The Dublin Planning Board met for its regular meeting in the first floor meeting room of the town hall on September 17, 2015, at 7:00 PM. Present were Chairman Bruce Simpson, Dale Gabel, Suzan Macy, Steve Baldwin, Bill Goodwin and selectmen’s representative Paul Delphia. Alternates, Todd Bennett, Donna Garner and Neil Sandford were also present. Greg Blake, owner of South Pack Solar attended to assist the board with their questions about solar energy. Gerry Christian attended to observe the proceedings.

**Dublin’s Proposed Solar Ordinance**

Bruce opened the discussion with a handout with several options and asked Greg what he would suggest for the break point between residential and commercial. Twenty modules of 250 watts dc or 5Kw AC generally will cover a resident. This is also where the residential rebates generally end. This saves approximately $1000/year. The federal government gives about 30% in tax credits from income taxes, and they can be rolled over if one doesn’t use all their credits in the first year. This will run out in 2016 so he anticipates that there will be a rush to do solar for the next year. A typical 5 Kw system costs about $17,500 with a payback in 7-8 years after rebates and credits. Systems have an expected lifetime of at least 25 years.

Greg explained how he figures out what size a system is needed and how he generally hooks up a system in a home. A inverter has to have both electricity from the solar panels and a connection to the grid or it shuts itself down. If both are present the inverter will send any excess electricity into the grid and turn the meter backwards. There doesn’t have to be an extra switching system, the inverter cares for it automatically. The power company allows 10 Kw with a simple interconnection agreement, but requires more scrutiny and connection charges for anything over that.

Dale asked about other kinds of solar besides solar photo-voltaic systems and Greg mentioned that there has been some solar water heaters but with the cost of panels coming down, there is not much incentive for heating water. Off grid requires batteries which makes the system extremely expensive. The batteries are improving but some are very heavy and deep cell tend to be required and are expensive. An off-grid system has be a larger system to make up for times when there is little sun, like in winter months.
Greg recommended that there needs to be an electrical permit to make sure it is done correctly. Building mounted is limiting anyway so only ground mount system perhaps need limits. A 25Kw system with two tiers would be 160 feet long. Suzan asked about pole mounted system. Neil shared the need to craft an ordinance for solar air heaters as well as solar photo-voltaic systems. Dale asked what was the largest residential size Greg had installed and he said 17Kw.

The National Electrical Code Section 690 deals with solar installations for safety concerns. The board discussed some safety concerns that need to be considered. An interconnection agreement has to be signed with the power company for larger systems so that agreement could be included in the town’s application process as a prerequisite. Greg thought it should be part of the process to insure that it is a well designed system.

The board discussed what should be in the ordinance and whether the board wants to give future boards the right to deny solar applications or whether they just want to have some kind of modified site plan. The Board also discussed Todd's recommendation that large systems should not be allowed in the Village District.

Bruce pointed out that the deadline for noticing a public meeting for zoning changes is Jan. 7, so the board has some time to work on this. He will update the rough draft and email it to the Board before the next meeting for further discussion at a future meeting. Greg agreed to provide input on future drafts as they are prepared.

**Minutes of the September 3rd Meeting**

The minutes from the September 3rd meeting were reviewed. Dale suggested that the wording about the second meeting minutes be added to the paragraph about the minutes. Bruce added wording about the Site Plan Review checklist in the first paragraph about Yankee’s public hearing for site plan review. Dale noted several editorial corrections. Dale moved and Steve seconded a motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion passed.

Dale moved to adjourn and Suzan seconded the motion at 8:35 PM. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Neil R. Sandford
Secretary