



## *City of Caribou, Maine*

*Municipal Building  
25 High Street  
Caribou, ME 04736  
Telephone (207) 493-3324  
Fax (207) 498-3954  
www.cariboumaine.org*

### **Caribou Planning Board Meeting Minutes Thursday, December 10, 2020 @ 5:30 pm Via Zoom**

**Members Present:** Robert White, Dan Bagley, Christine Solman, Drew Ayer, Dave Corriveau and Frank McElwain

**Members Absent:** Amanda Jandreau

**Others Present:** Ken Murchison –CEO/Zoning Administrator, Dennis Marker –City Manager, Hillel Halberstam –SynerGen Solar, Rick Jones –Jones Associates, Josie Ray –Jones Associates and Denise Lausier – Executive Assistant to the City Manager

**I. Call Meeting to Order** – Chairman White called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Meeting was held via Zoom.

**II. Approval of Minutes:**

**a. November 12, 2020 Regular Planning Board Meeting –**

Frank McElwain moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Drew Ayer.

Roll call vote.

Frank – yes; Christine – yes; Drew – yes; Dave – yes; Dan – yes; Robert – yes  
Motion carried with all in favor.

**b. November 24, 2020 Special Planning Board Meeting –**

Chairman White recommended one change to the November 24, 2020 minutes midway down on page 7 of the meeting packet – to change “inaction” to “enaction”

Drew Ayer moved to approve the minutes as written with the one change; seconded by Frank McElwain.

Roll call vote.

Frank – yes; Christine – yes; Drew – yes; Dave – yes; Dan – yes; Robert – yes  
Motion carried with all in favor.

**III. Public Hearing to consider a Site Design Review Application from SynerGen Caribou, LLC for a Solar Array proposed for adjacent properties on Tax Map 16 – Lot 30 and Tax Map 13 – Lot 17 accessed from the Ogren Road former Caribou Landfill entrance road.**

Chairman White introduced this item. Applicants were in attendance via Zoom.

CEO Ken Murchison explained that SynerGen Solar approached the City earlier this year and reached out to the adjacent farm owner as well, utilizing a portion of their property. CEO Murchison stated this public hearing has been advertised and he has received no public input.

Hillel Halberstam from SynerGen Solar explained they are developers out of Baltimore, Maryland that develops solar arrays all around the U.S. They have now entered the Maine Solar Project. Mr. Halberstam stated that this is a good property and that Maine encourages solar development on these kinds of environmentally compromised properties. It gives stability to farming operations.

Rick Jones from Jones Associates stated that there are two separate sites. The landfill is surrounded by wetlands. DEP does not encourage these types of developments there. He gave an overview of the land.

Rick Jones explained that ballast blocks support the panels. There is no penetration of the landfill but will be on top, the wiring is on top as well. It will be fenced in with a chain linked fence with access along the old access road. Close to having DEP signing off on the project. The overall site combined is just under twenty acres.

Chairman White commented that it has the same design parameters as other similar projects.

Drew Ayer questioned where they were hooking into the grid. Mr. Halberstam said that they will work with Versant Power down the New Sweden Road, it's part of the project cost.

Rick Jones stated that he is confident that the stormwater panels are high enough, vegetation can grow under the panels, will maintain as a meadow.

Chairman White asked about the fencing and if they had considered how small critters will get in and out of the site. Rick Jones stated it is a typical chain link fence and if they get in through the gate, they will be able to get back out that way as well.

Mr. Halberstam stated that it is a six foot fence with high voltage meant to protect people and animals from getting in.

Dan Bagley questioned if the cables above ground will be insulated. Mr. Halberstam stated that the above ground cables are protected and insulated.

Dan Bagley stated that no lease agreements were included with the application package and that executed lease agreements are needed for final review; Chairman White agreed.

Hillel Halberstam commented that there is a lease option agreement with the City and Guerrette Farms with an option to execute a lease when approved. Manager Marker stated there is authorization from the property owner.

Christine Solman asked if any parts are visible. Rick Jones said only from the trail, the old railroad bed.

CEO Ken Murchison stated there were no concerns with the Police or Fire Chiefs. They are excited about the development.

Chairman White stated this was the preliminary review and called for a motion for final site review at the next meeting in January.

Dan Bagley moved to schedule the final site design review at the next meeting in January; seconded by Drew Ayer.

Roll call vote.

Frank – yes; Christine – yes; Drew – yes; Dave – yes; Dan – yes; Robert – yes.  
Motion carried with all in favor.

Chairman White stated the next Planning Board meeting is Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup>. Chairman White closed the Public Hearing at 6:03 pm.

**IV. Staff Report – CEO Ken Murchison**

- a. **Birdseye Clean-up** – last clean up 98% of asbestos was removed. Hotspot with petroleum contamination needs cleaning and concrete.
- b. **412 Access Highway (Pop-Up Junkyard)** – waiting on court date. The site is getting cleaned up.
- c. **Small Communities Grant (Septic Systems)** – this is complete. State will be sending a check for reimbursement.
- d. **Riverside Redevelopment** – had another meeting, looking at Limestone Street area off of Broadway. Analysis of landowners and looked at zoning. Next meeting is January 20<sup>th</sup>.


CEO Ken Murchison and City Manager Dennis Marker thanked Chairman Robert White for his eight years of service on the Caribou Planning Board and for being a steadfast Chairman. A clock was presented to him for his time. Manager Marker stated that the City Council will be recognizing him as well. Chairman White thanked the Board for their active participation.

**V. Chapter 13 –**

- a. **Land Use Table** – Manager Marker reviewed the survey results that were compiled from the Board on the Land Use Table. Members of the Board submitted their work on uses in the table; whether they felt it should be a permissible use or non-permissible use. Chairman White recommended the Board hold a work session on this.

**VI. Adjournment** – Meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Christine Solman  
Planning Board Secretary

CS/dl

