Members Present: Mark Hesler (Acting Chair), John Dimarzio, Eric Meth, and Mary Grote

Also Present: Jennifer Pomiecko, Lynn Bart, and Carol Wills

A regular meeting of the Franconia Planning Board was held via Zoom on Tuesday, February 9, 2021.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm by Mark Hesler.

**Approval of Minutes –** Eric Meth made a motion to accept the minutes of November 10, 2020, as written, second by Mary Grote. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Eric Meth made a motion to approve the minutes of January 12, 2021, as written, second by Mary Grote. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

The minutes of the January 26, 2021, meeting will be reviewed at the February 23, 2021, meeting.

The Board had a brief discussion regarding a letter received by the Board of Selectmen from the Franconia Soaring Foundation about plans to replace the building at the airport.

**Informal Discussion – Solar Energy Regulation**

Lynn Bart and Jennifer Pomiecko were in attendance to discuss this matter with the Board. Lynn stated that she and Jennifer both own homes on Timber Lane and a neighbor had a free-standing solar array installed over the winter which it is quite visible from the road. At the present time there is no screening to minimize its visibility. Lynn stated the neighbor did get the appropriate permits and had a professional crew install the panels. Their concern is at the present time there is nothing in Franconia’s regulations to regulate the placement and installation of solar panels to protect neighbor’s views. Lynn stated they had looked at surrounding towns and Lincoln has a good solar ordinance which they presented to the Board.

The Board discussed the need for guidelines and regulations pertaining to solar energy to make sure that the gains being achieved from the energy side do not negatively impact neighbors and the larger community. The Board agreed that solar is an excellent renewable resource but if not done properly it can destroy the esthetic resources within the community and countryside.

The Board was in agreement that developing a solar energy regulation is something that can be worked on this year to have ready for a vote at next year’s town meeting along with the Master Plan.

The Board discussed solar panels placed on a roof versus a solar array that is visible from the ground and noted there needs to be a distinction between the two in any regulation that is developed. Mark stated there is a resident in Franconia that has a solar array on his property but you would not know it was there because it is surrounded by trees and is not visible from the road.

Eric suggested that perhaps Lynn and Jennifer would be interested in attending the next Energy Commission meeting to express their concerns. Eric will email them the zoom link for that meeting.

Mark asked if the Selectmen have discussed the pros and cons of solar energy. Eric stated the only project that has come up is the proposed new Welcome Center, but that would be a roof system.

The Board had a brief discussion about requiring that any new solar array installation must come before the Planning Board until a new regulation can be written into the zoning to allow the Planning Board the ability to dictate where the solar array can be located. Mark will draft an email to Thad, with copies to board members, about instituting an immediate requirement that any new stand-alone solar array be considered a structure and must come before the Planning Board.

The next Planning Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 23, 2021, at 7:00pm via zoom.

There being no further business, John made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Eric. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Wills