

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47

APPROVED
HDC MEETING
NOVEMBER 2, 2017

Board Members Present: Chair Rodney Rowland, Vice Chair Jeff Hughes, Tom Maher, Kate Murray, Peter Reed, Irene Bush, and Elaine Nollett.

Not Present: Judy Groppa

Chair Rowland called the meeting of the New Castle HDC to order at 7:00 pm. He also advised that there were no public hearings scheduled, but on the agenda is a discussion on the proposed language for the photovoltaic and solar technology regulations.

1. Review minutes of October 5, 2017.

Jeff Hughes moved to approve the October minutes as amended; Tom Maher seconded. All approved.

2. Discussion of Solar Technology in the District

Chair Rowland stated that Sandra Bisset of the Energy Committee had sent documents via email and Peter Reed provided copies of other documents relating to solar energy and solar panels. From past meetings, the general response from everyone is there needs to be a balance and Chair Rowland believes the new guidelines do a good job of presenting that balance.

Chair Rowland opened the discussion to the public and advised that the proposed guidelines will be in the *Island Items* which he had hoped would be out prior to this evening's meeting but it won't be out until tomorrow. So by next month's meeting, people should have had a chance to review and digest the guidelines. Chair Rowland made copies of the guidelines for the public present at the meeting for their review and discussion.

While Chair Rowland was making copies, Randy Bryan of 34 Wentworth Road inquired as to what the guidelines are. Vice Chair Hughes stated that times are changing and people are embracing solar yet the HDC board takes seriously its charge to preserve the historic character of the town. Present technology detracts from the historic character, but the board believes the panels may be allowed if they are not seen from a public road. The board is encouraged by what Tesla is proposing but the board hasn't seen this technology yet.

Tom Maher added that some of the decisions the board has made in the last couple of years on homes that have applied for solar projects have been approved and some have not. The board is trying to create solutions for houses more visible within the historic district. There was one project which was approved and the board later found the house was more visible than the board was led to believe. The HDC has decided to review regulations as it cannot let everyone who wishes to slap on solar panels do so because the town would look very different. We are trying to be consistent going forward and seek out new technologies that will make our job easier while being aware of our core mission.

Upon Chair Rowland's return to the meeting, he stated the biggest change between the 2012 regulations and the proposed changes are that the old ones said it will not be allowed in the district if it

1 can be seen from a public way. The HDC believes this is an important issue and the new technology will
2 allow us to consider it on a case by case basis. The Chair’s personal opinion is that if an applicant on
3 Main Street wants to maximize solar energy, it won’t be approved because a house in the center of
4 town cannot fill its entire roof with solar voltaic panels; there has to be some balance.

5
6 Sandra Bisset, Chair of the Energy Committee stated she did a very simple google search and found
7 “Solar 101 for NH Municipalities” which is very comprehensive, adding that a lot of the terms may be
8 overkill but the article does lend itself to the solar energy language, including how to get started and
9 what to include when you are going to install solar. Chair Rowland pointed out that slide 28 refers to
10 historic character and with the way technology is advancing, it is appropriate for the board to look at
11 this. There is a core group of preservationists who believe the Secretary of the Interior standards are
12 clear that solar cannot fit in the historic district but Chair Rowland thinks that is old school. The Chair
13 believes we have to look at this not only in terms of alternative energy but also, as with the sea level
14 rising, what changes do we make to historic houses so they can survive?

15
16 There are a lot of towns in NH proceeding with solar technology and Sandra Bisset stated the global
17 climate report is coming out tomorrow. Just looking at our own area in New England with wind and the
18 recent storm, if we don’t have solar, there will be many homes without energy. We are an island; if the
19 bridges are gone, how do we survive? We have to prepare ourselves for the future.

20
21 Elaine Nollet stated that no doubt we all appreciate and want solar panels. There are many people in
22 town that want to come before the board but solar companies have to improve the appearance of solar
23 panels. The Chamberlains house was great because it was uniform across the entire roof, but it was also
24 a new building. It is difficult when you have dormers.

25
26 Sandra Bisset asked what other information the board would like the Energy Committee to obtain on
27 the issue. Tom Maher said that the Energy Committee’s proposal on LED lighting was so well done, it
28 was comprehensive and tailored for our town. He would like to hear from vendors on whether they can
29 customize solar panels – can they design a panel that would fit on a dormer and conform to a roofline
30 that would be potentially acceptable? Right now there is the promise of Tesla shingles but they are not
31 a cure-all because they do not cover the entire roof and they may have to mix & match with other
32 roofing material. Maher would like to know from these companies if it is possible to combine panels of
33 different shapes such as triangle or hexagon, to bring the panels in compliance with a roofline.

34
35 Randy Bryan said probably not at a cost you would want to spend and that the whole idea of putting out
36 one stock product is what brings the cost within reason. Panels themselves are made in squares or
37 octagons and making a custom panel that has a diagonal to it would be costly. They do make smaller
38 squares but Bryan doesn’t know how electronically they all dovetail together.

39
40 Tom Maher asked that the Energy Committee focus on adaptability or design issues and what is
41 possible. It’s not intuitive that the very homes that should have solar, are precluded from having solar.
42 It’s wonderful to build new but we are trying to solve a problem for older houses. Ms. Bisset said
43 questions such as “What wattage do you need? What system do you need when you tie it all together?
44 Can you have only 2 or 3 panels work with another type of system?” Maybe there are ideas in the
45 community as to how much you really need to put on your surface area. How can we improve these
46 installations?

47

1 Tom Maher added that a matte finish without any glare would be best. Randy Bryan said there are anti-
2 reflective coatings but they cut down on the efficiency some.

3
4 Peter Schwab - 63 Piscataqua Street at the corner of Atkinson Street, said he is interested in pursuing a
5 solar array on his house. He advised the board that he really likes the look of the new guidelines, they
6 are more flexible, depending on location and that it will come down to how the board thinks it will look.
7 Chair Rowland also advised that public comment would help determine each application. Schwab said
8 it incorporates flexibility in trying to preserve what the board is doing. He thinks the board has done a
9 good job and is in support of the new guidelines.

10
11 Tom Chamberlain of 49 Riverview Road stated that more than once people have driven by and asked
12 him "where is the solar house?" while looking right at it. It's all flat black, with just a little sheen to it.
13 All the framing is the same as the glass so aesthetically it looks good and it helps that it is a brand new
14 square building.

15
16 Chair Rowland hopes the board can have a vote in December. It is expected that many residents will
17 attend the next meeting and it may take a couple of meetings to discuss and finalize the regulations.

18
19 3. Old/New Business

20
21 Chair Rowland received feedback from the State on its CLG application as they had a few questions and
22 he wasn't able to answer them. Three things needed to be addressed: 1. They would like Chair
23 Rowland to go to Concord to see the surveys and he has arranged to go on November 14th.
24 2. Something Chair Rowland put on the application made them believe our terms are for one year. The
25 zoning regulations say we have 3 year terms, but officers have 1 year term so he called them and
26 clarified this. 3. They wanted to know if the board had a Code of Conduct (which the board does not
27 currently have) and the State provided a draft which Rowland read aloud to the board. Tom Maher
28 motioned that the HDC board adopt the model Code of Conduct of the NH Association of Historic
29 District Commissions and the NH Attorney General; Hughes seconded. All approved.

30
31 Vice Chair Hughes moved to adjourn the meeting; Maher seconded. All approved. Adjourned at 7:45
32 pm.

33
34 Respectfully submitted,
35 Diane L. Cooley, Secretary