

Danbury Planning Board

November 11th, 2025

Un-Adopted

The Danbury Planning Board met on Tuesday November 11th, 2025 in accordance with the schedule adopted and posted. Gary Donoghue called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone present. Gary asked if anyone had a conflict of interest and hearing none, proceeded with the meeting.

Present:

Gary Donoghue, Vice Chair

Maggi Winn

Frances Bliss, Selectmen ex-officio

Jim Phelps

Edward Esty

Anna Offen, clerk/alternate

Katelyn Setterlund, clerk

Not Present: John Taylor, Chair, Kristen McKenna, Caelan Taylor -alternate,

Guests: Alan Huntoon, Kaye & Reg Glines, Tony Lane, Seth Offen, Jeffrey Hertel, Donna & Phillip Sprague, Dustin Sprague, Sarah Deliello, Lenny Ryan, Rachel Rosenblum, Carl Rominger, Nate Colannino, and Dale Knapp

Gary Donoghue appointed Anna Offen to be a voting member of the board.

At 7:01pm Gary Donoghue opened the application for the subdivision, property located at Spear Hill Road, **Tax Map 412 Lot 4**. Jeff Hertel (as authorized representative) was present. Lenny Ryan, guest, asked if that was a complete application, and inquired about driveway permits. Jim Phelps inquired about wetlands and flags marking wetlands on the property but did not see them in the plans. Jim asked what capacity Jeff is representing the property and application. Jeff is Scott Parseghian's cousin and part owner of the property. Jim again questioned the plans and omittance of wetlands. Jim inquired about wetland permits, driveway permits, and if utilities would be brought to the end of the proposed subdivision. Jeff noted they have begun discussions with Eversource. Donna Sprague, guest, lives across the road from the proposed subdivision and asked if she was considered an abutter, having not received the notice of public hearing. Anna Offen confirmed they are and verified with the certified mail receipt that a letter was sent on 10/31/25. Gary Donoghue asked if they were ok to proceed, considering they did not receive the notice. Donna confirmed they are ok with proceeding. Gary made a note that the Sprague abutters did not receive the certified mail with the public hearing notice. Jim considered the wetlands on the proposed lots are missing from the plans and inquired to the Board if they should

continue. Gary confirmed the Board can continue the review of the application and accept with contingencies and proceed. Tony Lane, guest, inquired if the same would apply about erosion on the map, and proceeding with the application. Gary confirmed that would come at a later stage in the process, if required. Jim made a motion to accept the application, with the contingency that the Board would need a wetlands determination of all the lots prior to it being considered complete, Maggi Winn seconded. **Roll call vote Gary Donoghue – Yes, Maggi Winn – Yes, Frances Bliss – Yes, Jim Phelps – Yes, Edward Esty – Yes, Anna Offen – Yes; motion passed unanimously.** Closed the hearing at 7:20pm.

At 7:20pm Gary Donoghue opened the public hearing on the Spear Hill Road subdivision, **Tax Map 412 Lot 4.** Jeff Hertel (as authorized representative), led the conversation by telling the Board and guests about the property and plans. The lot spans Spear Hill Road and Route 4, the proposed lots range from 6.5 acres to 17 acres, each with adequate road frontage. Also owning a lot across Route 4, which is in consideration to be donated to the State. Jeff noted all the proposed lots are over 5 acres, and therefore do not require test pits. Actively working with Eversource on running utilities down Spear Hill Road to the proposed lots, which has proven to take some time. Jeff noted the driveway locations are to scale, per the town's regulations. Gary asked the Board members to ask any questions they may have. Maggi Winn inquired if a cistern was being considered for installation. Jeff said not at this time. Gary read communication emailed from Jeremy Martin, Fire Chief, "It is my recommendation to the board that a cistern be required as a contingency of granting the subdivision, as there are no credible water sources in the area. Cistern must comply with NFPA standards." Rachel Rosenblum, guest, asked if they would be putting in water and sewer to the lots. Jeff confirmed they would not, it would be private well and septic on each lot. Rachel inquired if they were dug. Jeff noted that would be up to whoever purchases the lot. Jeff noted that the intent is only to subdivide the lots, and they would not be doing any building. Reg Glines inquired if the lots would be sold with the current covenants and restrictions in place, including what can and cannot be put on the properties. Jeff said yes; noting they have reviewed the covenants and restrictions and want to help maintain property value, as well as being open to working with the town and abutters on revising any restrictions that can be written into the sale of the lots. Reg asked if the town would enforce the covenants. Gary clarified that the town has no ability to enforce the covenants and restrictions, and that should not be factored in if the subdivision application is approved; unless an HOA is being established with a governing board, there would essentially be no enforcement. Jeff mentioned that every deed would be recorded with the covenants and restrictions included. Jeff said they would include no campers or mobile homes as permanent residences; noting willingness to work with abutters on the covenants and restrictions. Reg asked if they would enforce the covenants and restrictions. Jeff confirmed they would enforce them. Rachel noted currently that the covenants and restrictions are not enforced. Jim Phelps asked Jeff to bring a copy of the conditions of the covenants and restrictions to the next Board meeting. Lenny Ryan, guest, inquired if the lots would be further subdividable after being sold. Jeff noted that would be up to the town; it would seem only one lot may have enough road frontage to subdivide. Gary noted that could be made a covenant on the deed. Lenny commented that the rules and regulations of the town are not currently enforceable. Gary opened discussion regarding the road condition of Spear Hill Road and its suitability. Rachel asked if the top half of the road would be repaved. Frances Bliss noted the Board was in receipt of a quote from GMI Asphalt to repave the top part of the road, and with the potential subdivision to consider the impact on the road and if

the whole road should be paved. Rachel feels the houses currently on the road will be impacted. Jim noted the paving quote only included repaving the top part of the road and did not include any drainage. Jim asked Alan Huntoon how much he might estimate to bring the road up to town standards; Alan estimated around \$150k-\$200k. Jim noted that there are currently two seasonal homes at the top of the hill, and that part of the road does not currently get plowed in the winter. Jim noting furthermore that with more people, the road will have to be rebuilt and there are no provisions to do that within the town and the Board seeks to protect the interest of the taxpayers; an exaction may be sought from the applicant. Gary inquired to Jim and Alan if the road needs to be paved or if an alternative material option may be less costly to the town. Alan noted that there are only two houses at the top of the road, and it has not been a high priority of the town; the paved section does need work. Alan confirmed he feels the road could be maintained if it were rebuilt and not paved. Jim noted the three current concerns with the subdivision application – wetland delineation, utilities, and road improvement – noting that the rest of the application including road frontage and acreage meets the requirements, but wants to ensure that the costs won't end up costing the town or those who purchase the lots. Jim noted the gap between the power source until you get to the top of the hill. Tony Lane, guest, clarified that the top part of the road is paved and not in good condition, while the lower part of the road is not paved and in better condition, however, from the Huntoon turnoff to his property, is the steepest part, and at times is difficult to drive depending on conditions. Jim noted that it would be better to be paved, but it comes down to funding. Anna Offen inquired if an exaction were to be made, how is it determined and does the planning board need to meet with the Selectman's Office. Jim said that exactions have been determined in the past with information that was available to the Board. Jim said the exaction doesn't commit the town to the project, but rather spending the funds within six years of receiving. Gary proposed to end the meeting and ask the applicant to return with cistern, wetlands, and utilities plans. Jim asked Alan if he could come back to the Board with two proposed plans, including estimated costs, for road improvement, one including paving and one without. Alan agreed that was doable. Donna Sprague, guest, asked about the rail trail access for snowmobilers, as it currently runs through the proposed subdivision; if the new owner doesn't continue to allow the access, there may be an increase in snowmobile traffic, impacting the condition of the road – and the current proposed driveway locations. Frances Bliss noted the driveways would come after the subdivision through the Selectman's Office and with the town's Road Agent, in accordance with State law; agreeing the driveways would most likely need to be moved as there doesn't seem to be enough site line. Jim noted proposed lot 4 driveway in on the sharp corner, and there is most likely a better location. Gary mentioned continuing the hearing at the 12/9/25 meeting. Jeff will try and gather the outstanding information prior to the next meeting. Tony inquired if the continuation means the next hearing will be public as well. Anna noted that if abutters are not able to attend the next meeting, they are welcome to email in comments to the Board to be read into record. Gary Donoghue made a motion to continue the hearing at the next meeting, Jim Phelps seconded. **Roll call vote Gary Donoghue – Yes, Maggi Winn – Yes, Frances Bliss – Yes, Jim Phelps – Yes, Edward Esty – Yes, Anna Offen – Yes; motion passed unanimously.** Continued the hearing at 7:51pm.

Nate Colannino and Dale Knapp, as representatives from Walden Renewables, introduced themselves, presenting for an informal discussion with the Board. Nate mentioned they are in the beginning stages of the solar field planning process – they wanted to introduce themselves, solar, the project, and seek feedback they may be able to work into the application, when the time

comes. Walden Renewables operates business in solar, wind, and batteries throughout Massachusetts and Vermont. There is current solar project being installed in Farmington, New Hampshire, that will be the largest solar project the company has to date, once completed. Nate noted page 8 of the packet presented walks through the timeline and process options for land, file for interconnection with utilities; they are in the early stages of talking with Eversource and received initial feedback that the power company believes this location is good to give power. Nate said the next step would be to engage the community, fill design, field, well, soil surveys, and full design package to bring to the town – once all permits are received, a general contractor would be hired and construction takes about a year. Nate noted that once the field is operational, it is relatively low maintenance and could operate for 30-40 years, until the end of life of the project, at which point would be decommissioned. Gary Donoghue asked who is responsible for the decommissioning. Nate responded that Walden Renewables would be. Frances Bliss inquired what would happen if Walden Renewables went out of business before the end of the contract. Nate said in correlation with the contract, a bond would be posted or letter of credit to fund the decommission, if something were to happen to the company. Gary inquired at the proposition of a 30–40-year contract term, what is considered the life expectancy of a solar panel. Dale said the life expectancy is in regard to the operational system, based on 35-40-year span – the condition of the lease may be based on a 40-year term, with two optional 5-year extensions – even at year 40, the solar panels will still generate power and may have another 5 years left of life, but that would be up to the landowner. Frances asked what happens if the landowner sells the property the solar field is on. Dale confirmed the lease stays with the land. Jim Phelps asked if Walden Renewables retains the lease. Dale confirmed that Walden Renewables does retain the lease, with the right to sell the project to another operator if they choose. Jim referenced the map in the presented pack and asked where on the map might the proposed solar field be constructed. Dale noted this would depend on the interconnection with Eversource and wetland delineation. Nate followed up that currently Walden Renewables has been given options for potential locations of the solar field and it will depend on site specific field surveys and special assessments, then Walden Renewables will choose the best site to propose the location of the solar field – at this time, they are not at a point of choosing a location. Jim asked how high the panels sit. Nate said the panels in this proposed project would rotate, and be about 15-feet off the ground; the project is 5 megawatts and estimated to occupy 20-30-acres with an access road, agricultural style fence, invertors, transformers, and poles to tie into the existing power line. Jim asked if the estimated 20-30 acres would be one location or multiple. Nate said Walden Renewables prefers one but it could be multiple depending on the area, wetlands, and potential other factors. Maggi Winn asked if the owner would need to take the property out of current use. Nate confirmed yes. Jim inquired what State permits might be needed. Nate said the storm water, well, and delineation designs. Jim asked what would be needed for permission to source electricity back to the grid. Nate said just the permission of Eversource – the Public Utilities Commission does not sign off on every project. Jim asked how many households could the 5 megawatts field provide power for. Nate and Dale estimated between 1,000 and 1,200 households. Jim inquired if there would be any power storage capacity on the site. Nate said there is no battery storage at this time. Jim asked if power was only provided when the sun was out. Nate confirmed that is correct. Jim inquired the timeframe of the project. Dale said projects typically take a couple of years from start to coming online – spring would be a projected time for field surveys, late spring early summer to create a concrete design plan, State permitting takes about 90 days. Jim asked what the output of the panels is at the end of the 30-40-year term. Dale said the output degrades on

average a half a percent per year – so around 25 years the panels are warrantied to produce 80% capacity, so about 50-60% capacity at the end of their useful life. Anna Offen asked what benefit to the town these projects serve. Dale said other town agreements have solar power purchase agreements, but other options may be available. Jim asked what the cost is to build the proposed solar field. Dale estimated \$5 million to \$6 million for a 5-megawatt site. Gary asked if the panels could be replaced at the end of their lifespan. Dale said that may be an option in 40 years – but would depend on the agreement, timing, and financing. Gary asked Nate and Dale if they had any questions for the Board. Nate said the big question would be if there were any town specific variances. Gary said this project would require a special exception permit, and may need a joint meeting with the zoning board – the town would also want to hire an attorney to represent the town, which Walden Renewables would pay for. Maggi asked what the value of the project would be once operational. Dale said around \$6 million to \$8 million on day one, and depreciates thereafter – the pilot agreement could benefit the town, aggregate value of the agreement to tax. Jim asked if Walden Renewables would retain the taxes. Dale confirmed yes. Jim inquired how the property could be sold, if the owner was not paying the taxes. Dale said there are conditions of the lease that cover this scenario. Lenny Ryan, guest, inquired if the interconnection point to existing power lines had been determined. Nate said Route 104 near Buttrick Road, off an existing pole already within the property limits. Edward Esty inquired if a complete material list could be supplied. Nate said yes – however, the company has not selected a model supplier for this proposed project. Edward asked for confirmation that there are no plans for storage facilities. Nate said not as of yet, but if there are any changes they would let the Board know. Dale noted that the financial surety for decommission, if approved, would be acquired prior to the issuance of the building permit. Dale also recommended the Board reach out to Kyle Planner, Strafford County municipal representative, as he can inform the Board more about Walden Renewables, how they operate, and improvements made in the process.

Carl Rominger, one of the partners in the recent purchase of Ragged Mountain, was present for an informal discussion with the Board. Carl began by asking the Board if they had any questions for him. Edward Esty asked if there are plans for expansion. Carl said not in the short term – nothing outside of the existing master development plan that was revised two years ago. Jim Phelps inquired what the purchase included. Carl said the purchase includes all acreage of the resort operates on and a fair amount of the land surrounding it. Jim asked if there was still an option for the group to purchase the remaining land and noted the prior owners had different subdivisions, and if the purchase included those. Carl confirmed there was an option to purchase the additional land and the group acquired all RM Devco properties, Cardigan Cabins, Cluster Development, both parcels known as Forest Knolls West, and two parcels combined as Forest Knolls East. Gary Donoghue noted that the subdivision goes with the properties, but the development agreement stays with the entity and inquired if there is a transfer, modification, or if it's started from scratch again – noting planning should include the town enough to set the tone together, and at some point, town attorneys will want to engage with the owners' attorneys. Carl noted that the new owner group is excited to work with the town – for this season operations will run status quo, and nothing is changing yet. Lenny Ryan, guest, noted the mountain and land around it was for sale, inquiring if the group purchased all the land that was for sale as well. Carl confirmed the group purchased all the land the resort resides on, some surrounding land, and the assets; they did not purchase the entity – as they are forming their own company which will operate the mountain.

The meeting minutes were reviewed from 10/28/25. Anna Offen made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, Frances Bliss seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.** **Amendments to include to changing Gary to Frances noted the size of the Farmington site was 20 megawatts in paragraph ten; change the word pave to improve in paragraph eleven.*

Gary Donoghue read the following building permits into record:

Elizabeth Jablonski, 33 Juniper Meadow Rd, **Tax Map 412 Lot 022**, Roof mounted solar system.

Anna Hullinger & Heather Hill, 58 Littlefield Rd. **Tax Map 411 Lot 076**, 8'x20' Storage box.

Charles & June Deblois, 8 Sheldon Rd, **Tax Map 409 Lot 097**, Roof mounted solar system.

Sean & Kristen McKenna, 59 High St, **Tax Map 201 Lot 011**, Ground mounted solar system.

D&M Property Investments, LLC, 167 School Pond Rd, **Tax Map 201 Lot 039**, Interior renovation of home. Kitchen remodel.

Stephen Winslow, New Canada Rd, **Tax Map 416 Lot 064-004**, Roof mounted solar array w/ 33 solar panels.

Jeffrey Deuink Revocable Trust, 130 Moose Meadow Lane, **Tax Map 410 Lot 100**, Off grid solar system for cabin Ground mounted solar array w/ 24 solar panels.

James & Jessica Farmer, 66 Brad Chase Rd, **Tax Map 406 Lot 202**, Temporary Shed.

Frances Bliss inquired if the Board would consider looking at the LUZOs, and particularly LUZOs surrounding campers – as the ongoing issues with campers on properties in town and existing language may not be as clear as they could be. Maggi Winn noted the existing LUZOs only have four lines about campers – with seemingly different requirements. Jim Phelps and Frances agree that it does. Jim proposed the Board have a meeting about the LUZOs and discuss potentially amending home occupation versus cottage industry. Anna Offen inquired if that was the point of the LUZOs. Jim wasn't sure if that would be reasonable to set an employee limit now, as some businesses would have to leave town to continue operation. Maggi noted other towns require businesses to reapply each year – however, the town hasn't enforced many of the LUZOs in the past. Anna noted that it may be too late in the year to revise the LUZOs, as the Board would have to hold a public hearing in January – but agreed the Board should review the current LUZOs, as it's not something that is currently done on a regular basis. Jim noted that the town would need to be willing to enforce the LUZOs. Gary Donoghue noted that enforcement is up to the Selectman's Office. Jim said the review should include what parts of the LUZOs are unenforceable, and make recommendations from there. Anna asked if the LUZOs were worded differently, could they be better interpreted. Maggi said yes, and the changes could include a section about permanent occupancy. Anna noted if there is a specific problem, we can address it, however another problem could come up – someone needs to make recommendations as to what is helpful and what isn't. In addition, Anna would like to see the Board update the subdivision

checklist, regulations, and fee structure. Frances noted other towns require electricity, dry hydrants or system, among other criteria for subdivisions. Jim agreed that the subdivision application refers to outdated State department names. Anna offered to spearhead any LUZO project as well. Frances noted that more and more residents in town occupy in campers. Jim noted that some may not even have permits and may not be paying taxes, while putting children through the school system and potentially devaluing surrounding property.

Anna Offen inquired how an exaction amount is determined specifically in regard to the Spear Hill Road Subdivision application. Jim Phelps doesn't believe it's fair to ask the owners to pave the whole road, but maybe an exaction of \$50,000. Maggi Winn asked if that commits the town to cover the difference. Jim said it does not, it would only commit the town to spend the exaction received – but if the town matched it, that would be a step ahead. Maggi asked how that would work if the exaction funds are specifically requested for road improvements. Jim noted that the improve the road to town specs, it would not need to be paved. Frances Bliss expressed concerns that the taxpayers would end up paying more money seeing that the road needs improvements. Jim referred that the exaction definition makes reference to a proportionate cost, not creating a fully funded expense to the town, but it would be a subjective number and dollar value per lot when calculated. Gary Donoghue reviewed the GMI Asphalt quote to the Board. Maggi noted that the paved section of the road would need to be improved regardless. Jim agreed, however considering there are currently no full-time residences on that portion of the road at the moment, the road has been a low priority to the town for a while. Lenny Ryan, guest, feels that if the owners want to subdivide, they should be responsible for the road improvement. Anna inquired again how the Board determines the exaction amount. Maggi noted that in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts everyone contributes and it is spread throughout, on a smaller scale. Jim noted the proposed subdivision meets the criteria and if denied, could end up in Land Court and approved anyway. Maggi concerned that if it's estimated to cost \$150,000 to improve the road, and the exaction is for \$50,000, the town would be assumed to front the difference to bring it up to town standards. Anna asked if the Select Board should be at the next Planning Board meeting. Frances said she will present this information to Select Board. Jim recalled he asked Alan to propose two estimates for the road improvement, one to include paving and one that does not. Frances noted if the subdivision is approved, traffic will increase on that road and will impact the taxpayers in the long term. Gary noted the exaction is about timing – the town wouldn't have to improve immediately.

At 9:20pm Maggi Winn made a motion to adjourn, Frances Bliss seconded. **Roll call vote Gary Donoghue – Yes, Maggi Winn – Yes, Frances Bliss – Yes, Jim Phelps – Yes, Edward Esty – Yes, Anna Offen – Yes; motion passed unanimously.**

