

Richmond Planning Board Public Hearing
Town Hall
Minutes
September 26, 2023

Members present: Richard Bell, Douglas Bruce (Chairman), John Hanson, Katherine Keenum, Pete Lopez

Others present: Tajine Monjardo, Richmond; Philip Leslie, Trinity Solar; Regis Donovan, *Richmond Record*

Site visit

At 6:00 P.M., Planning Board members met Mr. Monjardo on his property at 282 Canaan Road to inspect the site of a proposed ground-mounted solar energy system. The visit and subsequent public hearing had been duly posted at Town Hall and advertised in the Berkshire *Eagle* on September 7, 2023 and September 14, 2023 (see Appendix 1). The petition submitted by Trinity Solar for a special permit to build a ground-mounted solar energy system as an accessory structure for residential use had been distributed to Board members electronically. (See Appendix 2 for excerpts. Hard copy of the full application is available at Town Hall.)

The site for the proposed south-facing array had been cleared behind the house on a gentle slope. It was evident to all members that the system would be well screened by trees on the heavily wooded lot. Mr. Monjardo explained that a large system was needed because the house (roughly 4,000 square feet) is all electric.

Board members and Mr. Monjardo proceeded to Town Hall, where they were met by Mr. Leslie and Ms. Donovan.

Public Hearing

Mr. Bruce opened the hearing at 6:30 P.M. by asking those present to introduce themselves. He then asked Mr. Leslie to give a summary review of the proposed project.

Mr. Leslie said that it would:

- be a 32 KW DC system of eighty panels in two sections
- occupy an area of 1463 square feet
- be located at the back of the property and screened from the road and abutters by vegetation
- meet the required setbacks at 552 feet from the road and 142, 238, and 367 feet on the other three sides
- have a maximum height of 134 inches
- be connected to the house by an underground power line.
- provide energy solely for the house

Mr. Bell asked how the calculations for the size were made. Mr. Leslie said that it was based on the amount of electricity the house had required in the past and took into account that the panels would be less than maximally efficient because of the trees. Mr. Hanson commented that the Board was interested in learning how well Richmond's Zoning *By-Law* Section 4.8.B.17.c was crafted and whether it needed modification. He said that the Board wanted the bylaw to enable townspeople to build solar energy systems with only limited restrictions, but efficiency might be a criterion to consider in future.

Mr. Bruce asked whether there were further questions or comments. Hearing none he called for a motion to close the public hearing. Mr. Hanson so moved. Mr. Lopez seconded. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous, 5–0.

The public hearing ended at 6:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine Keenum, Clerk

Appendix 1

**TOWN OF RICHMOND PLANNING
BOARD NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
SPECIAL PERMIT** The Planning
Board will conduct a public
hearing, pursuant to the
provisions of Chapter 40A of
the Massachusetts General
Laws, and Section 13 and
4.8B(17) of the Richmond
zoning Bylaw, on the petition
of Tajine Monjardo for a
special permit to install a
ground mounted solar system
for residential use at 282
Canaan Road, Assessors Map
405, Parcel 19. Copies of the
application and plans are
available for review at the
Town Clerk during regular
business hours. A site-visit
will be held September 26,
2023 at 6:00 PM at the
property and the hearing will
be held at 6:30 PM at the Town
Hall, 1529 State Road,
Richmond, Massachusetts. AD#
78733 09/07/2023, 09/14/2023

Appendix 2

August 22, 2023

To: Inspectional Services

From: Keith Leslie – Trinity Solar

Subject: Special Permit Application for Ground-Mounted Solar Installation



JUL 23 2023

TOWN OF RICHMOND
TOWN CLERK

Attached please find a special permit application for the construction of a residential ground-mounted solar energy system that is structurally mounted to the ground with a project area of approximately 1463.29 square feet. As per section 4.8 B. 17. C) of the zoning bylaw, this project requires a special permit to install in zone RA-C. Please additionally find supporting documentation including the corresponding assessor's map, site plan, mounting specifications, photographs of the site, and a check for \$200 for the special permit fee.

Please note the following as regarding requirements imposed by section 13 of the zoning bylaw via section 4.8 B. 17. C):

The array sits a minimum of 552' from the front property line, 142' and 238' from the side property lines, and 367' from the rear property line. As per section 13.2.1, the array must comply with the zoning setbacks in which the system is located (Residential-Agricultural District C), which has front/side/rear setbacks of 35'/35'/35'.

Please see attached photographs of the proposed location demonstrating the existing dense vegetative screen existing between the proposed location and adjacent properties or public ways as required by section 13.3.1 of the zoning bylaw.

The maximum height of the system is 134", as shown in the specifications sheets for the ground mounting. This is below the cap of 20' (240") as per section 13.2.2 of the zoning bylaw.

The power line connecting the system to the primary use structure will be placed in an underground trench as described on the plan set, in conformance with the requirements of section 13.3.3 of the zoning bylaw.

If there are any questions, please feel free to let me know.

Thank you very much!

Keith Leslie
applications.westma@trinity-solar.com
413-203-9088 Ext. 1508
Trinity Solar
4 Open Square
Suite 410
Holyoke, MA 01040

RECEIVED

JUL 23 2023

TOWN OF RICHMOND
PETITION
SPECIAL PERMIT VARIANCE/APPEALTOWN OF RICHMOND
TOWN CLERK

Please read the attached instructions before completing this form. Please provide all applicable information. Incomplete forms and failure to submit necessary documentation may cause rejection of the petition.

Property Owner Tajine MonjardoProperty Owner Address and Phone 282 Canaan Road, Richmond, MA (413) 822-4446Petitioner (if different) Address and Phone Trinity Solar - 4 Open Square Way, Suite 410 Holyoke, MA 413-203-9088

Representative (if applicable) Address and Phone _____

Location of Subject Property 282 Canaan Road, Richmond, MA Map 405 Lot 19Zoning District Residential-Agricultural District C Book 7136 Page 109

This Petition is for the Following:

Special Permit X Variance _____ Appeal _____Pertinent Section of Zoning Bylaw 4.8 B. 17 c) Permit Granting Authority Planning BoardProject Description Install 32 kW DC ground mounted solar array (80 panels). Approximately
1465 sq ft.

Attach narrative or additional sheets as needed)

Fee: \$200

The undersigned hereby certifies that this is a true and complete petition to the best of his or her knowledge:

Tajine Monjardo
Tajine Monjardo (Aug 12, 2023 18:20 EDT)

Signature of Property Owner

08/10/23

Date

Received by the Town Clerk on this 23rd day of August 2023Angela Sauty
Signature of Town Clerk