

Natick Avenue Solar Advisory Committee

October 22, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Attending: Jason Pezzullo, Planning Director; Joshua Berry, Senior Planner; Fred Vincent, Planning Commissioner; Drake Patten, Neighborhood Representative; Daniel Zevon, Neighborhood Representative; Attorney David Iglizzi, Assistant City Solicitor; Lindsay McGovern, Ralph Palumbo, Dave Russo, P.E.; Sara Bradford and John Carter, Landscape Architects and Attorney Robert Murray.

Minor amendments were made to the last meeting minutes.

Landscape Architect, John Carter, reviewed the revised plan, stating that the neighbors' concerns regarding deciduous plants were taken into consideration in forming the revised plan. He stated that an additional ten ft. planting bed in addition to the fifty ft. beds is now proposed. The fifty-foot bed to the North would remain. The East side would have 20-40 ft. of plantings. The NE and SE corners, (Letter D area), will have a typical supplemental planting pattern. He stated that they are going to plant on the southerly side so that the plants will get more sunlight. He stated that the plantings/screening will only get "better and better" with time.

Ms. Patten expressed concern with "the folks on Ridgewood". Mr. Carter stated that the proposal has extended the ten ft. planting strip along the Northerly line. He stated there is 410 ft. from the house to the first panel. He also stated that the 280 ft. of existing vegetation will not be altered. He stated that he tried to identify and cluster the plants to make a more effective buffer. He further stated that Reivity would commit to additional plantings if needed in the "place where it is most appropriate." Mr. Carter stated that he feels that Reivity has met the ordinance requirement "and then some." He will reflect multi-stemmed plants as suggested by Ms. Bradford.

Ms. Bradford reviewed the proposed tree list and explained what the various proposed plantings (deciduous/coniferous) look like. She stated that within five years they "will be substantial". The proposed planting list was compiled jointly with Ms. Bradford and Mr. Carter.

Mr. Vincent stated that he is "comfortable" and satisfied with the plan presented, however, he expressed concern with the lack of irrigation. He was under the impression that this parcel was once a tree farm. Mr. Zevon stated that this site was never a tree farm. Ms. Bradford stated that it is considered a "managed woods". She stated that the existing soil needs to be regraded. Mr. Carter stated that the additional ten ft. planting bed is to provide a suitable planting strip, light and water so as not to be in the understory. Ms. Bradford also stated that the planting strip should have topsoil. She stated the "green" should be loam and seeded. Mr. Carter stated that it will be done and clarified on the plan.

Ms. Patten was concerned with clearing along the gas easement wall and tree topping along the Lawrence property. Ms. Bradford stated that "birch and chaz" in that area would get to 20 ft. high. She also asked Mr. Carter for a wider planting strip in that area. Mr. Carter pointed out the access road in the Southeast area cannot be moved. Ms. Bradford then asked that the plantings be increased in that planting strip. Mr. Palumbo addressed the concern with tree topping, stating that he has never had a conversation with Mr. Lawrence regarding tree topping and does not intend to go on the Lawrence property.

There was some concern with the "verbiage" in No. 8 of the "Plantings" section (Plant substitutions shall be allowed based on availability. Substitutions may be made only with direct approval from the applicant's landscape architect or owner). Mr. Carter stated that, "typically the landscape architect has to verify in writing that what is installed is in substantial conformance with the plan approved". Mr. Carter suggested

that the board can require as-builts. Mr. Carter and Ms. Bradford concurred that they will work on the verbiage.

Ms. Patten expressed concern with her property, stating that the “forest is not coniferous”. Ms. Bradford stated that she “assumed there was quite a bit of vegetation there, although deciduous. Mr. Carter stated that no additional plantings are proposed along the wetland area. He further stated that “we are not promising you will not see it from everywhere.” He further stated that the view is “up” and there is sufficient screening there even in winter. He stated an additional transect was added. He stated that RIDEM has approved the geology.

The detention pond is proposed in the NE corner. Mr. Russo briefly explained the drainage proposal. He explained that it would flow away from Mr. Zevon’s property.

It was agreed that the project would proceed to the DPR Committee, where the adjustments to the plan proposed at this meeting will be presented. Mr. Pezzullo stated that the peer review report would “travel” to the DPR Committee, to the Conservation Committee and then to the Plan Commission Preliminary Plan meeting. It was agreed that a revised plan would be submitted by Mr. Carter on Monday, October 26, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.