

**City of Hallowell  
Planning Board Meeting  
City Council Chamber  
November 20, 2024  
6:00 pm**

**1. Call to Order**

Ms. Feinstein called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

**2. Roll Call / Quorum**

Ms. Feinstein took the roll call and established a quorum.

Present: Judith Feinstein (Chair), Richard Bostwick, Darryl Brown, Andrew Landry, Matthew Rolnick, Richard Seymour (1<sup>st</sup> alt.), Keith Taylor (2<sup>nd</sup> alt.)  
Melanie Weston, Community Planner; Gary Lamb, City Manager; Daniel Kelley, Deputy City Clerk

Excused: Melvin Morrison, Lisa Rigoulot

Mr. Seymour and Mr. Taylor will both be voting.

**3. Public Comments** (The Board has agreed to limit the time allotted to Public Comment to fifteen minutes.)

None.

**4. Approval of Minutes of the October 16, 2024 Planning Board Meeting**

Motion to approve the minutes of the October 16, 20-24 meeting as presented.

Moved: Rolnick

Seconded: Bostwick

Unanimously approved.

**5. Site Plan Review and Conditional Use Permit Application for Small-scale Ground-mounted Solar Array for Perennial Hallowell Solar, LLC, Pinnacle Drive, Map 18 Lot 33B**

Nicholas Lacasse, partner in Perennial Renewables LLC; Andy Johnson, a principle of Atlantic Resource Consultants LLC; and Lucien Langlois, Environmental Project Manager for Atlantic Resource Consultants LLC presented an application for construction of a ground-mounted solar array on city-owned land at Pinnacle Drive. Mr. Lacasse explained that the City issued a Request for Proposals for a solar array at the site of the proposed Public Works facility. The bid was awarded to Hallowell Solar on September 9. The proposal is for a lease from the City and a twenty-year power purchase agreement. The lease will be \$2,000 per acre per year. The power will interconnect to the three-phase line on Central Street. Access to the array will be a 16'-wide gravel road from the end of Pinnacle Drive with a gravel base 12" deep. The power line will be built to facilitate connection to the future Public Works Facility. The installation will be a 729 kW system consisting of 1300 panels covering 5 acres. They will pre-drill for ground screws to support the panels. The northeast corner of the lot is the most challenging area and will be visible from the southbound lanes of the Turnpike.

Ms. Feinstein summarized the Board's site visit at noon which was attended by Ms. Weston, Mr. Brown, Mr. Lacasse, Mr. Seymour and herself. She noted that the area still has a lot of debris from the construction of the Turnpike in the 1950s.

Mr. Lacasse noted possible issues at the state level regarding solar use vs. housing use, but he observed that the site is such that it would be hard to do anything but solar generation. He added that the Conservation Commission has identified lots of invasive species on the site and Perennial Solar will be careful to eliminate them.

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Mr. Lacasse explained that the panels will be self-powered to track east to west, so they will be oriented north-south, but that may be shifted slightly to maximize generation. He noted that the agreement with CMP calls for a maximum of 700 kW.

Mr. Johnson provided an overview of the topography and the plan to maximize viability.

Mr. Langlois provided an overview of the natural resources. He explained that he took the natural resources and wetland boundaries into account. He noted that there are a couple of areas that seem to be vernal pools, but an earlier examination by the state determined that they are not natural. Mr. Rolnick asked if the comments from the Conservation are consistent with this; Ms. Feinstein said the Conservation Commission is satisfied.

Mr. Bostwick asked if this project came under the Army Corps of Engineers oversight; Mr. Langlois said the Army Corps only oversees cases where there is soil disturbance. In this case the trees will be cut by hand and there will be no soil disturbance. Mr. Langlois also noted that in order to minimize the effect on bats, they will not cut trees in the summer, only before April. The site will be fenced to keep out deer, but there will be 4"×4" openings for small wildlife. The land will remain in meadow condition for wildlife migration.

Mr. Bostwick asked about the emergency road; Mr. Lacasse said they will construct the access road to City of Augusta emergency access specifications. Mr. Taylor suggested that the wetlands noted may be regulated; Mr. Langlois said that a report will be issued to delineate impact for a permit from DEP for road construction.

Mr. Rolnick asked if there were areas that might present problems for approval in December; Ms. Weston said she has gone through the application and that it is thorough. Mr. Taylor asked if there were conditions that might keep Perennial from completing the project; Mr. Lacasse said he could not answer that but added that they are required to establish a decommissioning bond and that they have met all requirements to build which are stronger than the Planning Board requirements.

Mr. Bostwick asked if there was a need for site location; Mr. Johnson pointed out that this project does not trigger that requirement.

Mr. Brown asked if the contract includes damages if the project is not completed; Mr. Lacasse explained that the City can exit the contract if there is no power generation and that the agreement starts with the start of construction. Ms. Feinstein noted that on the application they have checked "option" instead of "lease"; Mr. Lacasse explained that the option is still on the City Manager's desk. Ms. Feinstein asked Mr. Lamb to discuss ownership. Mr. Lamb used the survey map to point out the location of the proposed Public Works facility. He noted that Pinnacle Drive has been used by many heavy vehicles in the past and that culverts will be replaced either this fall or next year.

Ms. Feinstein noted that the abutting property owned by Audacity Zone has recently been transferred to Nevada Funding LLC and asked that all references to Audacity Zone be changed to Nevada Funding. Mr. Lacasse said they will do a supplementary report. Mr. Taylor observed that the Audacity Zone property is contaminated with asphalt.

Motion to find the applications for Site Plan Review and Conditional Use complete.

Moved: Landry

Seconded: Rolnick

Unanimously approved.

Motion to hold a Public Hearing at the December meeting.

Moved: Rolnick

Seconded: Seymour

Unanimously approved.

## **6. Certificate of Appropriateness for Window Replacement and Reintroduction of Previously Existing Window, Rat Cheese LLC, 157 Water Street, Map 9 Lot 157**

Eric James, principal of Rat Cheese LLC, and his contractor, Rodney Cloutier, presented an application for window replacement and reintroduction of a previously existing window. Mr. James explained that they plan to replace four windows on the third floor. The replacements will match the windows below them on the second floor. They also want to reintroduce windows like those on the second and third floors in two of the

bricked up openings on the first floor. In addition, they want to replace the blue door to match the other door which is Douglas fir and has a transom.

Mr. Seymour pointed out that there is no mention of replacing the door in the application. He also pointed out that some windows have been previously replaced without the Board's approval.

Mr. James said that he talked to Mr. Ide before replacing the windows and was told that it was all right as long as the trim was not altered. He told the Board that one window in each bedroom was a casement for egress purposes. The appearance is the same as the other windows. There was discussion of the fire escapes. Mr. James pointed out that the building was once two buildings until the first floor was knocked through. The brick wall between the two original buildings remains on the second and third floors. The Union Street entrance to the rear second floor apartment has a Union Street address, while the Water Street door provides access to the front apartment on the second floor and both apartments on the third floor.

Mr. Brown asked if Mr. Ide issued a permit; Mr. James said he did not. He added that the replacement windows were milled to fit the trim and that they will be painted once the pressure-treated wood has cured. Mr. Brown expressed the Board's concern with the absence of a permit.

Mr. Bostwick asked if Mr. James was planning on approval for the door. He said he would if possible because the lead time on doors is longer. He plans to replace the blue door on the Union Street side and the door to the apartments on the Water Street side. Mr. Landry said he would be open to approving the doors and asked if the Water Street door would also match the Douglas fir door. Mr. James said that door would match the shop door, which is a  $\frac{3}{4}$  glass door.

Mr. Brown observed that the photograph shows five windows bricked in on the Union Street side and asked if all of them would be opened; Mr. James said one of the bricked-up openings looks like it was a door and he may not replace it. There was discussion of the bricked-up door.

Ms. Weston asked for confirmation that Mr. James was replacing the blue door with a transom door; Mr. James confirmed that.

Mr. Bostwick noted that the bricked-up window to the left of the blue door has a grate below it; Mr. James said that it is not original and he wants to brick it up.

Motion to find the application complete with the verbal amendments including the blue door on Union Street.

Moved: Landry

Seconded: Brown

Unanimously approved.

Motion to find the application as amended in harmony with Historic District standards and grant a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Moved: Landry

Seconded: Rolnick

Unanimously approved.

## **7. Certificate of Appropriateness for Removal and Replacement of an Existing Building Extension for Brian and Devin Cook, 53 Middle Street, Map 6 Lot 8**

Devin Cook and Benjamin Murray, contractor, presented an application for removal of an existing extension of the main house and construction of a new extension.

Mr. Murray explained that the plan is to leave the front portion untouched and to remove the rear section entirely and build a larger extension with a breezeway to the garage. He added that the rear section has little historic significance. The length of the new construction will be about the same as the existing section but will be wider and have a full basement. The corner trim of the new construction will mimic the trim of the front section. It will be sided with clapboards to match the front section. The doors will also match. The front section has a metal roof which they plan to replace with asphalt shingles to match the new construction and the existing garage.

Mr. Bostwick noted that the existing extension seems to have two portions and asked if both would be removed; Mr. Murray said they would. He added that the middle portion is older than the rear-most portion but not as old as the front section.

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Mr. Rolnick expressed concern that the rhythm of the structure will change.

Ms. Feinstein asked if the ages of the two portions was known; Ms. Cook said they are not, but an 1878 etching of the City seems to show the three sections. She noted that the back section has a concrete foundation. Ms. Weston noted that the Historic Survey identifies the front portion as being built in 1850.

Mr. Bostwick asked if the plan had been submitted to the Historic Consultant; Ms. Weston said she reviewed the application and understands the issues. She called the Board’s attention to §9-558 1 D regarding building changes over time which may have acquired significance in their own right. General discussion followed with speculation of the changes that may have occurred over time.

Ms. Feinstein asked about the height differential between the existing and the proposed extension; Mr. Murray said the proposed addition is higher but uses a stepped look to mimic the existing rooflines. He pointed out that the north wall of the proposed addition will be one wall, as is the existing extension, but a large building hides that side from Union Street.

Mr. Landry asked if there was historic significance to the existing extension; Ms. Weston referred to standard 1 J from the Ordinance referring to making new additions or alterations to structures in such a manner that the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future. Discussion followed. Mr. Bostwick asked if both sections of the existing extension had concrete foundations; Mr. Murray said they did. Mr. Bostwick asked if there was a chimney; Ms. Cook said that at some time there was one in the middle of the first section, but it had been removed. She added that there is very little left in the extension that is in original condition.

There was additional discussion regarding the concrete foundation.

Mr. Seymour said he thought the Board could permit demolition under the first criterion in §9-560 1 since the structure is of limited architectural or historic value as part of the visual character of the street on which it is located. Mr. Landry observed that though the proposed addition is larger relative to the front part of the house than typical, it is not readily visible from the street; the only new visual is the breezeway.

Ms. Feinstein noted that the applicant has gone to great effort to make the proposed construction compatible with the front part of the house and suggested that they could talk to Ms. Weston to see if changes can be made to make it more compatible.

Motion to find the application complete.

Moved: Landry                      Seconded: Brown                      Unanimously approved.

Motion to approve the demolition of the rear portion of the building.

Moved: Rolnick                      Seconded: Brown                      Unanimously approved.

Motion to find the application in harmony with Historic District standards grant a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Moved: Landry

Mr. Rolnick asked Ms. Weston if the scale of the new construction is a problem and if the new breezeway is compatible. The Board members discussed the issues. Ms. Weston observed that if the materials are compatible and the Board feels the scale is compatible with the neighborhood streetscape they can approve it. There was further discussion.

Seconded: Seymour                      Unanimously approved.

Motion to make it part of the record that the demolition permit was granted on the grounds that the structure is of limited architectural or historic value as part of the visual character of the street on which it is located.

Moved: Rolnick                      Seconded: Brown                      Unanimously approved.

## 8. Other Business

Ms. Feinstein noted that she has talked to the City Manager about setting up city email addresses for Planning Board members. It will be done as part of the changes for new councilors in January.

Mr. Brown noted that the remains of the Schumacher house have been demolished. He speculated that perhaps it should have had approval from the Planning Board. There was discussion and the consensus was that it needed to be done in any case.

## 9. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn.

Moved: Bostwick

Seconded: Rolnick

Unanimously approved

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

*Accepted as Presented on December 18, 2024, by a vote of 6 Yea to 0 Nay.*

Attested: \_\_\_\_\_  
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*Judith Feinstein, Chair*

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