.

Mr. Crowner further explained that the lots in these areas are small. Zoning dimensional requirements are additional limiting factors. For instance lot coverage and building coverage are both smaller in the B-L districts than in the B-G.

The proposed change would allow residential use that is not possible now. However there are other issues regarding this proposed change that need to be considered.

All of the B-L districts around the downtown are in the Municipal Parking District (MPD). The MPD doesn't require provision of on-site parking.

There are issues related to the character and conditions of mixed-use buildings. Most of the new development in the B-L surrounding the downtown is likely to be mixed-use buildings.

The Zoning Subcommittee is currently working on a mixed-use building article.

There is also an issue with regard to Inclusionary Zoning. The Zoning Subcommittee and Planning Board had hoped to require that developments include affordable units. However, the Planning Board's approach to Inclusionary Zoning didn't succeed at last spring's Town Meeting.

Downtown is an appropriate place for dense development and housing should be developed there.

The ZSC recognizes that people will have concerns with this proposed amendment. The ZSC did not make a recommendation to the Planning Board, although there have been a number of discussions with interested citizens. The ZSC would like to have a bigger discussion with more people and therefore has waited for the Planning Board public hearing to decide on a recommendation.

Mr. Crowner explained the mechanics of the proposed change. The amendment would add the B-L zoning district to Footnote “b”. It would remove the lot area requirement and additional lot area requirement for the B-L zoning district for residential use.

Maurianne Adams of Precinct 10, a member of the UTAC Steering Committee and a member of CAN (Coalition of Amherst Neighborhoods) urged the Planning Board to withdraw this amendment for spring Town Meeting. It is premature and not adequately vetted. The town needs to do an adequate district by district study of this proposal since there are five distinct B-L districts in Amherst.

Ms. Adams referred to the definition of the B-L district as a transitional zone, meant to provide for areas of moderate density. It is a transitional zone between residential and business uses. This proposed change would turn the B-L district into a B-G district.

Ms. Adams stated that the B-L district along University Drive may be appropriate for more density, but it is susceptible to flooding. Ms. Adams expressed concern about drainage along University Drive and she mentioned climate change as an exacerbating factor. Changes to the B-L district along Dickinson Street may be of concern for the neighbors.

Ms. Adams stated that neighbors of all of the districts should be included in the discussion.

Ms. Adams expressed concerns about what would happen to the streetscape along the west side of Kendrick Park.

Ms. Adams read from a letter that she had written.

Joyce Berkman of 66 Cottage Street was pleased to have been notified by mail of the proposed change, even though the notification had not been required. She supports passing an amendment to require notification of zoning changes. She expressed concern about the proposed changes. Cottage Street is a residential neighborhood. There is a senior complex nearby. She asked about the impact of the various changes that are being proposed. What kind of transportation and traffic reports have been done? She would like a report on potential hazards to the elderly and children as a result of these changes. Amherst is a town and not a city. It has tourist appeal and beauty. She supported Ms. Adams comments about the need to examine each area of the B-L zoning district separately.

Melissa Perot of Summer Street read a letter from Hilda Greenbaum urging the Planning Board not to bring the B-L District Dimensions & Footnote “b” to Town meeting. The letter made a number of points, among which were:

There is a need to define a vision for each B-L district

There are concerns in general about the dimensional regulations in Table 3

There are questions about comparable dimensional requirements for the R-G and other zones

The dimensional requirements in general are unrealistic

Ms. Greenbaum proposed elimination of all footnotes in the dimensional table and changing the dimensional requirements across the board to dimensions that the town believes are appropriate.

Denise Barberet of North Whitney Street and a Precinct 9 Town Meeting member offered comments as follows:

- She is pleased that the ZSC has considered the merits and detriments of this proposed amendment;
- The article is premature;

- We don't have a clear indication of the existing housing situation in downtown;
- What are the number of housing units in the downtown area?
- There may be a glut of housing downtown;
- Economic development relates to the number of businesses downtown;
- There has been a decrease in the number of businesses;
- The Planning Board should consider the impact on businesses in the B-L zoning district if this amendment passes;
- There are questions about Footnote "b" and its impact on mixed-use and purely residential projects;
- Does the town want dormitories in the downtown?

Sarah la Cour of the BID and a Precinct 9 Town Meeting member offered the following comments:

- The BID has been talking about this zoning amendment for a long time;
- This is about housing and economic development;
- The Master Plan recommends density in the downtown;
- Footnote "b" already applies to the B-VC, B-N and B-G zoning districts; B-N is a transitional zone;
- Property owners in the B-L zoning district can't even build one or two units on their properties because the lots are too small;
- A Special Permit is needed for townhouses or apartments;
- This change would allow some mixed-use buildings to occur in the B-L district;
- We need more people living downtown;
- More people will bring more amenities.

Mr. Roznoy asked for input from the new Economic Development Director. He would like a close study of the proposal, addressing some of the points that Mr. Crouner raised. He asked the Economic Development Director to report to the Zoning Subcommittee and the Planning Board on this proposed zoning amendment.

Geoff Kravitz, Economic Development Director, offered to look into this in more detail. He noted that the core of the Master Plan is to increase density in the downtown and the village centers. He will look at the issues that have been raised.

Anne Marley, owner of the property at 100 University Drive, stated that the B-L zoning districts are all very different areas. She expressed concerns about the wetlands on the property along University Drive.

Ms. Rooney stated that she understands the interest in changing the regulations for the B-L district adjacent to the downtown, but it could turn out badly. The Planning Board envisions improvements to the quality of life, but the B-L is not the B-G. There is danger in making areas too easy to develop. She recommended that the Board look at Footnote "a", look at the context in which developments occur and treat each B-L district as special.

Mollye Lockwood Vice-president of Real Estate at W.D. Cowsls stated that Cowsls owns properties on Cottage Street. The property is already allowed to have mixed-use by right. She urged the Board to consider what is really happening with this change. The Housing Market Study prepared by RDG Associates contained good data. The downtown area has the ability to absorb more housing and to have mixed use development. Bringing more people into the downtown will support the businesses.

Ken Rosenthal of Sunset Avenue and a Precinct 10 Town Meeting member urged the Board to separate the proposal into relevant parts. Plan each B-L district area separately. Take additional time to develop this article and bring proposals for the separate B-L areas to Town Meeting in the fall.

There was a question about the boundaries of the B-L zoning district. They are not contiguous with the property boundaries in the area.

Mr. Crouner agreed that the Planning Board needed to carefully consider the B-L district areas, but noted that the vetting has to take place in public. The Zoning Subcommittee cannot be the only place to vet the article. Part of the vetting can take place at Town Meeting. He recommended against the Planning Board withdrawing this article.

Mr. Carson stated that it would be more useful to withdraw it and bring it back in the fall.

Mr. Stutsman also expressed concerns about this amendment but he noted that it was important that the work of analyzing the amendment happened in the context of a public hearing and Town Meeting. He agreed that the B-L district is a buffer and noted that the height and lot coverage requirements for the B-L district would not change. The maximum lot coverage in the B-L district is much less than in the B-G district. Also, lot coverage and building coverage can be modified in the B-G but not in the B-L. He further noted that a study of the numbers of housing units has been done. The town has been successful in preserving the outlying districts.

Ms. Adams offered the following comments:

- She wants to hear from the Economic Development Director on the extent to which the vernacular architecture in an area is an asset.
- She would like to have clarification on what is considered to be downtown; it seems to have extended north of Triangle Street.
- She would like the Planning Board to frame the discussion on this amendment, but noted that the Planning Board may wish to refer it back after hearing the discussion.

Ms. Perot made a statement about the opportunity for development in the village centers. She noted the positive effect on the North Amherst Village Center of the Trolley Barn. Other positive developments in North Amherst include the opening of Atkins North, the upcoming opening of a pharmacy, the increase in bus service and new construction of single family homes. Development does not all need to occur downtown.

Ms. Barberet urged the Planning Board not to use Town Meeting to talk about a particular article. This article needs more discussion before it is brought to Town Meeting.

Ms. Berkman asked about whether there is an ideal limit for the amount of development for Amherst. She expressed concern about adding more businesses and the resulting need for more housing, and vice versa. She is concerned about urban sprawl.

Mr. Stutsman responded that the Housing Market Study was commissioned for several purposes, but among them was the desire to bring a certain demographic to town.

Mr. Crouner stated that the Planning Board has several choices with regard to this article:

- 1) Should the article be placed on the Warrant?
- 2) If it is placed on the Warrant should the article be referred back, passed or amended?

Board members acknowledged that the article needs further work. Mr. Roznoy expressed support for putting the article on the Warrant for Town Meeting.

Mr. Roznoy MOVED to continue the public hearing to March 9, 2016, to a time after the Site Plan Review public hearing for the Hampshire College CSA barn solar array. Mr. Stutsman seconded and the vote was 6-0-0.

**V. PUBLIC HEARING – SITE PLAN REVIEW**

**SPR2016-00008 – Hampshire College – 1095 West Street**

Request Site Plan Review approval under Section 3.330.0 of the Zoning Bylaw to construct a 2.55 MW (DC) solar energy generating facility as an accessory use to a non-profit educational institution, to provide Hampshire College with renewable energy (Map 25B/5, R-O zoning district)

Mr. Schreiber read the preamble and opened the public hearing.

Todd Holland of Hampshire College and Mickey Marcus of New England Environmental presented the application.

Hampshire College plans to become a “carbon neutral” campus by 2022. They are proposing to use 100% renewable power. As part of that goal they are proposing to build the 2.55 MW solar energy generating facility on campus. The Board of Trustees has endorsed this project.

The college considered the notion that the solar array was competing with the agricultural use of the property, but determined that the land is not prime agricultural land.

By installing the array inside the confines of the main campus the array can be tied into the electrical system “behind the meter”. There will be arrays installed in Hadley and in Amherst. They will be partially screened and the land underneath will be planted with wild flowers and legumes. Hampshire College will monitor and maintain the site.

Mickey Marcus of NEE presented plans and photographs. The site is 20 acres in size. Eight acres will be used for the solar array. There are several small ground mounted arrays located in Amherst already. This is a large scale solar project. It is part of a two part project that will tie into an interconnection point. No overhead wires are needed. All connections will be underground. Mr. Marcus showed the site layout and the site context.

The project will use the existing open field. There will be rows of ground mounted, post driven arrays. No concrete bases will be needed. There will be two inverters in the middle of the field. The arrays will be tied via underground connections to a central electrical system at Hampshire College. The access drive to the array will come from the main Hampshire College driveway. There is an existing walk or trail. It will be narrowed and paved to form an 8 foot wide path.

Hampshire College has agreed to put in a bus stop. The location of the proposed bus stop and crosswalk have been determined by conversations with the Town Engineer. There will be a slight increase in runoff. Drainage swales will carry the runoff to a detention basin. The stormwater management system has been reviewed and approved by the Town Engineer.

Mr. Marcus showed photographs of typical installations. Hampshire College wanted a diverse grass seed mix below the arrays. Mr. Marcus presented a photograph of the type of wildflower meadow that is proposed.

Mr. Marcus presented photographs of typical signs that are required by state law and for safety and security reasons. There will be a sign on the gate to show the Fire Department where the emergency shut-off is located.

Hampshire College may wish to install interpretive signs, but the college does not have a design for these signs. They may be installed in kiosks.

The DPW requested a new bus stop location and bus pull-off. The bus stop will be moved away from the roundabout to prevent back-ups behind buses in the roundabout.

The arrays will be enclosed with a seven foot high black vinyl coated safety fence. The bottom of the fence will be raised six inches off the ground. There are no rare species on site but the six inch space at the bottom will allow wildlife to move around the landscape.

The array will have a green buffer around it, made up of Redosier Dogwood, which grows to a height of about 12 feet and has brilliant red stems in winter.

Mr. Schreiber reviewed the Site Visit Report, noting that three Planning Board members had attended the site visit. There were questions and issues raised about the crosswalk location and the need for lights along West Bay Road.

Mr. Schreiber acknowledged that a Development Application Report had been submitted to the Planning Board members outlining how the project met the requirements of the Zoning Bylaw.

Ms. Gray-Mullen agreed with the Town Engineer about the need to carefully consider the location of the crosswalk, and agreed that standard practice would move the crosswalk to the intersection of Gould Way, but she expressed concern about the safety of students who may still cross West Bay Road at the end of the pathway, rather than walking up to the crosswalk. She suggested that the pathway could be curved to the west towards the west end of the bus stop, to direct pedestrians to cross at the crosswalk. A fence or shrubs placed at the end of the pathway could be used to direct pedestrians to the crosswalk.

Mr. Carson expressed concern about the proposed crosswalk at Gould Way being too close to the bend in the road. The location of the crosswalk needs more thought. The “unofficial crosswalk” location at the end of the path may make more sense.

It is about 600 feet from the roundabout to the bus stop and proposed crosswalk location.

Ms. Gray-Mullen agreed that the line of sight isn't good, coming around the bend in the road from the west towards Gould Way. She recommended that the applicant go to the Public Works Committee to discuss the location of the crosswalk and get input from the Town Engineer. She suggested the use of flashing lights at the pedestrian crossing.

Ms. Gray-Mullen thanked Hampshire College for offering to install a bus stop. She also noted that there were no lights along this stretch of road. There are three utility poles, including one at the intersection of Gould Way and West Bay Road, and none of them have street lights on them.

John Boothroyd of 22 Longmeadow Drive expressed concern about the cutting of trees and digging in the field to install solar panels. He asked if the panels could be installed in a parking lot instead. He asserted that the use of solar panels does not significantly reduce the use of power from other sources. He expressed concern about replacing farmland.

Ken Rosenthal of 53 Sunset Avenue, a Trustee of Hampshire College, and Chair of the Building and Grounds and Sustainability Committee, spoke in support of the solar installation. Hampshire College is embarking on a plan to be a sustainable institution, replacing blacktop with meadows. He listed other projects that Hampshire is involved in regarding sustainability, including the Kern Center and preserving land in Hadley. There will be minimal tree cutting because the solar array will be installed in an agricultural field.

Mr. Schreiber reminded the audience that the Planning Board's job was to review the project before it. This is a by-right project that is an accessory use to an educational institution. The Planning Board's task is to make sure that it conforms to the Zoning Bylaw.

Ms. Brestrup noted that state law prevents cities and towns from prohibiting solar installations.

Mr. Marcus presented four letters of support from neighbors of the installation, including Yiddish Book Center, Eric Carle Museum, Hitchcock Center for the Environment and Applewood at Amherst

Mr. Marcus noted that Hampshire College is interested in developing a cultural trail through the campus. It would be an internal walking path that is part of an internal trail system.

Mr. Boothroyd requested that Hampshire College re-establish the old pond that was located at the corner of West Street and West Bay Road.

Mr. Marcus stated that the pond had been degraded and filled and that it is far away from the solar project. He showed the location of the outlet for stormwater from the detention basin, noting that it is far from the old pond.

Mr. Marcus stated that solar power has been shown to have a lower carbon footprint than most other energy sources. There will be a small number of trees and some brush on the Hampshire College property that will be cleared, but the trees along West Bay Road that are in the town right-of-way will not be cleared.

Mr. Holland stated that the college is also keeping the apple trees on the west side of the property. The solar array will generate 6 million KW per year. He noted that this is the equivalent of not releasing 2,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, which is equivalent to 390 cars.

The Board found under Section 11.24 of the Zoning Bylaw, Site Plan Review, as follows:

- 11.2400 – The project is in conformance with all appropriate provisions of the Zoning Bylaw;
- 11.2401 – Town amenities and abutting properties will be protected through minimizing detrimental or offensive actions;
- 11.2402 – Abutting properties will be protected from detrimental site characteristics resulting from the proposed use;
- 11.2403 – Adequate recreational facilities, open space and amenities will be provided because the project will pave and improve the walkway from the Hampshire College campus to the Atkins Corner Country Market and will only use approximately 8 acres of a 20 acre site, leaving the remainder of the site open;
- 11.2410 – Unique or important natural, historic or scenic features will be protected; farmland will not be significantly disturbed by the installation of the panels because they will be mounted on posts and no concrete foundations will be required;
- 11.2411 – N/A;
- 11.2412 – N/A;
- 11.2413 – The proposed drainage system within and adjacent to the site will be adequate to handle the small amount of increased runoff resulting from the installation of the solar panels; the Town Engineer and Conservation Commission have reviewed and approved the stormwater management system;
- 11.2414 – Provision of adequate landscaping has been addressed; the project includes a buffer of Redosier Dogwood along the roadway to partially screen the solar array;
- 11.2415 – The soil erosion control methods shown on the Site Plan are considered adequate to control soil erosion both during and after construction; the Conservation Commission has approved the erosion control methods as proposed;
- 11.2416 – Adjacent properties will be protected by minimizing the intrusion of various nuisances;
- 11.2417 – Adjacent properties will be protected from the intrusion of lighting, because no lighting is proposed for this installation;
- 11.2418 – N/A;

- 11.2419 – Wetlands will be protected in accordance with the provisions of the Wetlands Protection Act, Chapter 131, Section 40, and the Amherst Wetlands Bylaw because the project has been reviewed and approved by the Conservation Commission;
- 11.2420 – N/A;
- 11.2421 – N/A;
- 11.2422 – N/A;
- 11.2423 – N/A;
- 11.2424 – Partial screening of the solar array will be provided by the landscape buffer of Redosier Dogwood/
- 11.2430 – The site has been designed to provide for the convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement both within the site and in relation to adjoining ways and properties; a condition of the Site Plan Review approval requires the applicant to consult with the Town Engineer and the Public Works Committee on the best way to guide pedestrians in crossing West Bay Road, including the location of the crosswalk and the layout of the pedestrian pathway;
- 11.2431 – N/A;
- 11.2432 – N/A;
- 11.2433 – Provision for access to adjoining properties has been provided appropriately;
- 11.2434 – N/A;
- 11.2435 – N/A;
- 11.2436 – The requirement for a Traffic Impact Statement will be waived;
- 11.2437 – N/A.

Mr. Marcus stated that the pathway could be curved to the west but this would require grading and filling.

Mr. Boothroyd expressed concern about reflections from the solar panels getting into drivers eyes. Mr. Marcus stated that the solar panels are not reflective. They are designed to absorb light. Other Board members noted that there are solar arrays along the Massachusetts Turnpike that do not produce a problem with reflections.

Mr. Marcus stated that there will be no access for vehicles from West Bay Road. Construction will last for about 3 to 4 months. During this time all staging will occur in the field, with access from the Hampshire College campus roadway.

The Board discussed waivers and conditions.

#### Waivers

- Lighting Plan
- Traffic Impact Statement
- Waiver of the regulation regarding maximum height of fence, under Section 6.29 of the Zoning Bylaw.

#### Conditions

- 1) The applicant shall explore with the Town Engineer and the Public Works Committee locations for the proposed crosswalk across West Bay Road. Following these discussions the applicant shall submit a final Site Plan showing the proposed crosswalk location for review and approval by the Planning Board and ultimate approval by the Select Board.
- 2) Signs that are required for the safe and secure operation of the solar array are permitted as part of this Site Plan Review approval.
- 3) Interpretive signs that may be proposed by Hampshire College that are visible from the public way and that are a total of 12 square feet or less in size, in accordance with Section 8.101 of the Zoning Bylaw, shall be presented to the Planning Board for review and approval.

- 4) Interpretive signs that may be proposed by Hampshire College that are visible from the public way that exceed 12 square feet in size shall require a Special Permit from the Planning Board in accordance with Section 8.101 of the Zoning Bylaw.
- 5) The property shall be managed in accordance with the Management Plan submitted as part of this application.
- 6) Landscaping shall be installed in accordance with the Landscape Plan and, once installed, shall be continually maintained. All disturbed areas shall be loamed and seeded, unless otherwise specified.

Mr. Stutsman MOVED to close the public hearing on the Site Plan Review application, to make the findings as discussed, and to approve the application with waivers and conditions as discussed. Mr. Carson seconded and the vote was 6-0-0.

**VI. OLD BUSINESS**

Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting – none

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

- A.** Downtown Parking Working Group – Planning Board representative – Mr. Roznoy expressed interest in being the Planning Board’s representative.

Mr. Carson MOVED to nominate Mr. Roznoy to represent the Planning Board on the Downtown Parking Working Group. Ms. Gray-Mullen seconded and the vote was 6-0-0.

- B.** Topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting – UTAC subcommittee nomination

Mr. Carson MOVED to nominate Christine Gray-Mullen as the Planning Board representative on the Economic Development Subcommittee of UTAC. Mr. Stutsman seconded and the vote was 6-0-0.

**VIII. FORM A (ANR) SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS** – The Planning Board endorsed the following ANR applications:

- ANR2016-00003 – Town of Amherst – Old Farm Road  
ANR2016-00004 – Hampshire College – 1095 West Street

**IX. UPCOMING ZBA APPLICATIONS** – The Planning Board declined to review the following ZBA applications:

ZBA FY2016-00015 – Amherst Department of Public Works – Request Special Permit to modify conditions of previous Special Permit associated with Transfer Station use, at 740 Belchertown Road

ZBA FY2016-00016 – Conara, Inc., d/b/a The harp – Request Special Permit to transfer ownership and allow continued use of the property as a Class II Restaurant with outdoor dining, live entertainment, and changes to the approved parking plan, at 163 Sunderland Road

ZBA FY2016-00017 – Javad Moshfegh – Request Special Permit to modify conditions of previous Special Permit to formalize exterior changes made to enclose an existing deck for a Converted Dwelling at 65 West Street

**X. UPCOMING SPP/SPR/SUB APPLICATIONS** – Ms. Brestrup reported that the Planning Board had a number of upcoming Site Plan Review and other applications, including a group home on Henry Street, the addition of two apartment units to 417 West Street, the Amity

Street parking lot, a proposed solar array for the Hampshire College CSA barn and a Scenic Roads hearing.

**XI. PLANNING BOARD COMMITTEE & LIAISON REPORTS**

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission – Bruce Carson reported that PVPC proposed to raise the fees that they charge member communities. A final decision will be made in April by the Commissioners. Fees have not been raised in many years. The fee for Amherst is now about \$5,600 and would be raised to \$5,800. Mr. Carson reported that there had been discussion about the Highlands Footpath, connecting hiking trails from Lee to Goshen, a 40 mile walk with B & B’s scattered along its length. There was also discussion about the state-wide Zoning Reform bill. It is far from certain that the bill will come to a vote during this legislative session. They will seek increased funding for the Knowledge Corridor rail line. The goal is to add an additional two trains per day to provide service from Greenfield, MA to New York City, with the prospect of a round trip in one day. There is still talk about the Inland Route, New Haven to Boston to Springfield. \$650 million will be needed to upgrade rail lines in Connecticut alone. PVPC is talking about organizing a capital investment plan for 2016 – 2020 to help cities and towns to know where to go for money for infrastructure projects. There is a new Complete Streets program, with funding available. Christine Gray-Mullen is registered for an upcoming program on Complete Streets. She will attend and report back.

Community Preservation Act Committee – Pari Riahi – no report

Agricultural Commission – Stephen Schreiber – no report

Transportation Task Force – Christine Gray-Mullen and Rob Crouner – Mr. Roznoy’s name has been put forward to be reappointed to the Task Force. The nomination has been well received but it hasn’t yet been acted on. Ms. Gray-Mullen reported that the TTF would be discussing a final draft of a report by Nelson\Nygaard on the establishment of a Transportation Advisory Committee that would provide assistance to the Select Board and the town on all transportation issues. The TTF will be meeting in the upcoming weeks to vote on approval of the report and the report will then be presented to the Town Manager for him to decide how to proceed with it.

Design Review Board – vacant

Housing and Sheltering Committee – Greg Stutsman reported that the Committee would be meeting on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

Zoning Subcommittee – Rob Crouner, Bruce Carson and Greg Stutsman

UTAC (University and Town of Amherst Collaborative) – Greg Stutsman reported that the last meeting had been cancelled due to weather.

**XII. REPORT OF THE CHAIR – none**

**XIII. REPORT OF STAFF – none**

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Christine M. Brestrup  
Interim Planning Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stephen Schreiber, Chair

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_