Town of Stanford Zoning Commission

Meeting minutes
February 19, 2025

Present: Thomas Angell, Stephan Gotovich, Don Smith, Wendy Burton, Barbara Warren, Steven Horowitz
Absent: Chris Flynn

Meeting begins at 7:02 PM

Battery Energy Storage
Ms. Burton said she had asked surrounding Town Supervisors to see if there have been any battery storage laws that had been passed. Mr. Angell said Mr. Latimer should be providing model laws that they can review.

Each member gave their input on battery storage:
- Mr. Horowitz would like to get a better understanding of the fire risks, although he said it seems like it is not terrible but cannot really tell that this point. Mr. Horowitz said he is open to residential units but is wary about the "let it burn" technique because it needs to be contained to "let it burn." He said he would like to address the commercial scale once they see how the residential units do. Mr. Smith added that Fire Code for New York State is going to see major changes in the next year.
- Ms. Warren said the presentation gave her enough information to encourage the residential units, but not the commercial storage.
- Ms. Burton said in her opinion she would not like to see commercial battery storage in Stanford and would support an ordinance restricting them.
- Mr. Smith agreed with Ms. Burton and in this stage in the development of the commercial battery storage to need them in the Town.
- Mr. Gotovich would like "residential" to be named as "single unit" and allow small businesses for on-site use only and no connection to the grid. Mr. Gotovich said a connection to the grid becomes commercial. Mr. Angell clarified that a lot of residential people with solar generation are connected to the grid. Mr. Gotovich said in his opinion that he would rather pick the location than allow the State to mandate where it belongs, and if the storage units can exist in the city, he is not opposed to having one in the our Town. Ms. Burton pointed out that the city has a more equipped fire department than Stanford. Mr. Gotovich suggested using the Transfer Station space if needed since it is on the High Transmission line.

- Mr. Angell said he was reading about the Thruway's encounter with the legislature about why there are no truck charging stations along the Thruway rest areas and he said the utility company said it would need the amount of energy to charge several trucks would be needed for a small city. Mr. Angell said if collectively the State was closer to its climate action goal he would consider commercial grade storage, but the amount of electricity that is needed seems unattainable to do only with solar. Mr. Angell was concerned by the number of resources that would be needed to deal with a battery storage fire. Mr. Angell said he does not feel that he has the level of expertise to draft an ordinance for this topic. Ms. Burton said she may get a model law from a surrounding Town for reference. Mr. Angell said the moratorium sets a year deadline to create a law. Mr. Horowitz wanted to clarify that a scale for residential storage needs to be in place. Ms. Burton said there will be stipulations including only on-site storage.
The Commission agreed that an ordinance to not allow commercial battery energy storage should be drafted. Mr. Horowitz disagreed that residential units should not be connected to the grid because there is a benefit to the utility to allow them to connect.

Wind Energy
Mr. Smith explained that an application for a windmill got denied, because the height of the windmill was above the 35 foot maximum. The Commission agreed that they would like to create a residential use for wind energy. This will be an action item moving forward.

Home Occupations
December 18, 2024 – Mr. Horowitz created a memo, below are topics of the memo and any related discussion is included in each item line.
1. **Rural Character of the Town.**
2. **Special use permit should be required for "allowed" uses.** Mr. Horowitz said the draft from June 2024 has Home Occupations have to get a special use permit and meet the requirements within the ordinance.
3. **Prohibited uses.** And which ones may be controversial versus less controversial and perhaps there could be specific limitations.
4. **Contractor Yards.** They exist currently, and how to move forward to allow them to exist by law. Ms. Warren clarified that going forward, the Code needs to be very clear about the accessory use scale. Mr. Gotovich said there should be numerical limitations on the size of the business to the home dwelling size because the current code does not define these terms. The draft law includes a stipulation that the business cannot exceed more than 30% of the dwelling unit. Mr. Gotovich would like to include language on businesses conducted inside the home and outside the home. Mr. Horowitz said the Commission would have to

consider conditions for the definition.
5. **Review Ms. Warren's memo on weights of trucks and how that affects some home occupations.**

6. **Permitted uses:** antique shops and how to develop parameters for the Planning Board to use. Ms. Burton suggested that the Commission define Home Business versus Home Occupations. Mr. Angell read the Pine Plains code on Home Occupations and they use the terms "minor" and "major" to help define the difference.
7. **Create zoning for strictly residential use.** The Commission agreed this would not be the way they would want to go.
8. **Parking concerns.**
9. **Limit operating hours.** Ms. Warren said a noise ordinance would help, but Mr. Horowitz said creating operating hours is less subjective than noise level.
10. **Should fines be implemented.** Mr. Smith said he could write a notice of violation and then a judge would issue the fine at the judge's discretion.
11. **Should Nina Peek be involved and at what level?**

Mr. Angell said that what is currently in the draft is more effective for the Planning Board than what currently exists, but there could be room for improvement. Mr. Angell said the bulk of the laws' success comes down to the enforcement.

Ms. Peek should be making her first report at the March 20 meeting.

Mr. Angell asked Mr. Horowitz to work on the draft of Home Occupations with the version where Paragraph 5 is removed. This is the draft from June 2024.

Ms. Knickerbocker will send out the draft of Home Occupation from June 2024 to the Zoning Commission and the draft minutes from this meeting.

Ms. Burton to approve the January 29, 2025 meeting minutes with Ms. Warren's amendments. Mr. Smith seconded. All in favor, Mr. Angell, Mr. Gotovich, Mr. Smith, Ms. Burton, Ms. Warren, Mr. Horowitz. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:54 PM

Meeting recorded by Sara Knickerbocker