

September 22, 2017

Town of Lincoln – Planning Board

100 Old River Road

Lincoln, RI 02865

Dear Honorable Members,

On Tuesday, September 19, 2017 at 3:00 PM, the Technical Review Committee met to review the agenda items for the September 27, 2017 meeting of the Planning Board. In attendance were Al Ranaldi, Gerald Olean, Russell Hervieux, Leslie Quish, Peggy Weigner, and Michael Gamage. Below are the Committee's recommendations.

Major Land Development Review

a. George Washington Highway Solar AP41 Lot 58 Master Plan Discussion /

- WED GW Solar II, LLC. 600 George Washington Hwy.

Approval

This application is under the 2016 Subdivision Regulations and represents the development of 9.83 acres of an existing 15.11 acre parcel of commercial land into a 3.0 MW solar array system and associated site improvements. This project will require a special use permit. Currently, the front portion of the site contains a 7,500 square foot commercial building and associated parking. The rear portion of

the property is vegetated with mature trees. This project is in front of the Board at the Master Plan review stage.

On August 25, 2017, the project received a Certificate of Completeness. As of June 30, 2017, the Planning Board shall, within ninety days (90) days of certification of completeness or within such further time as may be consented to and obtain a written waiver of the deadline from the applicant, approve the master plan as submitted, approve with changes and/or conditions, or deny the applicant, according to the requirements of Section 8. A decision on the master plan review must be made by November 23, 2017, or within such further time as may be consented and obtain a written waiver of the deadline from the applicant.

The master plan submission included the following:

- Master/Zoning Plan Submission, George Washington Highway Solar, 600 George Washington Highway, Lincoln, Rhode Island, Assessor's Plat 41 Lot 58 September 22, 2017 and prepared by DiPrete Engineering.**
- Narrative Letter from DiPrete Engineering dated June 1, 2017 regarding, George Washington Highway Solar, 600 George Washington Highway, Lincoln, Rhode Island, Project #: 0601-018**
- Letter of Determination of No Hazard to Air Navigation, from the Federal Aviation Administration, Southwest Regional Office, Obstruction Evaluation Group, 10101 Hillwood Parkway, Fort Worth, TX 76177, Issued Date 07/24/2017**
- Letter from Green Development, LLC, dated August 16, 2017,**

regarding Plat 41, Lot 58-0 Solar Array Abutting Smithfield Property Zoning

Site Layout

The property contains a total of 15.11 acres of land. The front portion of the site that abuts George Washington Highway contains an existing 7,500 square foot commercial building and associated parking. The rear portion of the property is vacant and vegetated with mature trees. The property is bound by a car dealership and vacant land to the west, and a trucking company and vacant land to the east.

The proposed application is to construct a 3.0 MW solar array facility and associated site improvements on approximately 9.83 acres of undeveloped land at the rear portion of the property. The entire solar array facility will be fenced by a six foot tall fence. Access to the site will be from a gravel driveway opening off of a reconfigured parking area. The existing parking area will be reconfigured to accommodate this access as well as a turnaround area for large vehicles. The solar panels will be serviced from a gravel roadway traveling within the fenced in facility along the west side of the property. The TRC recommends that the applicant have the Albion Fire District review the proposed parking lot reconfiguration and issue a letter of their acceptance.

The proposed application does not indicate that any type of signage will be installed along the boundaries of the project. Members of the Technical Review Committee expressed concerns of people illegally

entering the site. Out of an abundance of caution, the TRC recommended that signage be installed at reasonable intervals along the boundaries of the project. The proposed signage will be reviewed during the next submission.

Zoning

The property is zoned ML-05 (Manufacturing Limited) and will require a special use permit under section 260-19Z: Renewable Energy – Utility Scale Facility. The project will be reviewed by the Zoning Board if it successful receives Master Plan Approval.

Utilities

The proposed solar farm will not require any public utilities. The proposed development will be connected to the existing overhead electric system that runs along George Washington Highway by a new underground service. Three new poles will be installed within the state's right-of-way. These new poles will be owned and maintained by the National Grid (a public utility).

Wetlands/Stormwater Runoff

The master plan submission indicates that most of the stormwater runoff will be addresses with several detention basins. The Town Engineer had some concerns regarding the proposed location of these detention basins. However, at the Technical Review Committee meeting, the applicant's engineer indicated that they have several options they will be exploring during the Master Plan review stage.

One of the options discussed in an infiltration drip line system that would run in front of each array and collect the stormwater runoff. The TRC is confident that an option exists for this project.

A natural gas pipeline easement and a small wetlands complex run along the east side of the property. This easement and the wetlands complex are outside of the fenced in project area. The TRC believes that the project will not require a wetlands permit. However, the overall project will require a RIPDES and Stormwater Construction Permit from RIDEM prior to Preliminary plan Approval. The RIPDES permit will review the wetlands complex and determine if a wetlands permit is needed. The stormwater management system will need to be designed in accordance with the Rhode Island Stormwater Design and Installation Standards Manual.

Parking

This proposed development will not require any dedicated parking spaces. However, the service roadway that runs along the western edge of the array system is 20 feet wide which will allow for a vehicle to park while another vehicle passes by if needed.

Traffic

After the initial installation phase, this type of development will not generate any traffic to or from the property. The facility will undergo regular maintenance visits from one or two technicians.

Property Access

Access to the solar array facility will be from a gravel driveway off of a reconfigured parking area. The existing parking area will be reconfigured to accommodate this access as well as a turnaround area for large vehicles. The TRC requests a revised parking lot design that clearly displays the proposed reconfiguration be submitted at the next submission. The TRC also recommended that the new parking lot contain vegetative areas.

Site Buffering

According to §260-23: Business and Manufacturing Districts, all Manufacture Limited (ML) and Manufacture General (MG) uses shall be at least 100 feet from Residential or Commercial Recreation Zoning Districts. If this distance is not feasible or unduly burdensome, a suitable buffer may be substituted, subject to review by the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

The abutting property west of the proposed project is a vacant parcel of land and an existing car dealership. The Technical Review Committee asked the applicant to look into the zoning of this abutting property which happens to be located in the Town of Smithfield. The property is zoned as Planned Development. This zoning classification allows for a variety of commercial uses, public and semi-public use, agriculture as well as residential use. In 2015, a 320 apartment complex was proposed for the site. However, this proposal was later withdrawn by the applicant.

The Technical Review Committee discussed the possible need for buffering considering the existing zoning classification. Since

residential use is one of many permitted uses, the TRC felt that the western side of the property should be buffered. This decision was made based on the fact that the property could be developed as a residential complex and that the property is located in another town. The TRC felt strongly that the Town of Lincoln should be a good neighbor and require site buffering. Many buffering options were discussed and a final concept will be reviewed at a later submission.

The Technical Review Committee feel that the applicant has successfully addressed the technical and regulatory requirements of the subdivision regulation for a Master Plan review stage and recommends that the proposed development advance to a Public Hearing in October.

Zoning Applications (*) – October Zoning Applications

Stephen & Linda Nault, 32 Dexter Rock Road, Lincoln, RI – Application for Dimensional Variance seeking side and rear yard relief for the construction of an addition to existing house and a free standing barn.

AP 23, Lot 023 Zoned: RA 40

Members of the Technical Review Committee reviewed the submitted plans and application. The Technical Review Committee recommends Approval of a dimensional variance seeking side yard

relief for the construction of an addition to existing house. This variance represents the pre-existing non-conforming placement of the house. The proposed addition did not create the need for the side yard variance. The Technical Review Committee feels that the dimensional variance for side yard relief will not alter the general character of the surrounding area and will not impair the intent and purpose of the zoning ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan.

The applicant is also requesting side and rear yard dimensional variances for the construction of a new free standing barn. The Technical Review Committee recommends Denial of this request.

The Technical Review Committee feels that with minimum revisions to the size of the proposed free standing barn, the applicant would not need two variances. The proposed barn is 528 square feet. This size barn is required to be placed within the existing setbacks of the property. If the barn is reduced to 500 square feet, it can be placed 6 feet from the property lines. The proposed location of the free standing barn is 15 feet from the rear and side property lines.

The applicant submitted a building plan for the proposed barn. This plan shows that the barn, if reduced to 500 square feet and retains the same roof line, would exceed the 15 feet minimum height requirement for an accessory structure. The Technical Review Committee is more amendable to granting one accessory structure height variance rather than two property line setback variances. The Technical Review Committee feels that an accessory structure height variance will not alter the general character of the surrounding area and will not impair the intent and purpose of the zoning ordinance and the

Comprehensive Plan.

Correspondence/Miscellaneous (*)

a. Staff Reports

b. 304 New River Road AP 35 Lot 132 Final Plan Approved

c. Douglas Vaughan AP 6 Lot 202 Final Plan Approved

d. Letter from Lincoln Police Chief Sunoco Gas Station Letter Submitted

e. Letter from Lincoln Police Chief Lincoln Mall Letter Submitted

Respectfully submitted,

Albert V. Ranaldi, Jr. AICP

Albert V. Ranaldi, Jr. AICP

Administrative Officer to the Planning Board