

**BOROUGH OF FAR HILLS**  
Planning Board Special Meeting  
Site Visit – 100 Lake Road, LLC  
**MINUTES**  
February 20, 2021

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Tom Rochat called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. at 100 Lake Road, Far Hills, NJ and read the Open Public Meetings statement in accordance with the law.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present: Chairman Tom Rochat, Vice Chairman Richard Rinzler, Kevin Welsh, Marilyn Layton, Robert Lewis and Suzanne Humbert, Alt. #2

Also Present: Peter Henry, Board Attorney, David Banisch, Planner, Steve Bolio, Board Engineer and Shana L. Goodchild, Secretary

**SITE VISIT**

Attorney Frederick Zelle and Applicant Philip Hofmann were present.

Attorney Henry announced that Board members should refrain from discussing the application with each other except in the context of the public meeting on the record. He asked that Board members put any pertinent information on the record at the March 1, 2021 public hearing.

The Board walked along the frontage of Lake and Pennbrook Roads to observe the respective views of the proposed ground mounted solar location as marked by the stakes. Attorney Zelle noted that the two (2) arrays are end to end and parallel to Pennbrook Road; the stakes represent each end. The Board discussed the angle of the arrays to which Mr. Hofmann opined they would be facing Lake Road at a slight angle. When asked by Mr. Lewis the kilowatts of the system, Mr. Hofmann responded 38 kilowatts. Mr. Zelle pointed out the two (2) rows of trees along the Pennbrook Road frontage, one row consisting of evergreens which provided a thick buffer. When asked by Mr. Banisch if supplemental landscaping would be added, Mr. Hofmann offered to provide additional landscaping along Lake Road and closer to the arrays. He noted that the greenery along the fence line and grasses in the field are very high in the summer and would help buffer the arrays. The Board opined that the view from Pennbrook Road was not as impacted by the array as the view from Lake Road.

After observation and a lengthy discussion it was noted that, despite the request by the Board, the stakes did not represent the height of the proposed array. As a result, Attorney Zelle stood in the area of the stakes (closest to Lake Road) with his arm raised to simulate the height of the arrays for the Board to view from both roadways. Mr. Welsh noted that the end closest to Lake Road would be the highest point and the view would be of the underbelly of the panels. Mr. Hofmann noted that there would be grading to level the area prior to the installation. It was agreed that the applicant's Engineer should be prepared to address any proposed grading at the public hearing.

Mr. Banisch noted that as part of the discussion at the hearing he would ask why a conforming location on the lot wasn't selected as opposed to the non-conforming location. The Board walked further

down Lake Road to view what would be the conforming location for an array which was adjacent to the detached barn/garage. Mr. Hofmann opined that the conforming location would be more visible from Lake Road.

The Board walked through the field to the stakes marking the proposed location. Mr. Hofmann noted that the grasses in front of the array are only cut two (2) times per year. Speaking to Mr. Chimenti, a noticed neighbor from 111 Lake Road, Mr. Banisch asked if most of his living space was generally oriented to the rear of the home to which Mr. Chimenti responded in the positive. There was a question about markings on the stakes (i.e. fill 8.24), Attorney Zellely agreed to provide clarification at the hearing. Mr. Banisch noted that it appeared from the plans that the area will be raised approximately two (2) feet and the applicant agreed respond to the question at the hearing. When asked the distance from the bottom of the panel to the ground, Mr. Hofmann opined three (3) feet. Mr. Hofmann noted that the power from the panels would feed back into the grid as a meter system that credits electricity. When asked by Ms. Layton if the power will be fed to the barn, Mr. Hofmann responded in the negative and noted that it only feeds into the main house. When asked by Mr. Lewis if a roof mounted system was considered, Mr. Hofmann responded in the positive and noted that the panels burn like an accelerator. When asked by Mr. Banisch if he would provide that opinion in writing, Mr. Hofmann responded in the positive.

The Board then proceeded to the area of what would be a conforming site adjacent to the detached barn/garage. Mr. Hofmann pointed out that the conforming location would be shaded by the existing tree line, would take up the active pastureland and would be highly visible from Lake Road.

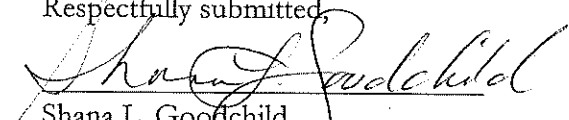
After retrieving the solar panel detail plans, Attorney Zellely explained that the top of the solar array is 109" and the bottom is 28" from the ground. He noted that the neighboring property installed ground mounted solar in 2010 without a variance and the other ground mounted solar on Spring Hollow Road was approved in 2020 through the use variance process.

Mr. Lewis questioned the size of the south facing side of the barn/garage roof and the ability to mount the solar panels. Mr. Hofmann opined that the existing trees would shade the roof and would only provide early morning sun.

#### ADJOURNMENT:

There being no additional questions, the meeting was adjourned by a motion of Marilyn Layton, seconded by Robert Lewis at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Shana L. Goodchild  
Planning Board Secretary

APPROVED 4/5/21