



STATE OF CONNECTICUT – COUNTY OF TOLLAND  
INCORPORATED 1786

# TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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## DESIGN REVIEW BOARD SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 2021, 7:00 P.M. ZOOM MEETING

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Robert Dawson, Michele Beaulieu, Gary Chapin, Ronald Stomberg and Kevin Zahner

**STAFF PRESENT:** Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner and Barbra Galovich, Recording Clerk

### I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Robert Dawson called the meeting to order at 7:09 P.M.

### I. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Review of design elements for Z202024 – Schneider Brothers, LLC, owner/ Earthlight Technologies, LLC, applicant, request for Special Permit for business office, warehousing and storage, and storage yard for building materials and a ground mounted solar array pursuant to Section 7.15.7 and Site Plan Modification for the construction of a commercial building, parking, loading area, outdoor storage yard, common driveway and utilities, ground mounted solar array, and associated site improvements on properties located at 124 West Road, APN 037-003-0000 and 128 West Road, APN 037-003-0002 in a PC (Planned Commercial) Zone.

Guy Hesketh and Ken LaForge, F.A. Hesketh and Associates, Inc., 6 Creamery Brook, East Granby, CT, Everett Skinner, The Barnyard, 120 West Road and Sam Schneider, Earthlight Technologies, LLC, 92 West Road were present to represent the application.

Mr. Hesketh stated the applicant previously received subdivision and zone change approvals from the Planning & Zoning Commission. He said the detention basin and shared access improvements with Barnyard have been constructed and the applicant has received wetlands approval for the proposed site improvements. Mr. Hesketh reviewed the proposed improvements such as the main access drive, building location, employee parking, customer parking, outside storage area and solar array. He reviewed the photometric plan, which includes the wall mounted lighting, parking area lighting and

landscaping proposal for the Earthlight development area. Mr. Hesketh stated the pole lights are proposed to be 25' in height from grade.

Mr. LaForge reviewed the proposed landscaping plan, which includes elm trees that will be 35' on center along the driveway and a variety of trees, such as elm, evergreen, and maple trees, that will be installed within the parking areas. They are planning on planting evergreens to buffer the outside employee's break area to the north side of the building and the outside storage area beyond the main building. He reviewed the landscape schedule and described the different plantings and shrubs to be used on site. Oriental plantings are proposed to be used between the building and the parking areas. Mr. LaForge explained the proposed landscape plan is designed to be consistent with other newer developments along Route 83.

Everett Skinner reviewed the building design, explaining the applicant is proposing to construct a 20,690 sf two story office with a one story warehouse, noting the front of the building will be made of timber frame and reclaimed barn board. The warehouse portion of the building will be constructed with steel and have solar panels on the roof. They are proposing to have a covered loading dock, an 80'x150' outside storage area that will be enclosed by an 8' chain-link fence, and a dumpster enclosure that will be completely screened from the public. Mr. Skinner stated the buildings will be fully fire sprinkled. Mr. Skinner stated the storm drainage will be in the back of the property.

Chairman Dawson stated the applicants did a great job on the presentation and asked if they would be installing lights along the driveway. Mr. Hesketh explained the photometric plan is just for Earthlight's portion of the property. They've completed the grading and installed the street trees in Phase 1 of the project. Chairman Dawson asked if the driveway would be paved and Mr. Hesketh confirmed it would be paved. Chairman Dawson stated he liked the farm-like look of the main building and inquired about adding a cupula to it for aesthetics.

Commissioner Chapin said it is an attractive building and appreciates the applicant for the thorough landscape plan. Mr. Schneider noted the land in front of the building will remain a hayfield for now. Commissioner Beaulieu likes the building and appreciates the use of reclaimed barn wood. She is not too sure about adding a cupula to the building. Commissioner Stomberg stated he appreciated the applicants' efforts and receiving a completed application. He questioned the idea of a cupula and requested the driveway be constructed to handle normal roadway traffic and expressed concerns about another building being erected in front of Earthlight's building that could detract from the favorable design. He suggested the applicant keep in mind that Route 83 is a highway and could possibly be widened in the future.

Mr. Hesketh explained where it is noted, "Possible Future Development" in front of the Earthlight building was for the concept plan required by the Planning & Zoning Commission that was submitted with the zone change and subdivision

proposals for the parcel. Mr. Schneider reiterated they are not planning on developing in front of their proposed building at this time.

Chairman Dawson stated he'd leave it up to the applicant whether or not to add a cupola and reviewed suggestions with the applicant and other Board members.

**BY CONSENSUS, THE BOARD GRANTED A POSITIVE REFERRAL TO THE PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION FOR A BUSINESS OFFICE, WAREHOUSING AND STORAGE, AND STORAGE YARD FOR BUILDING MATERIALS AND A GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR ARRAY PURSUANT TO SECTION 7.15.7 AND SITE PLAN MODIFICATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A COMMERCIAL BUILDING, PARKING, LOADING AREA, OUTDOOR STORAGE YARD, COMMON DRIVEWAY AND UTILITIES, GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR ARRAY, AND ASSOCIATED SITE IMPROVEMENTS ON PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 124 WEST ROAD, APN 037-003-0000 AND 128 WEST ROAD, APN 037-003-0002.**

**DISCUSSION/OTHER POSSIBLE CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Asphalt paving suggested for roadway;
- Addition of a cupola on main building;
- Design of potential future buildings should be compatible with design used for Earthlight Technologies headquarters.

**II. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:**

1. Approval of the November 19, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes

**MOVED (CHAPIN), SECONDED (STOMBERG) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 19 2020 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN.**

2. Election of Officers

Chairman:

**MOVED (CHAPIN), SECONDED (STOMBERG) TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER (DAWSON) FOR CHAIRMAN OF THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD FOR 2021.**

**COMMISSIONER (DAWSON) ACCEPTED THE NOMINATION. HEARING NO FURTHER NOMINATIONS, NOMINATIONS WERE CLOSED.**

**BY CONSENSUS, COMMISSIONER (DAWSON) WAS ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD FOR 2021.**

Vice Chairman:

**MOVED (DAWSON), SECONDED (BEAULIEU) TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER (CHAPIN) FOR VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD FOR 2021.**

**COMMISSIONER (CHAPIN) ACCEPTED THE NOMINATION. HEARING NO FURTHER NOMINATIONS, NOMINATIONS WERE CLOSED.**

**BY CONSENSUS, COMMISSIONER (CHAPIN) WAS ELECTED VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD FOR 2021.**

**III. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOVED (BEAULIEU), SECONDED (CHAPIN) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MEETING AT 7:58 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Barbra Galovich, Recording Clerk