The Dublin Planning Board met for its regular meeting and Public hearing for Yankee Publishing site plan review for their proposed solar field in the first floor meeting room of the town hall on September 3, 2015, at 7:05 PM. Present were Chairman Bruce Simpson, Dale Gabel, Suzan Macy, Steve Baldwin, John Morris, and selectmen’s representative Paul Delphia. Alternates, Todd Bennett, Gregg Fletcher and Neil Sandford were also present. Bill Goodwin arrived at 7:24 PM after the minutes were approved.

Bruce appointed Todd to fill Bill’s seat for tonight’s meeting.

**Minutes of the August 6th and August 20th Meeting**

The minutes from the August 6th meeting were reviewed. Dale noted some editorial corrections. Bill moved and Todd seconded a motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion passed. John abstained. For the August 20th meeting Bruce and Dale pointed out several editorial corrections in the wording and Cedar Ridge was changed to Spruce Ridge. Dale moved the minutes be approved as amended. Seconded by Steve and the motion passed.

The board discussed the threshold point for residential to commercial use for the proposed solar ordinance and if the village district should be treated differently. Different aspects of solar energy were discussed as well.

**Public Hearing for Site Plan Review for Yankee Publishing Solar Field, Map 17, Lot 15-A**

Bruce opened the public hearing at 7:26 PM. Nick Golon introduced himself, the project engineer, Kurk Penney, the builder representing Solar Roofing System and Jamie Trowbridge, representing Yankee Publishing, the owner. He explained what had happened up to date including the town attorney’s determination that it could be considered an accessory use, and what items on the Site Plan Review checklist were waived at the preliminary review before the Planning Board. He shared how Yankee has been working with the abutters to minimize the impact and how the plan had been revised. The plan included gates in the fence for maintenance. The concern for glare and noise is minimized by moving it back in the field. They put a mock-up in the field for people to get an idea of what it would look like but the angle of the panel makes a difference. He addressed the concern for noise from the inverter. He said it would be a soft tone that would blend in with the background noise. They located it over 150 feet from any property lines so that the noise should not be heard off premise and that it only runs when the sun is shining so it should be silent at night. He shared the landscaping plan with a row of arbor vitae. Jamie explained that deer love to eat arbor vitae so they are working on some other alternative to provide screening with some other bush. The slope of the
land with the shrubs and fence will hide some of the solar field. The screen will only be on one side and not all the way around the solar field. Several abutters had questions for Nick. They expect the shrubs to be pruned at 8 feet to keep them from growing up and shading the solar panels. Yankee will contract the work but Yankee will own and operate the solar field so it will be locally owned and operated.

Board members asked questions about the details of the plan. Steve shared that he looked carefully and felt most people would not be able to see it. John asked about the glare factor and Nick said there would be little or no glare factor to drivers on 101. Bruce shared that present panels only have a 2% glare. Linda Bensinger shared that they had no objections at all and hoped the project would move right ahead.

Shawn McMahon asked about equipment deterioration. Kurt explained that they are using the best of the best with equipment that will definitely last 25 years, and probably will last up to 40 years. Kurt explained that with the pitch the snow will mostly slide off. Steve asked if a blanket over the inverter would reduce the sound even more, but it was explained that it needs to let off heat.

Jamie clarified that the tree islands on the east of the property will be removed so that the field can still be used for events and cars need to come in there. They could shade the solar field and so they need to be removed for both reasons.

Shawn McMahon asked about the effects of neighboring property values and whether there were any studies to show. Kurt shared that most green communities increase property values and Bruce read a study from Massachusetts that indicates solar installations do not have an adverse impact on property values.

Bruce introduced the need to review the application for completeness. He brought up the issue of regional impact. Steve moved that it does not have regional impact. Bill seconded and the motion passed.

The board went through the site plan review checklist. Peter Pap suggested that the area for snow stockpiling be moved to the northwest corner rather than in front of the solar array. Dale moved that the board find the application is complete and Steve seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The question of screening was considered. John expressed that whatever is chosen should be the equivalent to the screen on the plan and Jamie assured the board that it would be as good as what the plan shows. They would try to use a variety of shrubs and trees if possible. The fence is 215 feet across the front of the solar field. Bruce asked if they would be planted this fall and Jamie felt that it would determined by when the construction is complete and the planting might better wait until next spring. Bill asked when the construction would be done and they hope to be running by the end of December, depending on the PUC approvals and mother nature allowing.

Bruce explained that the future Dublin ordinance would include some kind of bond for future removal when needed. Dana Wood spoke in favor of this plan and she does not have any concern for decommissioning because she felt it would be replaced when no longer functioning. Peter Pap spoke in favor of the overall proposal and felt that it would blend into the trees at the back of the property. Where it is presently located it won’t look like an 8 ft array.
Dale moved that the plan be approved with following provisions: that the snow storage space be moved to the northwest corner of the property and that equivalent plantings that adequately screen the installation be installed and that the array be removed or replaced at the end of its useful life. Bill seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**Andy Freeman resignation**
Bruce moved and Dale seconded that we accept his resignation. The motion passed.

**Solar Ordinance**
The board will do further investigation on sizes and invite the solar installer to come at a future meeting before determining the threshold for commercial use. Neil raised the question as to whether the board wants to encourage or discourage solar use and whether non-profits could afford going through the site plan review process that requires fully engineered plans.

The secretary pointed out the seminars coming to our area in Peterborough and Keene.

At 8:46 PM, Dale moved that the board adjourn. John seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Neil R. Sandford, Secretary