Town of Sharon

Municipal Solar Oversight Committee

Minutes for 3/8/21

**Welcome**

Glen Silverman, Josh Burdett, Siddharth Jeevan, Ron Stern, Tim Magner

**Committee Attendees**

George Aronson, Xander Shapiro, Alexander X. Tomic, Rob Maidman, Chris Pimental, Silas Fyler

**Approval of Minutes for 2/22/2021 and 3/1/2021**

Committee passed both minutes by a vote of 5-0-0. Chris Pimental was not present.

**Landfill Solar Array**

Josh Burdett from DSD presented an update for the Post Closure Use Permit (PCUP) for berm extensions. DSD attempted to reach DEP – they did not receive any response.

DSD Intention to submit application and work with the iterative process.

 **Questions from Presentation**

George -- How much longer is the berm? Josh Burdett approximately 75 ft.

Ron Stern – You will still be able to see the solar array from my property even after extension of the berm. Josh Burdett discussed issues of geo membrane versus clay cap and DEP may not allow on the geo membrane on closest landfill cap. DSD not aware of any precedents for berms on landfill caps for solar projects.

Ron Stern – will I be able to see transformers / batteries. They are on the North side of the landfill and unlikely you will be able to see.

George – Any study on noise impact? Josh - the two transformers have rated output of 62 dB each, 66 dB at peak, at 415 ft. to nearest residence (95 Mountain Street, Robert Violento) this will be approx. 36 dB when power is produced s.

George – Voltage within the array? Josh - don’t know answer. Josh - We are using a step up transformer and voltage will be less than distribution lines on the street.

Ron Stern – Concerned with depreciation of home value around solar farm. Josh - Only study he knows of is from SEIA.org. Silas -- Will send around a copy. No conclusive evidence of impacts. George – home values affected by many factors. Market forces dominate and mask other factors.

Glen Silverman – Can we have a mitigated site view sooner than 10 years, any update on the height changes? Josh – 10- ft planting plus berm at 5 ft. 20-35 ft for entirety of the system. We need to take initial step with MassDEP before further feedback.

Rob Maidman – can we cut on some panels in south east corner and move to them to the western side? Also on second landfill cap berm in the south can we extend berm there? Josh -- It is possible if electrically possible. Cannot answer today. Rob - Can we make berm 9 feet to allow for 3 ft depth hole for trees? And use that as submittal to MassDEP Josh. Potential grading issue.

Siddharth Jeevan – know tradeoff if we move the panels west more. Josh / Tim -- Can include as a question to MassDEP in the narrative. It will not be in the engineering plan submittal. Josh - The engineering implications of raising the point elevations at top of berm will cause the need for horizontal layout of berms. This will force the move of the panels to the west. DSD will have to explore implication on western front to balance the modules. If this can’t be done then we need shave panels which will force them to go back into the model and affect the potential economics of the system and the project schedule.

George – reasonable questions and points on PCUP. Can we make solar array bigger than 5 MW AC and see where MassDEP might allow new panels? We could then see the extent of movement of the panels that is possible. Once we get final MassDEP approval then design would be cut to 5 MW AC.

Silas -- Southern cap with potential berm would fall within the 100 ft wetlands restriction. Any issues? Josh -- ConCom would have to weight in. Silas -- As we raise the height of the berm we run into the velocity of the water coming off the berm. Do we need to drop the steepness of the slope amount to allow? This means the berm width becomes larger in a nonlinear way. Need to map out berm extension and look at western edge.

All would like more information to understand flexibility to refine the final site plan

George – makes a motion – Committee makes the request that the application include references to the request discussed at this meeting for additional mitigation both in the narrative and through appropriate site plan showing the nature of the request, including berm extension and areas for placement of additional panels.

Rob – makes a motion to adjust – DSD submittal include this site diagram and that the picture will show potential additional panels placement both north and west and extension of the berm to the south east corner, with additional height of the berm in a range of 9-12 ft.

Xander -- motioned to vote on George’s motion, Chris second. Committee voted 6-0-0

 **MOU with DSD and any sites below 500 kW**

George – is there a lower limit in size of projects that DSD would pursue under the MOU? Would DSD give up the exclusive below the limit? Tim – get back to you on 500 kW AC

**Future Solar Sites and the Constraints**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| a. Well # 5 | d. Middle School  |
| b. New High School | e. Deborah Sampson  |
| c. Town Hall |  |

George – Quick description of potential limits on Town ability to enter into Power Purchase Agreements for electricity from next set of municipal solar PV projects. Important because SMART incentives (which drive project economics) prioritize PPAs over site leases

**Zoning Issue - State MGL versus Town Bylaw**

George - Quick description of need for interpretation

**Group discussion and topics not reasonably anticipated within 48 hours of the meeting**

Silas – can we consider cost of social impact of solar for next sites ($51 per ton per Biden statement)?

Xander – can we help Sharon Housing Authority with solar? Raises general question of how to leverage solar PV within Town boundaries. Xander will take point on investigating. Silas – consider if Sharon Power Choice might purchase power in 2-3 years.

Xander is there a need to meet on feedback? Will circulate site plan. George – raised concerns about compliance with Public Records law for Committee communications on DSD application materials outside of the public meeting. Rob suggested that comments be directed to the Chair. Rob mentioned allocating responsibility to the Chair to ensure comments are incorporated.

Rob -- makes motion to appoint George as collective reviewer on committee behalf for written and visual submission that DSD is preparing for the landfill. Xander second

Committee voted 6-0-0 on Rob’s motion.

Next meeting April 5th at 4:30pm