

Town of Belgrade Planning Board

May 5, 2022 / 6 p.m.
Belgrade Town Office
990 Augusta Road

This meeting can be watched at

<https://youtu.be/pjCLmk4atY>

MINUTES

Planning members present: Peter Rushton, George Seel, Craig Alexander, Sara Languet.

In-person attendees: Code Enforcement Officer Richard Greenwald,

Remote attendees:

1. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Discussion and consideration of **Commercial Development Review Ordinance amendments** addressing commercial solar facilities. The Planning Board will return to the subject of setbacks after the Selectboard has been invited to participate in the May 12 special meeting. Mr. Seel initially proposed setbacks of 250 feet from existing public and private road rights-of-way and 250 feet from existing residential dwelling units. Transformers and inverters would not be located fewer than 150 feet from a property line because of the electromagnetic fields they create. Mr. Alexander advocated for a 250-foot setback from the property line, which he said would give property owners more freedom to build on their property and would minimize aesthetic impacts. Mr. Seel questioned protecting undeveloped property, but agreed solar farms should not be built along property lines; he questioned what an appropriate setback should be, allowing the normal 10-foot setback would not be. Mr. Seel noted his proposal would be the most stringent setbacks in the state. He advocated for consistency in the approach with setbacks for other large commercial ventures to avoid regulations that essentially prohibit solar power in Belgrade. Mr. Rushton agreed the Commercial Development Review Ordinance is meant to allow commercial development as opposed to prohibiting a specific development; minimizing and mitigating negative impacts is the goal, he added. Mrs. Languet offered to craft a visual mockup of the impact of the discussed setback restrictions. The setback conversation will continue May 12.

The board agreed maximum solar module height, as measured from ground level to a module's highest point at full tilt, shall not exceed 12 feet.

Mr. Seel suggested and the board agreed solar energy systems must be designed by a Maine-registered electrical engineer.