



PLANNING BOARD Minutes
March 11th, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 60 Court Street

1. **ROLL CALL:** Riley Bergeron, Bob Hayes, Paul Jacques, Stacey LeBlanc, Darren Finnegan, Tim DeRoche, Maureen Hopkins.

Absent – Ed Bearor (*Associate Member*)

2. **MINUTES:** Review the February 11, 2025, meeting minutes. All meetings are available live and after airing on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/c/CityofAuburnMaine>

Riley Bergeron points out a spelling typo in his name and requests a correction.

Motion to Approve with spelling correction: Bob Hayes **Second:** Darren Finnegan **Vote:** 7-0

Motion Carries

3. **APPOINTMENT:** The Planning Board will discuss and vote to appoint a student representative to the Planning Board

Adolphe Ngengele, a Junior at Edward Little High School introduced himself. He is class president this year and excited to learn about the Planning Board process.

Motion to Appoint Adolphe Ngengele to the student representative seat on the Planning Board: Riley Bergeron. **Second:** Bob Hayes **Vote:** 7-0 **Motion Carries**

Emily Carrington, City Clerk, swears in Adolphe Ngengele and he joins the Planning Board for the duration of the meeting.

4. **WORKSHOP:** Capital Improvement Plan: The Planning Board will host a workshop to hear and discuss a presentation on the City of Auburn Capital Improvement Plan

Phil Crowell, City Manager, presents updates on the Capital Improvement Projects throughout Auburn to the Planning Board. He talked about facilities and the status of various projects, goals for expanding public utilities and fiber networks as well as planned road improvements.

5. **PUBLIC HEARING/ SITE PLAN REVIEW:** Stetson Road Multifamily: The Planning Board will host a Public Hearing for this project, which was previously postponed at the February 11, 2025, meeting, for further review and action at the March 11, 2025, Planning Board meeting. The application, submitted by DiPrete Engineering on behalf of A.R. Building Company, proposes 50 residential buildings consisting of 30 four-unit multifamily buildings and 20 duplexes, resulting in a total of 160 residential units. The project is located on Stetson Road, Tax Map 291-011, within the General Business (GB) District.

Natalie Thomsen provides a Staff Report. She highlights updates to the development project which includes a reduction in 20 units from the previous design (180 units changing to 160 units). The applicant also provided a traffic analysis report and an updated utility plan that brings the private utilities to public standards. The developer is also proposing phased development since the city's ordinance calls for completion of a project within a year and based on the scale of development, the building of the development will take longer than a year to complete.

Maureen Hopkins asks staff about the difference between a multi-family residence versus a single family-attached residence since the review standards for the two different projects would be different. Staff reviewed the definitions of each and recognized that some further clarification is needed.

Brandon Carr with DiPrete Engineering is present to speak on behalf of the applicant. The applicant and staff look at the intended use of this development and determine since the developer will maintain ownership and rent out the apartments, that this development falls in line with a multi-family development.

Motion to Open Public Comment: Darren Finnegan **Second:** Tim DeRoche **Vote:** 7-0
Motion Carries

Spencer Dunn – Court St – Speaks in support of the project. Feels that this sort of housing is needed in the area and the site plan meets zoning ordinances. Dunn appreciates that the developer was willing to modify the design based on requests from city staff and Planning Board.

Stephen Beale – 575 Johnson Rd – Raises a concern over the timing for building of this project in conjunction with road work scheduled to take place on Stetson Road this summer. Also refers to a prior development project and voiced concern over adding a condition to the completion of the project to require the developer to provide the software for the pump stations to public utilities.

John Rice – Director of Operations, Schooner Estates – Speaks about the fact that Schooner Estates which is located across the street from this proposed development sits on granite ledge which has caused issues for utilities with lightning strikes and warns that the developer should take that into account to ensure the utilities are grounded well or plan for a backup system. Also makes a request that the developer considers landscaping that will provide sound and visual barriers year-round which would be mutually beneficial to both developments.

Motion to Close Public Comment: Riley Bergeron **Second:** Bob Hayes **Vote:** 7-0
Motion Carries

Board recognizes the validity of the request for year-round screening plantings and how that will benefit both properties.

Tim DeRoche makes the motion that the proposal meets the requirements of Sections 60-1277 for a Site Plan review and Sec. 60-1359 for subdivision proposing to 50 Residential buildings: 20 duplexes and 30 quadplexes, sidewalks and a paved drive isle off Stetson Road, also City Assessor's Parcel I.D. 291-011. The proposed project should be considered pursuant to Chapter 60, Article XVI Division 2 – Site Plan Review, Article IV Subdivision, Article IV, Division 13 – GB - General Business District, and Article IV, Division 7- Multifamily Suburban District with the following conditions:

- A. *No development activity until any bonding or inspection fees are determined by the Auburn Engineering Department.*
- B. *Blasting permit in advance of blasting from the City of Auburn, Planning, Permitting and Code Department.*
- C. *Prior to the adoption of the sewer lines by the Auburn Sewer District, the Applicant must complete all necessary infrastructure improvements, secure final approval of the pump station design, conduct required testing and inspections, and provide as-built plans and documentation to the satisfaction of the Auburn Sewer District and be in receipt of appropriate operational software.*
- D. *Prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the last unit constructed in Phase 1, the sidewalk along Stetson Road must be completed to the city's satisfaction.*
- E. *Adequate screening along Stetson Road between this project and Schooner Estates be established.*

Second: Riley Bergeron **Vote:** 7-0 **Motion Carries**

1:08

- 6. PUBLIC HEARING/ SITE PLAN REVIEW:** Danville Corner Housing Development: The Planning Board will host a Public Hearing for this project, which was previously postponed at the February 11, 2025, meeting, for further review and action at the March 11, 2025, Planning Board meeting. The application, submitted by Terradyn Consultants LLC on behalf of Timothy Millet, proposes 21 two-unit homes, resulting in a total of 42 residential units. The project is located on property owned by Spurwink Services Incorporated, on Danville Corner Road, Tax Map 122-004, within the General Business (GB) District.

Craig Sweet from Terradyn Consultants addressed the Board and asks for a postponement to the April 8th meeting.

Maureen Hopkins asked for clarification on the definition of single family attached dwellings and two-family dwellings because the way in which these units are categorized would change the development standards applied.

Board and Applicant discussed elements of the development plan and will plan to revisit this project at the next meeting.

Motion to Open Public Comment: Tim DeRoche **Second:** Darren Finnegan **Vote:** 7-0
Motion Carries

Dana Staples – Shares that he liked the project better in the first iteration which included 44 single family homes rather than the duplex-style homes. He supported the affordability of the single family home model.

John Cleveland – 183 Davis Ave - Reminds the board that the decision they make on this development will set the president for future developments as to how the City defines single family attached versus 2-family dwellings.

Motion to Close Public Comment: Tim DeRoche **Second:** Darren Finnegan **Vote:** 7-0
Motion Carries

The Board asks for clarification from legal and staff to know what review standards they will be using for this project at the next meeting.

Motion to Postpone this agenda item to the April 8th Meeting: Riley Bergeron
Second: Bob Hayes **Vote:** 7-0 **Motion Carries**

1:36

7. **PUBLIC HEARING/ SITE PLAN REVIEW:** BWC Gulf Island Pond, LLC – Auburn Solar Project: The Planning Board will host a Public Hearing for this project, which was previously postponed at the February 11, 2025, meeting, for further review and action at the March 11, 2025, Planning Board meeting. The application, submitted by Sean Murphy of Flycatcher LLC on behalf of BWC Gulf Island Pond, LLC (a subsidiary of BlueWave Energy), proposes a 1.41 MW DC ground-mounted solar array on approximately 10.12 acres at 224 East Waterman Road, Tax Map 393-010, within the Agriculture and Resource Protection Zoning District.

Natalie provides a Staff Report on this development. This project was previously approved but the approval expired. The size of the project has been reduced from the previous version.

Applicant, Colin Sexton with Blue Wave Energy, spoke about updates to the project since the 2022 approval.

Motion to Open Public Comment: Riley Bergeron **Second:** Darren Finnegan **Vote:** 7-0
Motion Carries

Stephen Beale – 575 Johnson Rd – Asks the applicant if this plan is covering just a small part of a larger parcel and whether the location is in an area that is less-desirable for farming.

Motion to Close Public Comment: Riley Bergeron **Second:** Paul Jacques **Vote:** 7-0 **Motion Carries**

Riley Bergeron makes a motion that the proposal meets the requirements of Sections 60-1277 and 60-1336 and approve the Site Plan by BWC Gulf Island Pond, LLC, a subsidiary of BlueWave Energy, to construct a 1.41 MW-DC ground-mounted solar energy generating system on approximately 10.12 acres at 224 East Waterman Road, Tax Map Lot 137-026, located in the Agriculture and Resource Protection Zoning District.

The proposed project has met the standards pursuant to Chapter 60, Article XVI, Division 2 – Site Plan Review and Division 3 – Special Exception, with the following conditions:

- A. No development activity until any bonding or inspection fees are determined by the Auburn Engineering Department.
- B. Prior to any blasting activities, the applicant shall receive a blasting permit from the City of Auburn Planning, Permitting, and Code Department.
- C. Prior to the final electrical approval, the applicant shall submit a final as-built site plan to the Fire Prevention Officer, indicating all shut-down mechanisms for emergency response.
- D. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit an acceptable financial surety.

Second: Bob Hayes **Vote:** 7-0 **Motion Carries**

1:46

- 8. PUBLIC HEARING/ SITE PLAN REVIEW:** Soper Mill Brook, LLC – Penley Corner Solar Project: The Planning Board will host a Public Hearing for this project, which was previously postponed at the February 11, 2025, meeting, for further review and action at the March 11, 2025, Planning Board meeting. The application, submitted by Sean Murphy of Flycatcher LLC on behalf of Soper Mill Brook, LLC (a subsidiary of BlueWave Energy), proposes a 1 MW DC ground-mounted solar array on approximately 10.91 acres on Penley Corner Road, Tax Map 137-026, within the Agriculture and Resource Protection Zoning District.

Natalie Thomsen provides a staff report. Colin Sexton with Blue Wave Energy spoke about the project.

Motion to Open Public Comment: Riley Bergeron **Second:** Bob Hayes **Vote:** 7-0
Motion Carries

Motion to Close Public Comment: Bob Hayes **Second:** Darren Finnegan **Vote:** 7-0
Motion Carries

Riley Bergeron appreciates the environmentally conscious approach that the applicant has taken into consideration when developing this plan.

Maureen Hopkins inquires about the ordinance stating that 1% of the Ag zone can be developed into Solar Projects and was curious if the City has reached that threshold yet.

Natalie Thomsen shares that the city has not yet reached 50% of that 1% of land use yet. These projects assuredly fall within that land use amount.

Riley Bergeron makes a motion that the proposal meets the requirements of Sections 60-1277 and 60-1336 and approve the Site Plan by Soper Mill Brook, LLC, a subsidiary of BlueWave Energy, for the construction of a 1 MW-DC ground-mounted solar energy generating system on approximately 10.91 acres at 371 Penley Corner Road, Tax Map Lot 137-026, located in the Agriculture and Resource Protection Zoning District. The proposed project has met the standards pursuant to Chapter 60, Article XVI, Division 2 – Site Plan Review and Division 3 – Special Exception, with the following conditions:

- A. No development activity until any bonding or inspection fees are determined by the Auburn Engineering Department.
- B. Prior to any blasting activities, the applicant shall receive a blasting permit from the City of Auburn Planning, Permitting, and Code Department.
- C. Prior to the final electrical approval, the applicant shall submit a final as-built site plan to the Fire Prevention Officer, indicating all shut-down mechanisms for emergency response.
- D. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit an acceptable financial surety.

Second: Bob Hayes **Vote:** 7-0 **Motion Carries**

1:53

- 9. PUBLIC HEARING/ SITE PLAN REVIEW:** Salt & Light Community Center: The Planning Board will host a Public Hearing for this project to review and take action on a Site Plan Review and Special Exception application submitted by Darlene Conant on behalf of Salt & Light Community Center. The applicant is proposing a walk-in community center with site improvements and associated infrastructure. The subject property is located at 29 Hampshire Street, Tax Map Lot 240-177, within the T-5.1 - Downtown Traditional Center Zoning District.

Staff Report provided by Natalie Thomsen.

Darlene Conant, applicant, speaks about the project. Darlene has been running this organization for about 5 years using shared and rented spaces in the city to run their programs for inner-city at-risk youth. Having this space of their own will allow for expansion of their programs.

Motion to Open Public Comment: Tim Deroche
Vote: 7-0 **Motion Carries**

Second: Riley Bergeron

Motion to Close Public Comment: Tim DeRoche **Second:** Darren Finnegan **Vote:** 7-0
Motion Carries

Maureen Hopkins asks about pedestrian traffic around the roads near this project and whether the police had any concerns about that.

David Hediger mentioned that there are established crosswalks and sidewalks in the area and there and Police did not raise this as a concern.

Tim DeRoche makes a motion that the proposal meets the requirements of Sections 60-1277 and 60- 1336 and approve the Salt & Light Community Center for the property located at 29 Hampshire Street (Tax Map: 240-177), within the Downtown Traditional Center (T-5.1) zoning district. The proposed project has met the standards pursuant to Chapter 60, Article XVI, Division 2- Site Plan Review and Division 3 – Special Exception with the following conditions:

- A. *No development activity until any bonding or inspection fees are determined by the Auburn Engineering Department.*
- B. *Blasting permit in advance of blasting from the City of Auburn, Planning, Permitting and Code Department.*
- C. *Prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy the applicant must pass a Life Safety Inspection from the Auburn Fire Department*

Second: Bob Hayes **Vote:** 6-1 (Maureen Hopkins opposes) **Motion Carries**

10. PUBLIC COMMENT: No Public comment

11. MISCELLANEOUS:

- a. Upcoming Agenda Items
 - i. CIP Workshop
 - ii. Danville Corner Rd Development
 - iii. Multifamily Development – Brickyard Commons
 - iv. Cannabis retail facility
- b. Legal Opinion on Validity of Planning Board Vote for Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Legal opinion confirmed that the elections that took place were valid and do not need to be revisited, but does recommend the board creates a subcommittee to consider edits to the Procedures and Policies to make the process clearer. Maureen Hopkins and Stacey LeBlanc express interest in participating on a subcommittee.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn: Tim DeRoche **Second:** Bob Hayes **Vote:** 7-0 **Meeting Adjourned**

2:09

Auburn Planning Board meetings can be viewed live on the City of Auburn YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/c/CityofAuburnMaine>), and on Great Falls Television (Spectrum Cable Channel 11).

Following live broadcasts, Planning Board meetings are rebroadcast at 7:00AM, noon, and 7:00PM on Tuesdays on GFTV and are available anytime on our YouTube channel.