

Town of Sharon
Municipal Solar Oversight Committee
Minutes for 10/30/2023 meeting held 4:30 pm on Zoom

Welcome

Committee Attendees: George Aronson (Chair), Xander Shapiro, Rob Maidman, Chris Pimental, Silas Fyler (late)

Guest Attendees: Jay Tobin (Town Energy Manager), Tim Chouinard (DPW), Allen Giles (Solect)

Approval of Minutes

Minutes were reviewed from the Committee meeting on August 21, 2023 and approved by a vote of 4-0.

Status of existing projects

- East Elementary School canopy solar PV. Operating. 518.85 MWh generated from commercial operation date to today; 196.57 MWh in 2023 to date.
- Heights Elementary School rooftop solar PV. Operating. 710.91 MWh generated from commercial operation date to today, 123.5 MWh 2023 to date.

Status of projects under development

- Mountain Street Landfill project: Per Jackie Bruce, project manager, DSD and vendor have signed the PO for the battery. Plans are being prepared for submittal to DPW for ministerial permit review. Also need to finalize amendment to confirm Site Lease Schedules 1 and 2. Project has secured PSOQ for Block 7. Construction is targeted to mobilize by early January 2024, perhaps before – depending on weather, 3 months for racks, two months for panels, commissioning and contingency time. COD in mid- to late-2024, depending on the schedule for battery delivery. Tim Chouinard is coordinating with Jackie Bruce on removing transformer and electric pole serving shed.
- Gavin's Pond parking lot canopy. Eversource interconnection study put cost at over \$345k vs. \$66k allowance. After rent adjustment per formula in Site Lease Schedule 1, rent would be negative, indicating that the project is not economic. Either Town or DSD can terminate per Site Lease Section 2(y) on basis that interconnection caused project to be uneconomic. DSD requested if Town wanted to proceed anyway, saying it could exchange compensation between the landfill project and Gavins Pond project. Discussion that Committee not inclined to recommend uneconomic project – there are multiple better ways to use Town resources. DSD development costs were at risk, so Town can terminate without liability pre-construction. Why the change? Delay caused incentives to be reduced in later SMART blocks. Interconnection costs are unpredictable, and can be elevated for underground residential distribution lines such as along Gavins Pond Road. Question about impact on Well #5 viability? Unpredictable. Well#5 much closer to South Main Street, fed off different substation. Allen Giles advised that Eversource response to pre-application filing did not indicate an issue. (Allen will send a copy to George).
 - Motion to recommend to the Town to abandon project due to absence of economic benefit to the Town. Seconded . Passed 5-0.
 - George will provide recommendation to Fred, who will inform Select Board and agree on a strategy to convey result to DSD.
- Heights Elementary School battery energy storage system (BESS). Physical work is done. Still waiting for Eversource approval of energization. George will contact Fred T to repeat advocacy effort with Eversource management.

- High School rooftop project. Project proceeding with battery deferred to a future phase. Solect pulling permits, working on Project Plan with Tony Kopacz. Aim to mobilize after January 1. Silas advised need for access to roof and laydown area might result in delays. Aim to be complete in second quarter 2024.
- DPW projects. Pulling permits for DPW roof project. PPA language for DPW roof matches language for High School roof and language updates for other DPW projects. DPW roof project agreements forwarded to George, who will advise Fred T.
- Middle School project. Allen noted next step to approach Planning Board for Order of Conditions based on advice from call to Town DPW. Rob noted that Planning Board typically does not regulate School property (not privately owned) and advised confirming with Peter O’Cain (Town Engineer) and referencing this MSOC meeting. Allen coordinating logistics and safety plan with Tony K. Goal to start installation in spring 2024.
- Well #5 project. Ground-mount will need Order of Conditions from Conservation Commission. Conservation Commission supportive, especially with plan to add pollinators under panels. Hope to get approval at December 2023 or January 2024 meeting. Allen/Jay confirmed that AOBC value will stay within Water Department. Goal of securing authority to sign agreements at November 30 Town Meeting.
- Solar PV at new Town library. Eversource will not accept an interconnection application until the building has a work order for electric service. Tim, as liaison with Standing Building Committee, will check on status of Work Order. Allen will provide Tim with an email describing what to ask for from the SBC and the contractor.
- Roof replacement projects. Allen and Xander are looking into Cottage Street School as a candidate for funding from the state GreenWorks project (\$50 million to replace roofs to facilitate public solar projects). There will be competition for limited funds. First round expected after Thanksgiving. Allen expects advantages to small projects. Strategy is to seek grant for engineering first, then return for solar PV project funding next round when solar PV cost is known. Allen will produce preliminary solar PV design to support grants application. Cottage Street School roof needs replacement and structural support, but not in capital plan until next year. Xander walked site with Tony Kopacz, who is supportive, and will contact School Dept Asst Supt Ellen Whittemore. Need for roof to be discussed at Capital Outlay Committee meeting; expect vote by early 2024. Rob can monitor progress.

Question on whether grant accounts for Environmental Justice. Noted that Sharon census tracts may qualify on basis of number of non-English speakers. Worth further evaluation.

Next meeting date set tentatively for Monday, December 11, 2023, time (4:30). Agenda to be confirmed.

Meeting adjourned at 5:38 pm