Revised DRAFT Minutes of 4 March 2020 Town of Clifton, Maine Planning Board Meeting

The meeting convened at approximately 6:05 p.m. in the town office building. Present were Chairperson Bruce Jellison, Vice Chairperson David Cogdell and Member Vern Campbell.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Upon a motion by Vern/David and vote of 3/0, the minutes of the 5 February 2020 meeting were approved.

The proposed board bylaws that Bruce handed out at the last meeting were discussed. David will send some suggested text changes to Bruce based upon that discussion. Bruce will contact the town office to determine if the proposed bylaws are consistent with public notification requirements. Upon a motion by Vern/David and a vote of 3/0, further discussion of the proposed bylaws was tabled for the time being.

The Board discussed several written comments submitted by concerned citizens regarding the proposed Silver Maple project. Bruce mentioned that one concern was that the proposed turbines would have an adverse effect on the scenic view from the historic Holden old town hall located on Route 1A. There was some discussion on whether that location fell within 8 miles of the proposed Silver Maple site. In any event, it is the Board’s belief that issue is within the purview of the State of Maine’s Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in their review of the Silver Maple permit application rather than the Town of Clifton Planning Board.

Bruce reported that he had recently spoken with DEP’s Jessica Damon regarding the status of the Silver Maple application and was told that DEP’s anticipated decision date had slipped two weeks (from circa 10-12 April to circa latter part of April). The SWEB representative in attendance said the delay was at SWEB’s request to allow for better weather for certain photographs to be taken. Bruce also reported that Jessica said DEP was looking very closely at the scenic aspect of the project with an attendant geological study being conducted.

Bruce said that at the last Selectmen meeting, a citizen had given a presentation regarding ground water concerns relating to the Silver Maple project. The Board believes that issue is moot in that a ground and subsurface water study on the effects of a Silver Maple turbine oil leak found a very minimal impact and risk (*see April 17, 2017 CES study titled Silver Maple Wind Energy Project – Groundwater and Surface Water Impact Report*). Additionally, Bangor Water District, whose nearby reservoir could be impacted by an oil leak, had signed a mitigation waiver based, in large part, on that study. Bruce also mentioned that he had conducted online research into frequency of turbine failures and found the actual numbers to be very low, with reasons including extreme weather conditions such as typhoons, blade failures or other defects.

The Board has been notified that DEP has approved the acoustic submission for the Silver Maple project (*see February 24, 2020 SWEB letter with attachments, Subject: Silver Maple Wind Energy Project: Acoustic Requirements*).

SWEB representatives reported that the owners of the nearest home to the Silver Maple project (a Woodchuck Hill address) had signed a mitigation agreement.

Bruce said he was aware of citizen concerns that additional windfarms could be planned for Clifton. As a result of these concerns, Bruce passed around a map that he created that showed where turbines *would not* be permitted without the land/homeowner’s consent in accordance with the Clifton Land Use Ordinance. Bruce noted that, based upon that map, further wind farm projects in Clifton would be impractical.

The Board began preliminary discussions for holding a public hearing for the Silver Maple Project. These included the following:

--Bruce handed out a copy of the “Sample Rules for the Conduct of Public Hearings” from the Maine Municipal Association (MMA) Planning Board Manual for review and comment at the next meeting. Former Board Chairperson Eric Johns reportedly had some written guidelines for a hearing and efforts are being made to locate those guidelines

--Bruce will contact the town office for guidance on whether the rules can include a time limit for speakers. This may require the town to contact MMA for guidance.

--The hearing should include a sign in sheet for those wishing to speak.

--The hearing will probably take place at the town office building. If that location is found to be too small to handle the number of attendees, the hearing may have to be cancelled until an alternate location is found.

--The hearing should be videotaped. David will take the Board’s video camera home and make sure it is serviceable and has enough memory card capacity.

--Upon a motion by Vern/David and a vote of 3/0, the Board decided to have a special board meeting (not a workshop) to further discuss the proposed hearing at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 12 at the town office building. Bruce will contact the town office to make the necessary public notifications.

Upon a motion by Vern/David and a 3/0 vote, the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:25 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Vice Chairperson David Cogdell.