

Town council balks at solar proposal

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LITTLE COMPTON—The Little Compton Town Council appeared ready to approve a solar ordinance at the outset of a public hearing on the matter last Thursday night, then backed away after listening to concerns expressed by members of the public.

The proposed solar ordinance, previously approved by the town planning board, and verbally outlined to the council by planning board chairman Mike Steers, was based on the ordinances for Block Island and East Greenwich, among others.

Roof-top solar installations under the proposed ordinance, and ground-mounted installations 750 square feet or less would be allowed by right in all zoning districts, while those 750 square feet or greater would require a special use permit, with more stringent standards and processes required for installations in historic zones on the Commons and in Adamsville.

The Little Compton proposal comes at a time when Tiverton is considering the possibility of repealing its ordinance adopted only last March.

So many citizens recently showed up in Hopkinton objecting to a solar proposal there, said Daune Peckham, that the council had to postpone a meeting to consider it, "due to the number of frustrated and concerned residents who couldn't be accommodated in the town hall."

"There are specifics we need to button up" with the Little Compton proposal, she said. Among other matters she mentioned were financial security to cover the costs of remov-

al, de-commissioning and abandonment.

Costs for removal if the developer did not do so, fencing, and buffering were not addressed. The proposed ordinance does not go far enough on the issue of dismantlement, said Malcolm McGeogh.

"I would hope we do not delay implementation of this ordinance," said Town Council President Robert Mushen,

"The proposed ordinance does not include any requirement that the project comply with conservation restrictions," which are applicable to a large percentage of the town's land, said Larry Anderson, who suggested there must be evidence of compliance with such restrictions, if any are applicable, before a project is allowed to move forward.

"We don't really understand the economics of this on the scale permitted," he said. "There are few standards in here, and a lot of discretion in the building official."

"There are portions of this that are overreaching," said Sidney Wordell.

"We may be better off waiting, if there's nothing in the pipeline," said Ms. Peckham. "What's the advantage of passing this today," she said. "There are many holes in this."

In the end, the council did not adopt a solar ordinance at last Thursday's meeting, but instead voted to invite those who have expressed an interest in the drafting of a solar energy ordinance to join the ordinance review ad hoc committee, with the goal of amending the current draft proposal for further consideration, and to ask the town solicitor to investigate the format for a moratorium should the council wish to go in that direction relating to solar installations.

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From FACING PAGE

growth and adhere to our comprehensive Plan so that we maintain the farm-coast character of our community. A spike in development will certainly strain our services that are already at minimum levels.

■ David Perry

"Trust: I have spoken to numerous residents of our Town, they seem to have a lack of trust in town government. We need councilors who will make sound decisions for our future. I have been involved because I love our town. I have the integrity, knowledge, and trust to be your next councilor. Zoning and Planning; Three years ago we talked about a total rewrite of both zoning and planning, nothing has happened over the past two years. We are trying to run a town with 1980 laws in the year 2018 that doesn't work. Vote for #8 first."

■ Joseph Perry Jr., incumbent

"Reducing town debt and getting a good qualified building inspector, and also getting the industrial park going."

■ Richard Rom

Zoning: I am concerned with keeping the small town look and feel. I prefer to increase small business rather than new home development, as our town does not need to grow infrastructure such as schools and roads. I do not prefer large scale corporate retail businesses ... However, land ownership rights must always be respected. Should a large retail business developer acquire legally zoned land, they should be allowed to develop, with the caveat that taxpayers are not impacted.

Town Services: I am concerned about purple bag trash pick-up. I would suggest selling trash stamps directly from Town Hall, that a homeowner would stick on each trash bag to be picked up, giving homeowners a choice of purchasing any kind of bag.

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