



**Town of Troy  
Planning Board Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday July 17, 2024**

**Members Present:**

**Kyle Smith (Chairman), Henry Underwood (Vice Chairman), Jack Gettens (Secretary), Matthew Meacham, Curtis Hopkins (Select Board Representative), Mike Leclerc.**

**Planning Board Consultant:**

**Carol Ogilvie (Zoom).**

**Planning Board Clerk:**

**Elizabeth Watson.**

**Public Present:**

**Katherine Sandman, Betsy Kivela, Dan Kivela, Sharon Batchelder, Ruth Batchelder, Don Batchelder, Jacob Landry, Rachel Rosenoff, Bill Harris, Alan Purrington, John Liimatainen, Richard HKS Thackston, Zachary Farkes (Rewild Renewables, Inc.).**

1 **Call to Order**

2 Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

3 **New Business**

4 **MOTION** to approve the Planning Board Meeting Minutes from Wednesday, July 3, 2024, Mr.  
5 Meacham. **SECOND**, Mr. Hopkins. Motion passed, Mr. Leclerc abstained, all other members  
6 voted in favor.

7 **MOTION** to approve the Planning Board Non-Public Meeting Minutes from Wednesday, July 3,  
8 2024, Mr. Meacham. **SECOND**, Mr. Hopkins. Motion passed, Mr. Leclerc abstained, all other  
9 members voted in favor.

10 **Continuation of Public Hearing from June 26, 2024**

11 Mr. Farkes introduced himself and described Rewild's June 28, 2024, letter responding to the  
12 three requests made by the Planning Board. The first response was formal memorandums from  
13 the Rewild attorney supporting requests for waivers. The second response was detailed on the  
14 expected upgrades to utility lines on Bigelow Hill Road. The third response was information on  
15 what the project will be like when operational.

16 Chairman Smith asked if there will be only one access entrance for each solar site. Mr. Farkes  
17 confirmed this.

18 Mr. Leclerc asked if Rewild considered it to be one project or three projects. Mr. Farkes  
19 indicated three separate projects: electrically, mechanically, and contractually.

20 Chairman Smith asked if Rewild considered including second entrances for safety. Mr. Farkes  
21 responded that second entrances could be done for all three sites. Their goal was to minimize the  
22 impacts to public ways and access areas and that the addition of second entrances would increase  
23 the impact.

24 Mr. Harris requested a summary of the three projects. Mr. Farkes described the three solar sites:  
25 the Bigelow Hill Road 83-acre parcel, the 42-acre Dort Street East parcel, and the Dort Street  
26 West 38-acre parcel using exhibits that illustrated access roads and solar panel coverage areas.  
27 (Note: This was a summary of the more detailed information he provided at the June 26, 2024  
28 Public Hearing).

29 Mr. Harris asked if there would be changes to the power lines on Monadnock Street and/or Dort  
30 Street. Mr. Farkes responded that he did not think so.

31 Ms. Batchelder described the impacts of solar arrays that were described on a government  
32 website; the impact is similar to that of an x-ray and the information indicated that it was not safe  
33 to live within 1.2 miles of the solar array. Mr. Farkes indicated that all of the equipment  
34 including solar panels, racks, and inverter are fully approved by Underwriters Laboratory (UL).  
35 He does not see dangers from the projects. Mr. Underwood requested that Ms. Bachelder share  
36 the source (report or website) of the health impact information she described.

37 Mr. Bachelder asked if the Planning Board was still deliberating. Chairman Smith answered that  
38 the Board is still deliberation. Neither the Site Plan nor Project has been approved.

39 Ms. Sandman commented that it is her understanding that there is a big fire risk. Fighting fires in  
40 arrays are very problematic. It is also her understanding that there is no video surveillance. She is  
41 concerned about trees falling on arrays. Mr. Farkes responded that the system is monitored with  
42 data acquisition systems and utility meters. In the event of a power outage, the system shuts  
43 down.

44 Ms. Sandman expressed concerns about hail and microbursts and indicated that solar panels leak  
45 toxic fluids when damaged and that she is concerned about the watershed. Mr. Farkes answered  
46 that the stormwater control section of their application is the largest because of the state  
47 requirements. Chairman Smith indicated that the state will be reviewing the stormwater permit  
48 application.

49 Mr. Batchelder read an excerpt from the 2007 Troy Master Plan and indicated that in his opinion  
50 the solar array violates the spirit of the Master Plan. There are Master Plan goals and objectives,  
51 and it seems like the projects violate the intent of the Master Plan for a rural area. Mr. Batchelder  
52 asked if variances were requested. Chairman Smith described the waivers that are being  
53 requested and that the waiver criteria include both hardship and consistency with the spirit of the  
54 ordinance.

55 Mr. Batchelder indicated that there were inconsistencies between the Rural District zoning  
56 provisions and the Solar Ordinance. The Rural District Ordinance does not include Utility Solar

57 as an allowable use but the Solar Ordinance does allow Utility Solar conditional on the Planning  
58 Board's approval of a Conditional Use Permit. Ms. Ogilvie replied that the Solar Ordinance is in  
59 the Supplemental Provisions section and this section is applicable town-wide.

60 Ms. Sandman indicated that the solar array would be visible from West Hill and that some West  
61 Hill residents were upset about it. She estimated that property values will be reduced by about  
62 30%.

63

64 Mr. Purrington asked why Bigelow Hill was selected. Mr. Farkes responded that they were  
65 looking for a large project, in the 20-to-40-acre range, with proximity to a substation. From his  
66 standpoint, it is a very well sited property, and it will not impact views.

67 Mr. Purrington asked about the impact to wildlife and the cost to the town. Mr. Farkes answered  
68 that there will be an impact to the wildlife in that 32 formerly forested acres will have solar  
69 panels and be fenced. There will be no costs to the Town. Rewild will pay for everything.

70 Mr. Batchelder asked how much of the fenced area will be accessible to wildlife. Mr. Farkes  
71 replied that there will be a 6-to-8-inch gap underneath the fence.

72 Mr. Batchelder commented that there is a historic culvert and asked if it will be wrecked. Mr.  
73 Farkes indicated that how the culvert is affected is open to consideration and he will do whatever  
74 the Town requests with respect to the road upgrade.

75 Mr. Whooley asked if Rewild approached the local Historical Society He also requested, in his  
76 role as Deputy Health Officer, that Rewild provide information on health impacts. Mr. Farkes  
77 replied that he would contact the Troy Historical Society. Mr. Farkes indicated that he did his  
78 due diligence on the solar projects. They will limit their projects to Tier 1 equipment. There is  
79 nothing that leads him to believe that there are health risks. He could provide background  
80 information on the testing results for the critical components (modules and inverters). Mr.  
81 Whooley requested background information.

82 Ms. Batchelder expressed a concern about the impact of the solar project on traffic that may  
83 affect her walks of Bigelow Hill Road. Mr. Farkes indicated that it will take 6 months to  
84 construct the Bigelow Hill project and that the road will not be shut down.

85 Ms. Batchelder asked how much land would be cleared. Mr. Farkes replied that, in total, it will  
86 be a bit over 60 acres.

87 Mr. Thackston asked if the plans are available to the public. Chairman Smith replied that the  
88 plans are available for viewing at Town Hall.

89 Mr. Thackston asked if project structures are taxable. Mr. Farkes responded 'yes.'

90 Mr. Purrington asked what was going to happen to the panels in 30 years? Mr. Farkes described  
91 the decommission plan, the estimate of the decommissioning cost, and that Rewild will purchase  
92 a bond to cover the cost of decommissioning.

93 Mr. Kivela asked if Rewild considered re-foresting as part of decommissioning? Mr. Farkes  
94 replied that re-foresting is not planned. Mr. Landry, speaking for his family, commented that the  
95 family prefers meadows rather than re-foresting.

96  
97 Ms. Sandman asked why the land was being leased rather than purchased. Mr. Farkes indicated  
98 that Rewild cannot force the landowner to do anything. The landowners have had the land in  
99 their ownership for years.

100  
101 Mr. Batchelder requested that the Board consider underground utility wires on Bigelow Hill  
102 Road. Mr. Farkes responded that the interconnection work will be the responsibility of  
103 Eversource and will not be within the scope of the Rewild projects.

104 Mr. Batchelder commented that he does not have a problem with the Dort Street project because  
105 it is not zoned rural. Bigelow Hill Road is rural, and it does not fit to have many wires along a  
106 woodland road.

107 Ms. Sandman asked if there is another site for a 35-acre solar array that could be considered  
108 other than Bigelow Hill Road. Chairman Smith replied that the Planning Board cannot tell  
109 Rewild to select different properties.

110 Mr. Whooley reported that the Solar Zoning ordinance, approved by the Town in March, is not  
111 legally in effect and suggested the Board table actions on the applications. Chairman Smith  
112 indicated that the July 18<sup>th</sup> Town Meeting is being held to ratify the Town Budget. The other  
113 items that passed at the March meeting are not affected.

114 Mr. Thackston asked if the solar project applications were available as electronic documents, for  
115 example PDF files. Chairman Smith replied that it may not be possible because the file sizes are  
116 large.

117 Mr. Purrington asked what power will be generated and will it supply Troy homes. Mr. Farkes  
118 responded that the power would be equivalent to about 3000 homes worth. The power will be  
119 sold to the utility company.

120 Mr. Kivela asked about the benefits to Troy. Mr. Farkes described three benefits. There will be  
121 about \$4 million paid to Troy over 35 years, \$110 thousand per year. There will be discussion  
122 with the Selectmen to determine the payment method, for example payment in lieu of taxes  
123 (PILOT). There will be energy savings in NH. Rewild receives energy credit for energy supplied.  
124 They sell the credit to municipalities around the state at about a 10% discount. The Town of Troy  
125 could receive a 10% discount on their electricity.

126 Ms. Batchelder asked if the Planning Board will be considering the projects as a package or as  
127 separate projects. Chairman Smith indicated that the Planning Board will vote on each on  
128 separately.

129 Mr. Leclerc asked if one was voted down, would it affect other projects. Mr. Farkes indicated  
130 that it would not.

131 Mr. Batchelder asked for clarification of the power line upgrade. Mr. Farkes responded that  
132 Eversource will upgrade the power lines on Bigelow Hill Road from the intersection of  
133 Monadnock Street to the access road for the solar project.

134

135 Ms. Batchelder asked if the Rewild description of the traffic impact included the Eversource  
136 traffic to upgrade the power lines and poles. Mr. Farkes replied ‘yes.’

137

138 Ms. Sandman commented that the health aspects of the solar project should be looked into. Mr.  
139 Whooley responded that he will collect information, compile it for the record, and share it with  
140 everyone. For when the Planning Board will be make a decision on the project.

141 Mr. Batchelder. The corner next to Pelto’s house is not passable at some times of day. Chairman  
142 Smith responded that the issue should be brought to the Selectmen.

143 **Chairman Smith closed the public hearing at 8:29**

144 **Planning Board Discussion of the Solar Projects**

145 Mr. Underwood suggested a ‘site walk.’ The requirements for the meeting were discussed. A  
146 notice would be posted in town at least 24 hours before the meeting. If there is a quorum,  
147 meeting minutes will be required. The Planning Board will need to decide if abutters may  
148 participate. Mr. Farkes will check with the landowners about access to the sites.

149 Mr. Gettens asked for additional details on the amount of traffic and noise during the  
150 construction phase of the project. Mr. Farkes responded. There is a flow of traffic for the initial  
151 mobilization. A construction trailer is set up for the project manager’s office. Heavy equipment  
152 is dropped off at the site. Heavy equipment operators are coming to the site daily and working.  
153 The first phase, site prep, will include tree clearing, grading, etc. and takes about two to three  
154 months. A forester will develop a tree clearing plan. Most of the materials will be ground on site  
155 and used as mulch and fertilizer. No wood chips will be taken off site. Some of the bigger logs  
156 may be removed but not many because the three sites have been selectively cleared. Rewild  
157 generally creates a mulch berm around the limits of the clearing to control erosion. After tree  
158 clearing, the stumps are pulled, and the topsoil is stockpiled and this is followed by the grading.  
159 There will be no blasting. Prior construction, geotechnical analysis will be done to provide  
160 information needed for the foundation design. The foundations are six-foot screws that are  
161 screwed into the ground (thousands of them). Rewild is proposing screws rather than pile driven  
162 supports. The grading plans are balanced sites, Rewild does not want to bring anything in. The  
163 only material that will be brought in is the sand that will be used to fill the trenches.

164 Mr. Farkes continued to describe the phases of the project. Prior to construction, there will be a  
165 plan set of approximately 150 pages that will be available to the building inspector. The heavy  
166 equipment will be removed from the site (fellar bunchers and bulldozers) and smaller white  
167 equipment will be brought to the site. Eventually that equipment will be removed and then  
168 wiring and whatnot will be moved to the site.

169 Mr. Gettens asked about the days and hours of traffic. Mr. Farkes indicated that he expected that  
170 the Planning Board will indicate when the road could be used to transport equipment. He  
171 anticipated that the Board would work with Rewild to determine the conditions and that they  
172 would be included in the Conditional Use Permit.

173 Mr. Gettens indicated that the health concerns mentioned in public comments may be related to  
174 the voltage of the power distribution lines and asked what the voltage of the lines are. Mr. Farkes  
175 indicated the Bigelow Hill Road will be 34KV and the Dort Street will likely be 12KV and that  
176 these are not considered to be high voltage and are not an different than the distribution lines in  
177 other towns throughout the country.

178 Mr. Gettens asked why the bond for decommissioning was proposed at 125% of the estimated  
179 decommissioning cost in current dollars. Mr. Farkes indicated that two estimates were made, one  
180 at 125% and another assuming an annual increase in cost in the range for 2% to 3%. The higher  
181 of the two was used.

182 Chairman Smith asked about the acreage covered in the Decommissioning Plan, and in  
183 particular, the extra approximately 4 acres of the Bigelow Hill Road project. Mr. Farkes  
184 indicated that the Decommissioning Plan will but updated prior to the building permit  
185 application to ensure that it matches the Construction Plan.

186 Mr. Gettens asked for a high-level timeline for the project. Mr. Farkes indicated that the Utility is  
187 conducting an impact study that will specify what upgrades are necessary to support the projects.  
188 The impact study will take four or five months. Based on the impact study, the Utility will  
189 estimate the time to complete the upgrade, for example 18 months. Assuming the 18 months  
190 starts on September 1<sup>st</sup>, the Utility upgrades would be completed in March 2026. In this scenario,  
191 Rewild would start construction in the summer of 2025. Mr. Farkes indicated that would be done  
192 parallel-ish. Crews will likely move from site to site; for example, the crew would complete the  
193 tree clear and site prep on Bigelow Hill, then move to Dort Street West, and then to Dort Street  
194 East.

195 Chairman Smith asked why meeting the 35% coverage limit on Bigelow Hill would cause  
196 hardship. Mr. Farkes responded that they designed the most efficient system for the property. Mr.  
197 Smith asked if lowering the coverage to 35% would require changes in the position of the fence  
198 or a reduction in the number of solar panels. Mr. Farkes responded that it would likely be both  
199 and that removing the waiver request was a possibility.

200 Mr. Leclerc asked if there were any chemicals used for vegetation control. Mr. Farkes responded  
201 that their typical pollinator spread does not require any pesticides.

202 Mr. Gettens asked about the timeline for the New Hampshire Department of Environmental  
203 Services approvals. Mr. Farkes indicated that the process is lengthy, about 6 months to get  
204 permits after submission.

205 Chairman Smith asked if they have ever included beehives on their projects. Mr. Farkes  
206 responded yes but they are not the typical square hives.

207 Mr. Gettens noted that there were public comments about the fire risk and asked Mr. Farkes  
208 about the risk. Mr. Farkes indicated that the fire risk was incredibly low. He was not aware of  
209 any ground mount solar systems having any fire issues in New England. Mr. Farkes discussed  
210 some of the safety features and things to consider during a fire event. If there is a fire during the  
211 daytime, the solar panels continue to produce electricity and water conducts electricity so they  
212 should not be sprayed with water. The electrical cables within the fence are buried. The inverters  
213 automatically shut off if there is a grid power outage.

214  
215 Chairman Smith asked if they expect to replace the fence that uses pressure treated pine. Mr.  
216 Farkes responded that the fence replacement is an expected maintenance cost.

217 The site walk was tentatively scheduled for August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 9:00 a.m. Mr. Farkes will confirm this  
218 with the landowners.

219 Mr. Farkes reviewed Rewild action items:

- 220 • Provide a couple of web page links to health impact information and he will copy the  
221 Troy Health Officer.
- 222 • Modify the Bigelow Hill Road site application so that the fence line coverage area is 35%  
223 and check to make sure the decommissioning plan is consistent with this.
- 224 • Provide the seed mix specification and provide the information to the Troy Conversation  
225 Commission
- 226 • Provide a list of standard conditions that may be applicable to the conditional use permit,  
227 for example: firefighting training, decommissioning bonds, and Application items that  
228 will be updated.

229 Mr. Underwood noted that the Troy site plan review checklist requires written statements from  
230 the Road Agent, Fire Department, and Police Department and this will be an opportunity to  
231 specify the conditions for the upgrade of the Class VI section of Bigelow Hill Road.

### 232 **Old Business**

233 Master Plan Survey Report: Ms. Watson will email the Troy Boards, Commission, Committees  
234 and Departments to inform them of the Master Plan Survey Report and she will include the  
235 report as an attachment.

236 Open Planning Board Positions: Ms. Watson will contact Ms. Steadman to check on her  
237 continued interest. Mr. Whooley also expressed interest.

### 238 **Correspondence**

239 A Notice of Potential Regional Impact was received from the Town of Jaffrey. The notice  
240 included the following notification:

241 On July 9 2023, the Jaffrey Planning Board determined that the following Notice of  
242 Breach in the Mountain Zone has a potential regional impact. Therefore, in accordance

243 with NH RSA 36:57, you are hereby notified that the Jaffrey Planning Board will conduct  
244 the following Public Hearing.

245 Public Hearing (continued) – Tues., Aug. 13 at 6:00 pm  
246 At Jaffrey Town Office, 10 Goodnow St., Jaffrey, NH 03452

247 **Next Meeting: August 7, 2024**

248 **Adjourn**  
249 Chairman Smith adjourned the meeting at 9:29 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by  
Jack Gettens  
Planning Board Secretary

