



# East Greenwich Planning Board

## Regular Meeting

Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 7:00 PM

**HYBRID IN-PERSON & REMOTE MEETING VIA ZOOM**

**Town Hall, 125 Main Street, East Greenwich, RI 02818**

## Meeting Minutes

### Planning Board Agenda

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call** – Chairman Benjamin Lupovitz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and took roll call.

Present: Benjamin Lupovitz, Marc Gertsacov, Andrew Shartenberg, Tara Wood, Matt Yoder, Greg deGroot and Greg Dubell (Alternate)

Absent: Matthew Renninger

Staff: Al Ranaldi, Planning Director; Bruce Lofgren, Assistant Town Planner; Christina Marseglia, Planning Analyst; Andrew Teitz, Town Solicitor.

### 2. Planning Board Administration

- a. Minutes: The Board is asked to review and approve the minutes of the February 01, 2023 meeting.

Ms. Wood made a motion to amend the minutes, Matt Yoder 2<sup>nd</sup>.

All members present voted to amend the minutes – 6-1.

Mr. Lupovitz made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, Ms. Wood 2<sup>nd</sup>.

All members present voted to approve the minutes as amended – 6-1.

- b. Discussion and possible recommendation – Revolution Wind 115kV Transmission Line Upgrade Project G185N, K189, G185S and L190:

Mr. George W. Watson III, a lawyer representing Rhode Island Energy was in attendance.

Mr. Watson and the Planning Board Members briefly discussed the specifications of the project, soil disturbance, traffic impact, and the long-term impact that the project may have on residents, commercial and industrial properties.

Matt Yoder, asks Mr. Ranaldi if the town has any concerns regarding the application. In which, he replies “No, the town is prepared to handle whatever may need to be handled.”

The conversation between Mr. Watson and planning board members continues. Mr. Watson also takes down a list of questions that the board has asked and will provide answers once obtained from peers/ colleagues. Mr. Watson takes a seat shortly after.

Mr. Lupovitz states that “There are really only two directions to go in now. We can table this for further discussion pending the additional information that will be forthcoming or make a determination and have a discussion on whether or not the board generally feels about continuing to pursue this in some form to understand whether we should make a recommendation to town council. I will open the floor to discussion for anyone who may have an opinion on the matter.”

Mr. deGroot comments “As Mr. Teitz pointed out, the heavy schedule the board is looking at in the coming meetings, that if we take any action we should dispose of it tonight one way or another and I’d be prepared to make a motion at this time to recommend to the Town Council that I support the Rhode Island Energy Application.” Mr. Lupovitz comments “Based on what we know about it so far, that is a form of endorsement from the planning board.” Greg deGroot replies “Yes.” Andrew Shartenberg states “I would agree with Mr. deGroot and I will second that motion.” Ms. Tara wood replies “Same.” A motion is now on the floor.

Mr. Teitz comments “At this time there is a motion and a second.” Mr. Ben Lupovitz asks “Do you feel that that endorsing the project will provide the town some benefit as opposed to not taking any action at all?” Mr. deGroot states “Yes.” Mr. Lupovitz states “I wouldn’t say so, unless I am unclear about something. If we take no action, make no recommendation and remain neutral then its not an endorsement, it’s not saying it’s a good project or a bad project. We are just not taking a formal position on it. Alternatively, if we decide to draft a letter to make a recommendation to the town council, we’re collectively taking a position that we are endorsing the project based on the information that we’ve received.”

Mr. Lupovitz comments “So, as I understand, I’m looking at least three board members Greg that are in favor of endorsing the project and drafting a letter and making a recommendation to Town Council.”

A discussion further ensues between board members about their concerns, questions, and support or neutrality regarding the recommendation to town council about the Rhode Island Energy application.

Mr. Lupovitz states “The reason why, my feeling is that we should remain neutral and take no action at all is I don’t feel as though I personally have enough information to decide one way or the other. It’s such an immensely complicated project with professionals and engineers that goes on for years. I don’t know anything about it. It’s an unusual project and an extraordinary matter brought before the board in my almost six years serving the board. I haven’t seen anything quite like

this that has come before us before or has been in our wheelhouse and I think I understand some of the opinions here in terms of drafting a letter of endorsement but I don't see that we've spent enough time analyzing the project and understanding it fully and its impact and potential risks to the town to take a formal position on it in that manner. By the same token, I would agree that we've learned that this has been in the town's hands for some time now, its been processed, we've kind of jumped on here mid-stream and it appears for all intensive purposes although it's been moving along so far without any huge objection to road block or any kind of problem. We would have all been made aware of it, it would have been publicized, there would have more chatter around town about it, and so on. So, my feeling is we take no action at all and we remain neutral on the matter at this point. If there is something that materializes, subsequent then we can look at it and have another discussion."

Mr. Shartenberg states "To clarify my position I'm on board with Ben and Marc to take no position. Originally, I just did not want to object to it."

All members for remaining neutral and not writing a letter of recommendation to Town Council: Andrew Shartenberg, Marc Gertsacov, Benjamin Lupovitz, and Greg Dubell (4)

All members in favor of writing a letter of recommendation to Town Council: Matthew Yoder, Tara Wood, & Greg deGroot (3)

In a 4-3 vote, all members present took a vote and rejected Greg deGroot's motion to write a letter of recommendation to the Town Council.

Marc Gertsacov calls for a motion to remain neutral and to take no action at this time, Mr. Shartenberg seconded the motion.

All members present voted remain neutral and to take no action at the time. – 4-3.

- c. Planning Board members voted to move the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the Making Land Use Decisions Training to March 1, 2023.

Marc Gertsacov calls for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Andrew Shartenberg 2<sup>nd</sup>.

All members present voted to adjourn the meeting– 7-0.

**Adjourn – 8:24 PM**