The Dublin Planning Board met for its regular meeting and public hearing on a Solar Energy Ordinance in the basement meeting room of the town hall on August 6, 2015, at 7:01 PM. Present were Chairman Bruce Simpson, Dale Gabel, Steve Baldwin, Suzan Macy, Bill Goodwin, and Selectman’s representative Paul Delphia. Alternates Todd Bennett, and Neil Sandford were also present. Paul Tuller, Mary Loftis, Nancy Nolan, Margaret Gurney, Chris Raymond, Jamie Trowbridge, Mary Liz Lewis, Carolyn Demorest, John McKenna, Ian Aldrich, Greg Blake and reporter Nicolas Handy were present.

**Public Hearing on Solar Energy**

Bruce opened the hearing at 7:03 PM and read from the Master Plan about solar. He mentioned that there is no mention of solar energy in Dublin’s Ordinance. Solar energy has been allowed as an accessory use up to this point, but the board hopes to have an ordinance to vote on this coming March. He outlined several approaches that could be used in a solar energy ordinance, for instance there could be a differentiation between systems of different sizes or in different zoning districts.

Paul Tuller spoke in favor of residential solar and would like to see the town encourage solar energy. He has one and is a great way to reduce carbon emissions as well as provide electricity. He shared that some communities are working together to build solar fields. That way someone who has an excellent site could do a larger field than they might be able to build on their own and share the power produced with other subscribers. He would like to see the ordinance encourage a community solar field(s).

Bruce explained his misinformation in the Advocate. He read the headlines and studied it more and Germany on a very sunny day could produce half the energy the country needs, with 90% of that coming from residential systems on rooftops.

John McKenna spoke as one who supports solar energy but lives across from Yankee field. He pointed out that there is a difference between those who benefit from the electricity and those who have to have them in their front yard and don’t get any benefit. He supports residential solar, but sees larger projects in a different way. He pointed out that the inverters make noise and thought that every applicant should be asked is there is a better location, and is there a newer technology. What will be done with them when they no longer are in use. He felt that those living in the village district would suffer lower property values. He explained that commercial projects should be treated in a different way than residential solar projects.
Nancy Nolan shared how solar is a great benefit for them in their home, appliances and car. They are hoping to go off the grid in the next couple years. She felt that for the future of the country and the planet it is necessary to get away from fossil fuels. She shared a MIT report that came out in May which predicted that the present solar technology would not be replaced for the foreseeable future. She thought that people driving through Dublin would be encouraged by seeing solar fields here to do something in their town.

Chris Raymond shared that his home is solar powered for most of their energy use. He felt that it is not a money making thing because anything over the individual’s use is usually wasted rather than making a profit. He felt that no hindrances should be put in the way of those who want to build solar fields.

Bruce pointed out the article by SNHPC that encourages towns to be user friendly toward solar energy.

Greg Blake, the builder of two systems in Dublin noted that no other towns in the immediate area have solar ordinances. He thought that it was good to require an electrical permit but a building permit is not necessary. Net metering is a way to back feed from one site to benefit another site that might not be good for solar.

Todd pointed out that while we favor solar, what should we do with large projects in the village district or in the Mountain zone? What the threshold size should be in the village and mountain district, is the big question. The solar builder said that the power companies already deal differently with fields under 100 Kw than those that are larger than 100 Kw.

John McKenna explained that he thought there should be some kind of neighborly review for large projects. Paul Tuller felt that people being bothered by the visual impact of solar is similar to limiting the color people paint their house. Chris Raymond felt that there was very little difference between rural district and the mountain zone or the village district and that it was crazy to put any limitations on solar projects. Shaun McMahon just encouraged some kind of community review.

Dale explained that the Planning Board is a land use board. Accessory uses are allowed on anyone’s property, but we need something that addresses commercial solar. He explained that our ordinance has a phrase that states if something is not listed as a permitted use is not allowed. So commercial uses or something on someone else’s property is not presently allowed.

Steve shared information he learned from the planning chair in Bedford and how they are promoting solar energy. He felt we should welcome solar use in Dublin, not push it aside. Bruce explained how a change of use triggers site plan review by the board. A business who is expanding with solar, needs site plan review.

Nancy Nolan suggested that if there is a new ordinance it make a statement on the dangers of climate change.

Jamie Trowbridge spoke in favor of treating business who are generating for their own use, the same as residential users who are doing the same. He suggested that should be where the line is drawn between accessory use and commercial uses where the field is for making a business profit.
**Minutes of the July 30 Meeting**
The minutes from the July 20th meeting were reviewed. On the second page the fourth line the word should be changed to “be made conditional.” Dale moved and Steve seconded a motion to approve the minutes as written. The motion passed.

**Special exceptions for Charlie Pillsbury**
Recommendation for two special exceptions for Charlie Pillsbury’s basement apartment. Bruce explained that Charlie built his house with plans for a basement apartment, but was not aware he required a special exception. Neil noted the reasons for the special exceptions. The Board noted that there was unlikely to be adverse impact on neighboring properties. Dale moved granting of the SEs. Bill seconded. The motion passed. The Board also discussed the possibility of removing the requirement for special exceptions in this type of case.

The secretary shared that Yankee’s site plan review public hearing will take place on September 3, 2015.

At 8:30 PM, Bill moved that the board adjourn. Suzan seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Neil R. Sandford, Secretary