

Town of Sharon
Municipal Solar Oversight Committee
Minutes for 02/12/2024 meeting held 4:30 pm on Zoom

Welcome

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

Not attending: Silas Fyler

Guest Attendees: Tim Chouinard (DPW), Allen Giles (Solect)

Approval of Minutes

- Minutes from the Committee meeting on December 20, 2023 were approved by a vote of 4-0.

Operating projects

- East Elementary School canopy solar PV. Operating. 546.06 MWh generated from commercial operation date to today; 14.20 MWh in 2024 to date.
- Heights Elementary School rooftop solar PV and battery energy storage system (BESS). Operating. 753.21 MWh generated from commercial operation date to today, 13.96 2024 to date.

George noted that Solect had promised to provide the MSOC with data on net output for each prior contract year. George further noted that the Town had not received Monthly Reports, and that data from the website appeared to indicate that Solect had fallen short on its guaranteed production and might owe penalty payments to the Town. Allen acknowledged that Solect had not provided the promised information, but that Solect Customer Service (headed by Steve Bianchi, SVP of Customer Service) was aware of the issue and would provide the reports shortly. Similarly, the invoices for the BESS project have not been provided due to non-collection of required data. The Heights project has a G-2 rate, and the meter does not have capability to provide interval data. Allen advised that Solect will follow up on the BESS data and invoice issues as well.

Projects moving toward construction

- Mountain Street Landfill solar PV project. George reported that, based on correspondence with DSD Project Manager Jacki Bruce, areas of the southwest corner of the landfill shown as being outside of the limits of waste, and where electrical equipment was to be located, might in fact be holding buried waste not shown on design plans. DSD is arranging an on-site meeting with MassDEP to address the issue, most likely on February 22. Xander and Rob advised that Peter O'Cain or Kevin Webber be asked to attend the meeting. Xander might be available. DSD should also contact the Conservation Agent. If site plan changes are needed, DSD would need a modification to the MassDEP Post-Closure Use Permit and might need to present the changes to the Planning Board (which voted approval of the Site Plan in a January meeting). The process might delay mobilization until late summer. George also advised DSD to contact the abutter at 155 Mountain Street.
- High School rooftop solar PV project. During development of the Construction and Safety Plan, it was noted that the high school has an integrated roof system that cannot accept the anchors that Solect typically uses for workers performing rooftop construction or maintenance work without damage to the roof. An alternative approach is needed for the Safety Plan. Allen advised that the problem was not insurmountable, and solutions would not require measures that would be visible, but there would be delays. Impacts are to be determined.

- DPW projects. Select has ordered equipment and started the canopy project. Still on track for mechanical completion in late spring and commercial operation by the end of 2024 or early 2025.
- Middle School project. Select has uncovered potential cost overruns during the detailed design process, especially for the three small canopies in the northeast parking lot (low water table causing higher concrete cost; need to trench around underground structures; and other unforeseen subsurface conditions). Select is reconsidering aspects of the design to avoid an impact on the PPA rate. Changes include removing the three small canopies and replacing the capacity by expanding other canopy areas, including areas beyond the thirty-foot setback from the property line, but within the 50-foot setback of the prior design. Multiple options are being considered. Select believes it has the flexibility to modify the design without going back to Eversource to modify the ISA, and can preserve its existing SMART incentive. Changes would be brought back to the Committee at its next meeting, and to the Planning Board thereafter. The changes might delay the project into 2025.

Allen noted that the bonding requirement mandated by the Planning Board would not affect the PPA rate.

Projects under development

- Well #5 ground mount project. Select has issued draft agreements for Town review.. Project has an Eversource ISA approval with a Notice to Construct and the utility upgrade costs have been identified and included in the cost of the project. The ground-mount project will need Order of Conditions from Conservation Commission. Schedule is to go before the Conservation Commission in February and the Planning Board in March. Select would be on-site over the summer, mechanically complete, with Eversource approval to energize with 8 to 14 months thereafter.
- Ames Field Parking Lot Canopies (also known as the Ames Street Lot project, though not located on Ames Street). Allen will develop a design using the Bill Credit approach similar to Well #5. Approval would be needed at the next Town meeting – fall 2024, if there one, or spring 2025. Noted that there are no abutters with a head-on view of the project.
- Library rooftop solar PV project. Would be on same approval schedule as the Ames Field Parking Lot canopy project. Would need to present to the Library Board of Trustees, that could then indicate acceptance/support to the Select Board. George will follow up with Cheryl Weinstein, with whom he has had some correspondence regarding the project.

Chris asked about availability of electrical use data town-wide for use in the Centrica audit. George will follow up.

Chris also noted that he will be serving as the Finance Committee's liaison to the Standing Building Committee, and can use his position to address solar-readiness issues.

Next meeting date set tentatively for 4:30 pm on Monday, March 11, 2024.

Agendas to be confirmed. Meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm