

SOMERSWORTH SITE REVIEW TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
June 7, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: George Kramlinger, Jeff Gallant, Michelle Mears, John Sunderland, and Michael Bobinsky

EXCUSED MEMBERS: Mike Hoage, Paul Robidas

STAFF PRESENT: 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 May 3rd meeting.
The MOTION is SECONDED by Bobinsky
The MOTION CARRIES 5-0.
- 2) **OLD BUSINESS**
 - a. Any old business that may come before the Committee – No old business.
- 3) **NEW BUSINESS**
 - a. **Central Park Express is seeking minor site plan approval to install one (1) Sunaction Dual Track 48 Panel Solar Tracker on concrete base on a property located at 464 High Street, in the Residential/Commercial (RC) District, Assessor's Map 40 Lot 01, SITE#05-2023. PUBLIC HEARING**

Bob Stowell of Tritech Engineering was in attendance to represent the application. The applicant, **William Stowell**, was also in attendance. B. Stowell stated that in May of last month, they went before the Zoning Board of Adjustment to seek approval for the location and placement of the tracker which they were granted. He said this SRTC meeting was their last requirement before they can apply for a building permit. He provided a brief overview of the proposal and noted that the plan's schematics were provided for the Committee's review in their packets. He noted the proposed solar trackers located at 464 High Street and 470 High Street would be similar to the solar trackers behind the car wash on Penny Lane and these would assist the business with their energy consumption.

Mears opened the public hearing.

No comments received.

Mears closed the public hearing.

Bobinsky asked for clarification on whether the Zoning Board of Adjustment's (ZBA) approval was for the variance for the setbacks. He also asked the applicant about what led to the selection of this solar design and if other solar options were considered in the process.

Stowell confirmed that is correct. He noted the solar tracker's efficiency in its tilt and rotation of following the sun and stated a roof solar option would have had to be retrofitted which would have been cost prohibitive to the applicant.

Bobinsky asked whether the proposal would impact Public Works' plowing of the High Street sidewalk. He noted that in the past, Public Works has educated businesses on the High Street corridor to prevent the discharge of snow on the sidewalk as it becomes a challenge for Public Works to clear.

Stowell stated that would not be an issue. He noted the 48 individual panels have gaps in between them and the tilt and twist action of the solar tracker allows snow to easily fall to the ground.

Sunderland asked if the solar tracker would be located in the parking lot and asked how it will impact employee and customer parking.

Stowell responded yes, and referenced the schematics in the packet which indicate there will be a four-foot high concrete base with clearance that is close to twelve feet. The only vehicle that could be impacted would be a dumpster. Trash is picked up in the off-hours so that won't be an issue as there will be empty space in the parking lot for navigation.

Sunderland asked for clarification on the clearance below the solar tracker when it is in the fully tilted position and the setback encroachments when it is fully flat.

Stowell clarified the footage of clearance below the solar tracker as twelve feet. He stated that in the tilt position, the solar tracker is the most impactful on vehicle traffic in the parking lot. He said the flat position would impact the setback requirements the most.

Sunderland asked if any tractor trailers deliver to the business.

Stowell responded that box trucks are the biggest vehicles that frequent the site.

Crossley asked whether they are planning to make any landscaping improvements and noted some that occurred in the 1980s. She asked if the project would involve cutting trees on the site.

Stowell stated there is no cutting that has been proposed on the site. He said there was landscaping in the corner of the site which was then relocated when High Street was widened. He said there is five feet between the pavement and the property line which limits the ability to install additional landscaping on the site.

Crossley asked whether parking spaces beneath the solar tracker will be able to be utilized.

Stowell responded yes.

Gallant asked if there will be bollards surrounding the concrete base for cars to park around. He pointed out the five-foot width of landscaping that is at City Hall.

Stowell stated there will be bollards around the concrete base. He noted there is ample parking on the site even if one parking space is lost. Stowell said that landscape architects recommend a minimum of an eight-foot minimum space for landscaping to survive.

Kramlinger asked if the applicant could provide an exact vertical measurement from the pavement to the max tilt of the solar tracker so the Fire Department can determine whether they can fit a truck in the space beneath the solar tracker.

Stowell stated there will be a four-foot concrete base and the clearance beneath the solar tracker will equal eleven feet and three and three-quarter inches.

Kramlinger asked if there were a problem with getting fire apparatus beneath the solar tracker, whether there is anything the applicant could do to increase access. He stated he understands that cost would be a factor. He asked whether engineering plans could possibly be revised to raise the solar tracker by six inches to increase access.

Stowell responded yes, the plans could be changed.

Crossley referenced a solar array that was installed at Dunkin' Donuts and noted that in that plan review process, Kramlinger wanted written emergency procedures in the event of a fire. She asked Kramlinger if that was something he would like to see in this proposal in addition to phone numbers of emergency response personnel.

Kramlinger stated that in this particular case, he would not require written emergency procedures of the applicant, however he would like phone numbers of emergency response posted on the site.

Crossley asked about safety training for the Fire Department for the solar trackers and whether that would be applicable to this proposal.

Kramlinger stated that having the emergency phone numbers would suffice as a condition for this proposal.

Mears asked if the location of the dumpster is feasible for access. She suggested adding a condition regarding signage and the clearance below for drivers with trucks that visit the site in the off-hours.

Stowell responded the waste truck may have to turn the vehicle internally within the site before exiting at the entrance. He said with waste collection being an off-hours operation, that will not be an issue.

Mears stated there is a restaurant located next to this property. She asked if the applicant could add arborvitae in the area of the site that is visible from the restaurant and whether there is any existing vegetation at Central Park Express that abuts the restaurant. She stated from the restaurant, the Central Park Express site is clearly visible.

Bill Stowell stated that after the original site was developed, the existing landscaping had to be relocated.

Bob Stowell asked for clarification on the type of arborvitae Mears was referencing and the location.

Mears stated three or four bushes planted staggered and said she would let the applicant determine the exact location.

Site Plan Motion: Bobinsky made a MOTION that the request of Central Park Express for minor site plan approval to install one (1) Sunaction Dual Track 48 Panel Solar Tracker on concrete base on a property located at 464 High Street be APPROVED WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. List emergency response phone numbers
2. Plant three-to-four arborvitae in the north easternly corner of the lot that abuts Map 38 Lot 37
3. The solar tracker shall be NFPA compliant
4. The solar tracker shall have shutoffs, and proper labelling and positioning of the shutoffs

The MOTION was SECONDED by Sunderland

The MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

- b. **Central Park Garage is seeking minor site plan approval to install one (1) Sunaction Dual Track 24 Solar Tracker on concrete base on a property located at 470 High Street, in the Residential Commercial (RC) District, Assessor's Map 40 Lot 03, SITE#06-2023 PUBLIC HEARING**

Bob Stowell stated the twenty-four-panel solar tracker for this proposal is a smaller unit than the previous proposal that was a forty-eight-panel solar tracker. He said Central Park Garage has less electrical demand compared to Central Park Express. He noted the solar tracker will similarly have a concrete base and be located on the back side of the property in a non-paved section and in close proximity to an area reserved for garage expansion.

Bobinsky asked about the impact of snow operations on the parking lot and the High Street sidewalk.

Stowell responded there will be no changes with how the property is plowed during the winter and he noted that due to its location, there will be no snow removal that occurs beneath this solar tracker.

Gallant asked if the solar units will be capable of powering the entire building and whether traffic will travel around the concrete base of the solar tracker.

Stowell responded yes, it is the intent that the solar units will meet the electrical demand of the building. He confirmed there will be traffic traveling around the concrete base.

Kramlinger pointed out there is no way for one to circumnavigate the building by vehicle.

Stowell responded it is their plan to pave beneath the solar tracker in the future.

Crossley asked the applicant if they plan to remove any trees for this proposal and whether the existing trees will impact the movement of solar arrays. She further asked if there is or will be a fence located on the rear of the property. She noted there is no existing landscaping in the front of the lot.

Stowell stated some trees have been removed for this project. He said due to the clearance beneath the solar tracker, there will be no impacts to or from trees below or surrounding. He stated there is no fence located at the site, however the abutting property has a chain-link fence surrounding their property.

Kramlinger stated conditions of approval including to list emergency response phone numbers, to ensure the solar tracker is NFPA compliant, and the solar tracker has shutoffs, and proper labelling and positioning of the shutoffs. He advised to add these conditions of approval to the previous proposal.

Mears opened the public hearing.

No comments received.

Mears closed the public hearing.

Site Plan Motion: Sunderland MOVED that the request of Central Park Garage for minor site plan approval to install one (1) Sunaction Dual Track 24 Solar Tracker on concrete base on a property located at 470 High Street be APPROVED WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

5. List emergency response phone numbers
6. The solar tracker shall be NFPA compliant
7. The solar tracker shall have shutoffs, and proper labelling and positioning of the shutoffs

The MOTION was SECONDED by Bobinsky

The MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

- c. **Any other new business that may come before the Committee.**
No other new business.

Bobinsky stated he appreciates the progress reports from Nobis about certain sites. He asked how the site at MB Tractor is progressing.

Gallant provided an overview of the work they are doing and stated that significant progress has been made.

MOTION: Bobinsky made a MOTION to ADJOURN.
The MOTION was SECONDED by Sunderland.
The MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:41am.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Stockman
Planning Secretary Site Review Technical Committee