

Minutes:

Addison County Regional Planning Commission

Act 250/Section 248 Committee

January 7, 2016

1. Call to Order- 4:30pm

2. Greg White and Josh Castonguay, engineers who work for Green Mountain Power, gave a brief presentation and explanation of the purpose of the recently published GMP Solar Map. They walked the committee through how the map is set up and how to glean more detailed information by clicking on one of the solar sunburst images or a transmission line segment. The sunbursts represent either approved projects or ones that have been proposed and that GMP has had a chance to do a quick review on. Red color on transmission lines indicates that a line is approaching its capacity. GMP desires to leave enough capacity so that small homeowner projects can still be added.

Larger projects may need to pay for line and/or substation upgrades as part of their overall project. Greg and Josh believe that no substation upgrades are likely in the near future and that GMP is exploring storage of power as a way of reducing the need for substation upgrades. They are hoping to be able to design "islanding" or "Micro Grids" which would allow storage of electricity within a smaller grid. This would allow service to continue even if part of a larger connecting grid were to fail. They are currently exploring possibilities for islanding for one of the Weybridge microgrids and as a way, along with line upgrades, to have their proposed Panton project to support the grid which serves Vergennes.

GMP is still working on a policy which indicates who pays for major upgrades, Last in? Shared among producers? Shared as line extensions are currently handled, Etc. Costs for upgrades should not end up on consumers bills unless ISO New England requires them to do so.

GMP has currently met its 15% cap on renewable and has entered a request to be able to increase that cap due to the demand and projected production levels.

Responding to a question about the "fast track analysis" they indicated that projects between 150 and 500kw go through an expedited interconnection review to determine whether a project will impact system reliability. A failure of this review may indicate that simple upgrades such as a fuse replacement may be needed or, if more extensive improvements may be required, a more complete system review may be called for.

- GMPs GIS contact is Tom Williams who is able to share some of the behind the scene data which currently feeds the map.
- Single phase lines can handle the input from a maximum of a 150kw array. Anything larger requires 3 phase interconnection.
- The PSD is currently looking at a threshold size for distributed generation. Very large projects may impact the grid to an extent that is not in the public good.

- GMP has the E-home program which assists homeowners with weatherization and heat pumps as a way of reducing overall demand on electricity.
- GMP supports continued development of rooftop solar.

3. Application reviews:

The committee had just enough time to briefly review the sites for the following projects:

Review of BDE New Haven Lazar Solar, LLC proposal to construct a 500kw solar array off Rte 17 in New Haven. This project was reviewed in its 45 day status on 12/3. The subsequent application clarifies what screening will be removed and what is proposed to add to the project to reduce visibility. In the hedgerow that is currently located between the project and Rte 17, the applicant proposes to remove all trees taller than 20' and maintain a 20' height. Additional screening will be added to the south and east to reduce the adverse impacts of the project from those vectors.

BDE North Ferrisburgh Lazar Solar, LLC proposal to construct a 500kw solar array northwest of Pierce Lane in the Town of Ferrisburgh. The project is expected to impact 4 acres of a 175 acre parcel in North Ferrisburgh. The project appears to be well screened by existing trees which are not proposed to be removed. There will likely be limited visibility from Rte 7 from the northeast at a distance of approximately 1500 ft. It appears that the project is well sited from an aesthetics standpoint.

West Addison GLC Solar LLC 500 kw solar array proposed for 4375 Lake St in Addison. This project is proposed for the corner of Atherton Rd and Lake St. It will occupy approximately 4 acres of a 10 acre parcel currently used to grow soybeans. The site appears to be well screened from the north and plantings are proposed for the west, south and east sides of the project. The project will be visible from Lake St, Jersey St. Atherton Rd. and Rte 17.

Vorsterveld GLC Solar LLC is a 500kw array proposed for 4530 Jersey St in Pantown. The project is proposed for 4.5 acres of a 608 acre property across the street from the Vorsterveld farm complex. The site is currently wooded and bounded east and west by class 2 wetlands. An initial review on google earth seems to show that the project will be essentially not visible due to terrain.

L.K. Holdings is proposing a 500kw solar site on a 29 acre parcel on the corner of Leicester/Whiting Rd and Sawyer/Needham Rd in Whiting. The project will be visible for approximately 1/3 mile along S/N Rd and more scattered along the L/W Rd. This will be a very visible site and will be difficult to screen adequately.

Crawford Solar LLC is being proposed for 324 Leicester/Whiting Rd. in Whiting. The array is proposed to be 4 acres in a 200 acre lot. As sited, the array is well screened from the north and east by hills. It will be intermittently visible from the west along the L/W Rd and Rte 30. Project appears to be well sited and takes surrounding features into consideration for natural screening.

BDE Ferrisburgh Lazar Solar LLC is a 500kw solar array proposed for 4 acres of a 114 acre site at 3980 Rte 7 in Ferrisburgh. The site will not be visible directly from Rte 7 to the west and will be quite a

distance from other viewpoints. Staff believes that, based on the preliminary information, there will be little or no aesthetic impacts from this array.

Staff had been able to put these project locations on Google Earth and the committee was able to review images both in aerial photo form and in “street view”. Concern was expressed by the committee particularly on the LK Holdings project proposed for Whiting. Staff will continue to monitor all proposals.

4. Next Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 4 at 4:30.

7. Adjourn at 5:45

Attendees:

Ellen Kurrelmeyer – Chair
Ron Crawford
Stephen Pilcher
Steve Revell

Andrew Manning
Jeremy Grip
Jim Walsh

Guests:

Gaen Murphree – Reporter, Addison Independent
Cindy Hill – Attorney for the Town of New Haven

Staff:

Tim Bouton

Adam Lougee