



# Town Of Durham

## Planning Board Minutes

### Fire Station Meeting Room, 6:30 pm

### January 15, 2025

---

#### 1. Roll Call & Determination of a Quorum

**In attendance:** John Talbot (Chair), Juliet Caplinger (Vice-Chair) Allan Purinton, Brian Lanoie, Marc Derr and George Thebarge (Town Planner).

#### 2. Continuing Business:

##### a. Public Comment on Draft Land Use Ordinance Amendments

- Stephen Brezinski of Quaker Ridge Road compared the dangers of electric vehicles to those of BESS facilities. He called for special training of the Fire Department for both.
- Michael Friendly of Runaround Pond Road said the proposed limit of 30 kWh for small-scale BESS is too low. He proposed raising it to 60 or 70.
- Roberta Brezinski of Quaker Ridge Road pointed to the need for snow removal on access roads to BESS facilities.

Public comment was closed.

- Juliet Caplinger proposed changing the types of battery technologies and their thresholds to a single threshold of 70 kWh.
- Fire Chief Robert Tripp addressed safety issues of the draft BESS amendments:
  - The need for multiple water access points due to potential prevailing winds;
  - There should be redundancy in the water supply system;
  - The limited length of fire hose carried by Durham vehicles;
  - The need for the draft amendments to address all safety codes;
  - The need for an Emergency Response Plan prepared by the developer;
- Board members proposed adding a general statement on redundancy of the water supply.
- The Emergency Response Plan language should specify Fire Department approval rather than simply referring to NFPA codes.
- The Board reviewed the written comments provided by members of the public.
- Rachel Walker of Mission Clean Energy asked for clarification on the terms “Fire Department permit” and “special permit.” She also questioned the need for 100-foot setbacks and proposed more specificity for fencing requirements. She thinks the buffering requirements are excessive and the noise limits too restrictive. More thought is needed on decommissioning in terms of the time for determining abandonment of a system.
- Jason Queen of Leighton Road pointed to the experience of BESS in other parts of the country that have been dealing with it longer. He also pointed to the manufacturing and fire rating systems that are applied to the technology.
- John Simoneau asked for BESS to be included in the Table of Uses, that the acronyms for energy capacity be clarified, and the surfacing of access roads be specified.
- The Board asked staff to look at whether the draft site plan and other standards should apply equally to Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 or more separation is needed.

- The Board favored keeping sound limits consistent with Durham’s standards but saw the need for flexibility where facilities are isolated from residential uses.
- The Board discussed the potential contract zoning threshold requirements for large BESS and solar farms.

### 3. Adjourn:

**Motion made by Allan Purinton:** To adjourn the meeting. **Motion seconded by Marc Derr:**  
**Motion carried: 4 – 0.** Meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm.