

**TOWN OF SKOWHEGAN  
PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

May 4, 2021

7:00 P.M.

Conference Room, Skowhegan Community Center

**PRESENT:**

Steve Conley, Chairman  
Steve St. Pierre, Vice Chairman  
Stephen Gould, Secretary  
Matt Smith  
Joel Greenwood, Planner  
Cynthia Kirk, Recording Secretary

**ABSENT:** Brady Chapman, Harvey Austin

**PUBLIC PRESENT:**

Bryan Belliveau, Code Enforcement Officer  
David Leavitt, MSAD 54  
Jon Moody, MSAD 54  
Mark Hatch, MSAD 54  
Doug Breer, Stephen Blatt Architects  
Andy Johnston, Atlantic Resource Consultants  
Patrick Carroll, Carroll Associates  
Jason Gayne, Chamber of Commerce

• **QUORUM:**

Planning Board Meeting called to order at 7:00 P.M. Quorum was present.

2) **MINUTES OF THE April 20, 2021 PLANNING BOARD MEETING TO BE APPROVED:**

Motion by Stephen Gould to approve the April 20, 2021 Planning Board meeting minutes,  
Seconded by Matt Smith. Motion passed 3-0.

3) **SITE PLAN / SUBDIVISION**

None

4) **ITEMS BY THE PUBLIC:**

None

5) **COMMUNICATIONS:**

None

**6) NEW BUSINESS:**

**A) MSAD #54 presentation regarding proposed new school building.**

Jon Moody, Superintendent of MSAD54, started with the presentation of the new proposed school building to be located behind where the existing Margaret Chase Smith School is located. He explained that they had applied to get on the school replacement list in 2018. They were notified in 2019 that they had been approved for a replacement school. They are looking to build the new 2-3 story school where the bus garage and tennis courts are located now off of Heselton Street. Mr. Moody said this school will be fully state funded and will allow them to consolidate several schools into one. The schools that will be consolidated are Bloomfield Elementary, North Elementary and Margaret Chase Smith schools.

Doug Greer from Stephen Blatt Architects gave a brief rundown of what has transpired over the last year to get to this phase in the project. He said that they were hired last year by MSAD54 once the school district got their rating from the state. They then reviewed all of the current schools and found several deficiencies. They then researched and evaluated what would be the best option for the town in consolidating all of the schools into one. Mr. Greer said they are looking at an approximate 70,000 sq. ft. new school structure that will incorporate grades kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

Andy Johnston from Atlantic Resource Consultants then spoke to the process of the site selection that they have gone through in order to determine which site would be the best option for this new school. They evaluated several sites throughout town and looked at everything from size, access, traffic and neighborhood impact.

Patrick Carroll from Carroll Associates also spoke to the site selection process and said in the end they really wanted to keep this school within the town instead of having it on the outskirts. He said by using this site, they will be able to construct the new building while the Margaret Chase Smith school is still be used without any disruption. Mr. Carroll then went over the traffic, parking and busing information for the new school. He said this will definitely work better for student drop off as well as teacher and parent access.

Steve Conley asked if the athletic fields and tennis courts that will be removed for this project will be moved to another location in town. Patrick Carroll said they have been meeting with the rec. director and are planning on moving those things up to the rec. center area. He also said that some of the fields and the playground will be remaining on the site for use.

Stephen Gould said he was astounded at how busy it was near the current bus garage and he thinks it is really a good idea to have the new bus garage located away from the school.

Jason Gayne asked about the new school being 3 stories and if it will be district funds that will be used to convert North Elementary into the new bus garage. Jon Moody said that the cost of the new bus garage will need to be negotiated with the state since the current bus garage will be impacted by the construction of the new school. So, it may or may not be fully funded by the state. As far as the size of the new school, he said it is an option of having the front part be 3 stories and built into the grade of the property. Then the younger kids would be in the single-story part of the building.

Steve Conley thank everyone for coming and giving a nice presentation.

**7) UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**A) Review the proposed Solar Ordinance**

Joel said he has gone through and made all of the changes that they had talked about at the last meeting. He also included a sample visual impact study if they are looking to include this requirement in the ordinance.

Joel asked if in section 6 if it should say stamped by a “Maine” licensed surveyor. Stephen Gould said it should and also change it to “sealed and/or stamped”.

They reviewed the sample visual impact study. Joel explained this study analyses the local, where the project can be viewed from, etc. Steve Conley said this study is a good idea because it will give them a lot of good information to help them make their decision on projects. Everyone agreed that this should be included in the solar application requirements. Joel continued onto the setback section. Joel said that they have to try and be flexible but at the same time they need to make sure everyone is being treated the same. After further discussion everyone agreed to list the setbacks as 100 ft. from any residential dwelling unit. As far as the height limit of the panels Joel said 15ft is the general standard that he has seen in other solar ordinances. Stephen Gould said the 15ft. sounds good. Everyone agreed. Steve Conley asked what they had decided on for the decommissioning plan. If we are going to require a bond or something else to make sure that it gets completed when it is at the end of it’s use. He is concerned if the property is sold the plan wouldn’t carry over to the new owners. Joel said that they can add that requirement into the ordinance. Joel said he will make these updates and bring it back to them.

**8) COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE:**

Joel said he will be meeting with Greg Dore on Thursday and he will be getting feedback from him regarding the Transportation section so he should have an updated version soon for them.

**9) ITEMS BY:**

• **SELECTMEN:**

• **DEPARTMENT HEADS:**

Bryan said that he has looked at the Maine Water project down by the Eddy. He said the structure currently does not meet the conditions of approval and he will be working on that with them as well as the replanting that they will need to do.

• **MEMBERS:**

Steve St. Pierre asked if there is anything that they can do about all of the overflowing dumpsters in town. Bryan said he can look into it and see if there is anything he can do. He said unfortunately there are over 1300 rental units in town and they can get filled up pretty quickly.

Stephen Gould asked if there had ever been talk about getting the CEO some part time help with inspections. Bryan said no. Joel said that with all of these big projects coming in and the review time for them it might not be a bad idea. Steve Conley said if this is something that Bryan wants them to bring to the Selectmen they would be happy to.

- **CHAIRMAN:**

- **STAFF:**

Joel said that they will have the West Front St. Solar project and the Palmer Heights Subdivision coming up in the next couple meetings.

**9) ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Steve St. Pierre to adjourn at 8:59 p.m., Seconded by Stephen Gould.

Motion passed 3-0.

**Minutes approved on May 18, 2021**

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**Chairman**

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