

**SOMERSWORTH SITE REVIEW TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
November 1, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT: George Kramlinger, John Sunderland, Jeff Gallant, Michelle Mears, Paul Robidas, Mike Hoage, and Michael Bobinsky

EXCUSED MEMBERS:

STAFF PRESENT: Amber Hall, City Engineer
Dana Crossley, Planning Technician
Anna Stockman, Planning Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 10:00am.

- 1) Approval of Minutes: Sunderland MOVED to approve the minutes from the October 4th meeting.
The MOTION is SECONDED by Gallant.
The MOTION CARRIED 6-0-0.

2) **OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Any old business that may come before the Committee – No old business.

3) **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **Blackwater Rd. Solar LLC on behalf of the City of Somersworth is seeking to develop a 2.63-Megawatt direct current/1.99 MW alternating current ground-mounted solar photovoltaic array at the Somersworth Sanitary Landfill located on the property located at 17 Blackwater Road in the Agricultural (A) District, Assessor's Map 22 Lot 50, SITE#18-2023.**

Mears stated this is a courtesy review of the project and comments will be provided to the applicants following this meeting. The project will go before the Planning Board at their next meeting on November 15th.

Ryan Fahey, Senior Project Manager at Ameresco, and **Rob Bukowski** and **Marissa Sewell**, engineers at Weston & Sampson, were in attendance to represent the application. Fahey stated the project has been in development since 2022 and contracts have been negotiated and executed with the City. He said the City owns the property and will benefit from the project. He stated the project has received approval from Eversource which is working with them to connect the system. He noted Ameresco will own the project and maintain the project as well as the grass within the fenced area of the project.

Robidas asked when the project will break ground. He asked whether anything will shield this project from neighbors.

Fahey stated they hope to start construction in quarter 1 or quarter 2 of 2024. He said the project area will be fenced; however, they may consider vegetative screening.

Bukowski stated they would not plant anything on the cap of the landfill itself. He noted the planned fence is black which has a less industrial appearance than chain link fencing. He stated because it is a landfill, fence posts will need to be supported by ballast blocks.

Bobinsky asked whether Ameresco will maintain the panels and maintenance around the structure. He stated currently the Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for mowing the landfill, which is completed once or twice a year depending on growth.

Fahey stated Ameresco will mow the grass inside the fenced area. He stated the western side of the property will still be open and would be the City's responsibility to maintain.

Bobinsky referenced the western side of the property and asked whether that is a future development.

Fahey stated recent changes in net metering in NH has made a project feasible in the western portion of the property. He stated the first step is to submit a preapplication to Eversource, which would provide a read on what the infrastructure might look like. He stated the City would benefit from an additional lease payment.

Bobinsky asked what they are waiting for from the EPA.

Bukowski stated they need approval from the EPA and the Department of Environmental Services (DES). He stated a narrative and design plans have been submitted.

Gallant asked when Ameresco would take over maintenance of the project area.

Fahey responded from the commencement of construction.

Hall asked whether a copy of the stormwater report was provided. She noted the solar panels themselves are not considered impervious and they would impact the distribution of rain.

Bukowski stated the only impervious surface is the foundation below under the panel. He stated an Alteration of Terrain application has been submitted to the City.

Hall noted six culverts on the proposed plan. She asked whether there is any requirement for treatment.

Bukowski stated there is not much that can be done for treatment. He noted the idea is to prevent the ponding of water.

Crossley asked whether they are planning on installing new utility poles.

Bobinsky noted there is a licensing process for installing new utilities.

Crossley asked whether the electrical conduit is able to be in a trench or if it will be above grade.

Bukowski stated the work plan approved by the EPA will be located above grade. He stated the conduit will be well marked so it will not be hit while mowing.

Bobinsky noted the applicant's participation in a power purchase agreement, and that analysis would determine the runoff impact of groundwater penetration into the Superfund site. He stated that would ensure the project would not negatively impact the City's chemical treatment process.

Bukowski stated they do not plan on changing any treatment methods.

Kramlinger asked whether they are aware of any industry standards for the angles of panels or reflectivity.

Fahey stated they have performed a glare analysis of the impact on neighboring businesses and passersby. He said they would be happy to provide that to the City.

Kramlinger stated the analysis should be submitted to the City. He asked who the Fire Department should call if there is an emergency with the panels and the power needs to be shut down.

Fahey stated there is an operations team that is available 24/7.

Kramlinger asked if signage will be posted with instructions in case there is an emergency. He asked for the number of man gates that will be installed for access to the property.

Bukowski confirmed there will be signage with emergency protocol. He stated there will be one man gate for access.

Kramlinger asked how the gate will be locked and further, how the FD would be provided access in case of an emergency.

Bukowski stated the gate will have a combination lock.

Kramlinger stated there should be a requirement to use a Knox box. That way fire can provide access for police. He asked whether there are industry standards for emergency response for the types of arrays that are being installed.

Fahey stated their team can follow up with that information.

Kramlinger recommended a condition of approval that the applicant provide emergency procedures they would use to mitigate an emergency that would occur within the panel system. He further noted a condition that the applicant's experts provide emergency protocol training to the Fire Department. That would build an awareness of how the system works and shutoff locations and procedures. He asked about the plan for wiring the panels. He asked whether the arrays are in one constant system or broken up into zones.

Fahey stated they can provide follow-up on that. He said there will be a central inverter with combiner boxes with various strings.

Kramlinger recommended a condition that, once the system is designed, the applicant provide a final map of components and shutoff locations of the system.

Fahey stated they plan to provide training to the Fire Department.

Mears stated if the vegetation beneath the solar arrays could be slow growth plantings, that would be best.

Bukowski stated their plan is to use the grass that is currently at the site and they do not have plans to conduct any replanting.

Mears stated the Fire Chief's comments will be provided to the applicant prior to the next meeting.

Bobinsky referenced the proposed access road and asked whether the road would be located right off of Blackwater Road.

Bukowski confirmed the access road would be located off of Blackwater Road.

- b. **Central Fence & Deck is seeking a conditional use permit and site plan approval to construct a 6,720 SF facility with associated infrastructure on a property located at Willand Drive in the Commercial/Industrial (C/I) District, Assessor's Map 43 Lot 1I, SITE#14-2023, CUP#04-2023.**

Bob Stowell of TriTech Engineering was in attendance to represent the application. Stowell stated detailed plans were submitted to the Planning Office and responses to comments from the first SRTC meeting were provided. He stated a waiver to keep lights on at night at the property was provided, in addition to a waiver for metal siding. He stated fire truck turn calculations were also provided to ensure navigation in the cul-de-sac.

Mears stated she reached out to Horsley Witten, which had indicated they will provide comments on the project by Friday. She stated there were questions about stormwater revisions related to the lot line adjustment.

Bobinsky noted the requirements to obtain trench and driveway permits. He asked about the projected start time of construction.

Stowell stated the applicant would like to get concrete in before winter, in middle or late January.

Kramlinger asked about the plans provided in this submission.

Stowell identified the contents of the recent submission.

Kramlinger stated he does not see any issue with access after reviewing what has been provided.

Bobinsky referenced the transportation report's statement that the proposed development is not going to add significant traffic to the area.

Stowell stated that relatively, the site receives an average of sixty daily trips.

Kramlinger expressed his appreciation of the applicant's level of organization and responsiveness.

Crossley asked whether a note could be added to the plan about landscaping; that any vegetation dead or dying would need to be replaced. She noted to ensure the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) recommendation from the Conservation Commission is listed on the plan. She further noted the requirement to install landscaping surrounding freestanding signs.

Stowell stated that will be reviewed with the applicant.

Crossley noted the snow storage locations are in the same location as outdoor display.

Stowell stated that should not be an issue in the wintertime.

Crossley asked whether there has been any written communication with Unitil regarding the Unitil easement impact and the maintenance of landscaping.

Stowell stated they do not have it in writing.

Crossley stated the applicant should be aware should Unitil need to do any work in the easement area, the site plan requires there is a certain amount of landscaping. She said any changes would need to go through the appropriate approvals if there is significant alteration to it.

Mears stated the Planning Office will work on getting comments from Horsley Witten. She said the project will go before the Planning Board on November 15th, as well as the lot line revision.

Stowell said he looks forward to the Planning Board meeting.

MOTION: Robidas made a MOTION to ADJOURN.

The MOTION was SECONDED by Bobinsky.

The MOTION CARRIED 6-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:36am.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Stockman, Planning Secretary