

Gilsum Zoning Board of Adjustments

Public Meeting

February 11, 2025, 6:00 pm Gilsum Public Library

Approved Minutes

Gilsum Zoning Board Members Present: Eric Zablowsky, Jane Wing, Josh Zeolla, Mike Gokey, Sang Curtis - Alternate, Georgia Cassimatis- Alternate

Public Present: Fergus Cullen of Loki Solar, LLC, Jack Dustin, Vicki Ayer, Heidi Bukoski, David Dauphin, Chip Chapman

Chair Zablowsky called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm.

Purpose for the Meeting

This Public Meeting is being held to discuss an Application for Variance submitted by Loki Solar, LLC, of Portsmouth, NH, seeking a variance for Article 7, Section E of the Gilsum Zoning Ordinance, for the property located along Route 10, Map 406, Lot 8, to construct a solar array.

It was noted that Mike Gokey would be recusing himself from the approval process of this application, due to a possible conflict of interest, being an abutter.

Official Notice

Chair Zablowsky announced all abutters were sent a certified letter via USPS. Public notice of the meeting was posted in the January 29, 2025, issue of the Keene Sentinel. Notices were also posted in the Gilsum Post Office and on the door of the Gilsum Town Offices/Library building.

Chair Zablowsky read the Application for Variance and accompanying documents for all present. It was noted by Fergus Cullen that Section 3 of the application should read

'....would NOT burden...' instead of 'would burden'. All present accepted the verbal change of wording.

Project Summary

Fergus Cullen provided an overview of the project summary. He advised Loki Solar, LLC, has entered into a lease option agreement with the current owner of the property. The proposed solar array will cover an area of approximately 11.6 acres within the zoned Highway Business District portion of the property. The array is .99 megawatts AC in size and is expected to produce approximately 1.3 megawatts of power annually. This power will connect to the existing grid of 3-phase power lines located along Route 10. The project will require an interconnection agreement with Eversource, which Loki Solar has already applied for.

Summary of Discussion Points

The exact location for the project has not yet been determined. The final location will be determined by factors such as the distance required from wetlands, results from soil testing, and distance from main road. Presumably the project will be situated several hundred feet from Route 10 due to the steep slope of the property leading up from the road. Out of the 119 acre parcel, only 11 acres will be clear-cut. Loki does not anticipate the project impacting Fish Road.

The array will have single axis panels, which will rotate. The panels will face east in the morning and west in the afternoon; rotation is guided by light cameras. Due to the panel rotation, the array does not need to be installed on the top of the hill or a south facing hill.

The functionality will be monitored remotely.

A construction road will need to be created, although it is believed that a driveway permit will not be needed. Heavy equipment will be needed for building the road as well as the logging activity.

Concern of invasive plant species having access to the clear-cut area was voiced. Fergus explained brush hogging, or similar, will take place one to two times per year; no herbicides will be used.

Concern was also voiced with regards to water run-off of the clear-cut area. Fergus assured a Storm Water Management Plan will be provided to the Planning Board.

It was noted that Loki Solar will need to provide the Gilsum Planning Board with a detailed site plan which will include the topography and soil testing results.

Benefit for the town would be 11 - 12 acres being removed from current use and will be taxed as commercial. The town will collect 10% taxes of the harvest.

As Gilsum does not have a police department, who would cover the cost of officers responding to a reported issue at the array. Fergus stated that Gilsum could request Loki Solar carry an insurance policy for such situations as a condition of approval.

It is projected that the array will be decommissioned in 40 years. The cost of the decommissioning will be covered by a bond posted by Loki Solar, which is required by the state. The site will be returned to as close to the preexisting condition as possible. All material parts of the project will be removed. The land will revert to conservation land.

Chair Zablowky made a motion to close the public meeting at 7:44 pm; Sang Curtis seconded - a vote was taken, all in favor, none opposed, motion was passed.

Gilsum Zoning Board of Adjustments

Business Meeting

Gilsum Zoning Board Members Present: Eric Zablowky, Jane Wing, Josh Zeolla, Mike Gokey, Sang Curtis - Alternate, Georgia Cassimatis- Alternate

Public Present: Fergus Cullen of Loki Solar, LLC

Chair Zablowky called the business meeting to order at 7:44 pm.

Purpose for the Meeting

The purpose for the Business Meeting being held was to discuss and vote to approval or deny the Application for a Variance submitted by Loki Solar, LLC.

Old Business

Approval of the 12/3/2024 minutes was table until the next business meeting.

Voting for board positions of Vice-Chair and Secretary were postponed until the next meeting.

Current Business

It was noted that Mike Gokey recused himself from the approval process due to being an abutter to the property.

Discussion ensued with regards to the five variance criteria.

It was noted that the Town of Gilsum currently does not have specific zoning ordinances with regards to solar arrays.

All agreed that granting the variance would not be contrary to public interest due to the project not directly impacting the public.

All agreed the spirit of the ordinance would be met as currently there are no ordinances specific to solar arrays.

All agreed substantial justice would be served due to there not being any negative public impact and there are no ordinances for solar arrays.

All agreed values of the surrounding properties would not be diminished due to the surrounding properties not seeing, smelling or hearing the project.

All agreed there would be no unnecessary hardship as the proposed use is reasonable.

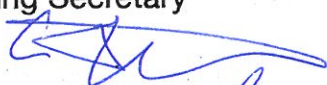
Georgia Cassimatis made a motion to approve the Application for a Variance submitted by Loki Solar, LLC; Sang Curtis seconded; a vote was taken - all in favor, none opposed; motion was passed.

Chair Zabrowsky will draft and send a letter to Loki Solar, LLC, as well as, Gilsum Selectboard, Gilsum Planning Board, Gilsum Town Clerk, Gilsum Building Inspector and Members of the Gilsum Zoning Board of Adjustments.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Wing

Acting Secretary



Chair - 

Vice chair - 

~~Clerk~~

clerk - 

offices - 

officer -