

**SOMERSWORTH SITE REVIEW TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
FEBRUARY 8, 2017**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Shanna Saunders, Chair, Mike Bobinsky, Scott McGlynn, Tim McLin and Paul Robidas.
MEMBERS ABSENT: Keith Hoyle and Tim Metivier.
STAFF PRESENT: Tracy Gora, Planning Secretary.
OTHERS PRESENT: Dale Smith-Kenyon.

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 am.

- 1) Approval of the minutes of the meeting of January 11, 2017.

Motion: Bobinsky moved to accept the minutes of the meeting of January 11, 2017

Seconded by McGlynn. Motion carried unanimously.

2) **OLD BUSINESS**

- A) Any old business that may come before the Committee.

None.

2) **NEW BUSINESS**

- A) Velcro USA is seeking site plan approval with waivers to install a solar panel system on property located at 300 Route 108, in the Commercial Industrial (CI) District, Assessor's Map 47, Lot 01, SITE #02-2017.

Brian Ramsey with Velcro USA, Inc. addressed the Committee and stated that they are proposing a 1.75 megawatt solar array that will use about 12 acres of area. Stated that this will supply about 10% of their power usage and about 33% of power demand. Stated that Eversource has already been brought into the loop on this project and they are doing a feasibility study. Stated that they are requesting waivers for overhead utilities, landscaping and trees.

Rick Dolce with CLD Consulting Engineers addressed the Committee and stated that the overall parcel is 208 acres and it mostly wooded. Stated that the solar field is about 6 acres with another 2.5 acres for tree clearing. Stated that the site has well-drained soils and that the infiltration rate is high. Stated that there will be tree clearing and that the undergrowth will be maintained. Stated that they are staying out of the 100-foot wetland buffer. Stated that there is a high infiltration rate and that flow and volume will not increase during storm events. Stated that the loop road is just an access way and will not be paved. Stated that it will be used for emergencies only and that it is sized for emergency vehicles. Stated that there will be a 7 foot security fence around the perimeter of the array, which is required by code and that there will be gates at each access point. Stated that he has been in touch with the NHDES and they are on board with the proposed layout. Stated that they are coordinating with the solar company and the electrician for installation details.

Smith-Kenyon asked who is responsible for the maintenance of the solar panels.

Ramsey stated that the property owner is responsible and will hire that out and have a contract.

Robidas confirmed that they will not be feeding power back onto the grid.

Ramsey stated that 99% of the time they will be using 100% of the power.

Robidas confirmed that water will just sheet flow off the panels and go into the ground.

Dolce confirmed and stated that it is similar to a roof on a house. Stated that it won't create any concentrated flow. Stated that the NHDES reviewed this and supports it.

Robidas asked how the panels are secured, specifically with high winds.

Ramsey stated that the posts will be at least 5 feet in the ground. Stated that any wind should shoot over the array because of how they will be installed.

Robidas stated that he would like to see the detail on how the array will be secured for safety reasons.

Ramsey stated that the panels are fixed and do not move.

Saunders asked about potential glare on Route 108.

Ramsey stated that there is an earthen berm so you can't actually see the solar field until you reach the entrance of the property and then you are looking at the back of the panels.

Bobinsky asked the applicant to explain the landscape waiver request and why they are asking for it. Stated that he is concerned with screening for glare.

Ramsey stated that they would like to use the array as a show-piece rather than hide it on the property. Stated that they want the array to be visible.

Bobinsky stated that he is just learning about this and that the City may develop a solar array also. Asked if this property will have access for the public to see it and learn about it.

Ramsey stated that they will welcome that. Stated that they would be cautious about opening it up to the general public because of safety but that they intend to promote it.

Bobinsky asked if they are seeking any incentives from Eversource.

Ramsey stated that they will seek federal tax incentives but nothing else. Stated that there will be no increase in water or sewer with this project.

Bobinsky asked about the longevity of the panels.

Ramsey stated that the expected life is 25 years and that general maintenance is to clean them once a year. Stated that sometimes the inverters need to be replaced. Stated that if they have to be decommissioned they would look at other technology at that time.

Bobinsky asked if the access road will be plowed.

Dolce stated that the base material of the access road will be strong and have the bearing capacity of emergency vehicles.

Robidas stated that emergency vehicles will need access through the fence like with an Opti-Com or something. Suggested a Knox Box at the point of entry.

McLin stated that the less keys that emergency responders have, the better.

Ramsey stated that they will look into it and that they have done break-away locks before.

Saunders stated that the Fire Department isn't present today and she will reach out to them on what they would prefer.

McLin stated that there needs to be access and the Police can just piggy-back on what the Fire Department would like.

Saunders stated that the landscape renderings show the front portion of the fence as being stockade and then going to non-opaque-asked if that is correct.

Dolce stated that the fence is going to be chain link but the renderings make it look opaque.

Saunders stated that she likes the idea of having some screening with a peek-a-boo view. Stated that she thinks the Planning Board will have a tough time with the landscaping waiver request.

Robidas stated that he likes the idea of being able to see the array. Stated that Velcro looks good and that it would be nice to see the array. Stated that he would support the landscaping waiver.

Saunders stated that she would like the renderings to be accurate and have more detail.

Ramsey stated that there will be an equipment concrete pad and stated that there is some detail on it on sheet D2. Stated that the array racks will have conduit on the back side.

Robidas stated that he would like to not have the equipment, etc. being visible from Route 108. Stated that he would like to just see the panels.

Saunders stated that she would like to see drawings of what it will look like.

Robinsky stated that he isn't sure the equipment will be seen from Route 108 because the building is setback from the road.

Saunders mentioned that the plans show overhead utilities but there is underground power so they mustn't have gotten a waiver for that when the building was originally built.

Ramsey stated that they have a few poles existing on the property and stated that in order to maximize the output for the building they have to redo the arrangement. Stated that it would be a burden to Velcro to have to do everything underground.

Saunders asked if they have overhead utilities parallel to Route 108.

Ramsey replied yes and stated that to centralize power they need to have a shared distribution network so they will need additional poles.

Saunders asked if that is an Eversource requirement.

Ramsey stated that Eversource wants them to reduce the number but that the cost is high.

Saunders stated that she is not sure what the Planning Board will say about additional overhead lines. Stated that it is counter to what they are looking for on Route 108.

Dolce stated that the lines will run behind the existing pine trees and shouldn't be seen from Route 108.

Saunders asked if there is a way to connect farther up the street.

Ramsey stated that if they did that they would only be providing power to one portion of the building. Stated that it would be nearly impossible to connect to just one.

Robidas stated that he would like to see detailed drawings as to what it is going to look like.

Saunders stated that this show eight new poles and feels that is a lot.

Smith-Kenyon asked if there are large trucks that could get caught on the lines.

Ramsey stated that it goes underground under the driveway. Stated that there will be no overhead lines where the trucks will be driving.

Robidas asked if there are different points where they can go underground with utilities and then come back up.

Saunders stated that Metivier isn't present today but she has one comment from him. Stated that he wants to make sure that where the tree cutting is proposed that there are no conditions from prior approvals that the vegetation remain.

Ramsey stated that he doesn't remember that being the case and that they just had to stay away from the cemetery.

Robidas asked when they want to start on the project.

Ramsey stated that they would like to start in May.

Robidas stated that the property looks nice and that it always has.

Saunders stated that she will follow up with the Fire Chief and get a memo out to the applicant. Stated this is on track to go to the April SRTC and Planning Board meetings.

B) Any other new business that may come before the Committee.

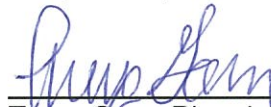
None.

Motion: Robidas moved to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Bobinsky. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:11 am.

Respectively submitted:



Tracy Gora, Planning Secretary
Site Review Technical Committee