

**SELECT BOARD
MINUTES**

**October 12, 2016
Special Meeting – Site Visit**

Present: Jeanne Conner, Michael Keane, V. Chair, Jeannie Jenkins, and Jim Carroll.
Also present: Stuart Hurd, Town Manager, Dan Monks, Assistant Manager, and Mary Morrissey.
Absent: Justin Corcoran, Tom Jacobs, Chair, Donald Campbell, the latter two recused themselves due to possible conflicts of interest.

The Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm in the Bennington Town Offices Conference Room. The meeting was adjourned to the site of the Paper Mill Solar Array proposal on Murphy Road. At the site, the group was joined by Megan Randall, Margaret Randall, Executor of the Randall Estate, Rob Spurber, and Michael Fitzgerald.

The site is a 4 acre parcel bounded by Murphy Road to the south and east. It is bounded to the north and west by the remaining 52 acres of the Randall Estate. The group walked a portion of the site discussing screening, view sheds, and the benefits of this array (SVMC will be the beneficiary of the electricity generated). Rob Spurber asked to address the group. He focused his discussion on the financial benefits to SVMC, to the Estate (the income will allow the family to leave the remaining site undeveloped and is in discussions with the Land Trust about a conservation easement), and to the community due to the conservation and a potential addition to the pathway along the Walloomsac River on the north side of the site. The family are enthusiastic supporters of solar power. Michael Fitzgerald reiterated his opposition to the array due to his concerns for inadequate screening and its visibility from Murphy Road. The group then left the site via Murphy Road to view the site from the east and returned to the Town Offices.

The meeting reconvened at 5:25 pm. Mary Morrissey and Rob Spurber re-joined the group. The Manager read the Planning Commission comments. Discussion continued focusing on the view sheds and the screening, both what is currently there and the proposed additions to infill the gaps. Jim Carroll indicated he had no objections to this proposal. Jeanne Conner indicated she was satisfied and felt the site visit was beneficial. On a motion by Jeanne Conner, seconded by Jeannie Jenkins, the Board voted 4-0 to indicate to the PSB that the Board found no adverse impacts, but encouraged the PSB to require continuous review of the south and east screening to insure sufficient screening throughout the life of the project.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart A. Hurd