

Conway Planning Board Minutes
Tuesday, May 19 2026, 7 p.m.
Location: TOWN HALL

Present for the Planning Board: George Forcier, Chair; Jeff Lacy, Phyllis Craine, Cheryl Case, Lara Matta Moebius, new associate member Jennifer Mullins.

Also present were Civil Engineer Melinda Costello of Weston & Sampson, the engineering company designing the project for developer BlueWave Solar, also represented by Joel Lindsay, BlueWave Vice President - Solar Development, Reilly Fitzmauric, BlueWave analyst for project development and Kevin LaMalva, Fire & Risk Alliance, Principal Engineer. Also attending was the board's consulting engineer, Christopher Chamberland of Berkshire Design Group.

1. Unanimous approval of minutes of May 5, 2026.
2. Second session of public hearing for special permit and site plan review application of BlueWave Solar of Boston for an approximately 20-acre agri-voltaic solar farm on Boyden Farm land off Roaring Brook Road. About 18 people attended in person and another handful via Zoom. Discussion mostly focused on the Battery Energy Storage System planned for use in conjunction with the solar panels. There were also comments and questions from residents that ranged from potential dangers of battery storage canisters to suggestions for better screening from the road than proposed in the BlueWave application. Concerns also raised about noise, and potential storm runoff impact to neighbors, tornadoes and hail storms. In response to a question, BlueWave said its business model is not just to build but also to operate their solar farms. The BESS canister envisioned would be about 20 feet long and 8 feet wide and the battery system was described as a 1.2MW DC lithium-ion phosphate battery that would discharged to the grid as needed to improve the workings of the regional power network, a system state Department of Energy Resource promotes as part of its effort to minimize reliance on fossil fuel generators to meet peak demands. Purchasing decision on the specific make and model of the battery system would typically be made late in the planning process, according to BlueWave. Generally speaking Blue Wave reps contend the BESS canister would meet all current safety standards designed to minimize the possibility of and effects of runaway overheating of battery cells. Overheating BESS units are designed to vent hot gases like hydrogen and carbon dioxide to prevent explosions, and typically are just allowed to cool down on their own with minimal active firefighting intervention, said BlueWave. They generally downplayed potential risks. Residents posed several questions about the possible harms the BESS

might pose, especially to neighbors and nearby Conway Grammar School. BlueWave was asked by the chair to send in writing all the information the developer has on the proposed BESS unit so it could be evaluated by the fire chief and the board's consulting engineer, and then discussed in detail at a future public hearing session.

3. Next session of the public hearing will be June 9 in town hall. The Board voted unanimously to an extension of the hearing to that date as co-signed by Costello for the developer.
4. After the hearing portion of the meeting the board discussed who wanted access to the official planning board email account (Forcier, Moebius and Case)
5. The board also discussed some logistical and protocol issues around proceeding with the special permit process with Chamberland who was meeting the board for the first time, and who offered some advice about how to proceed with its review.
6. Adjourned 9:30
The full recording of the Zoom enabled meeting will be filed on the board's page on the town website.