

Town of Sharon
Municipal Solar Oversight Committee
Minutes for 03/11/2024 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: Allen Giles (Solect)

Meeting called to order: 4:35 pm

Approval of Minutes

- Minutes from the Committee meeting on February 12, 2024 were approved by a vote of 3-0.

Operating projects

- East Elementary School canopy solar PV. Operating. 555.82 MWh generated from commercial operation date to today; 17.7 MWh in 2024 to date.
- Heights Elementary School rooftop solar PV and battery energy storage system (BESS). Operating. 768.02 MWh generated from commercial operation date to today, 28.216 MWh 2024 to date.

Solect has provided monthly report data and responded to some of the questions raised about prior performance of the Heights Elementary solar PV project. It appears that Solect did not incur shortfall penalties in Years 1 and 2. Year 3 is still in progress. George is awaiting information on causes of outages during the summer of 2023, as well as causes of multiple main breaker trips by Eversource in August and September of 2023. George will follow up.

The invoices for the BESS project have not been provided due to unavailability of data. Solect will be following up on the BESS data and invoice issues.

The Committee discussed a draft Master Plan for Town elementary schools commissioned by the School Department. The Master Plan puts forth multiple options for addressing a projected rise in school enrollment, which involve various combinations of renovations, additions and reconstruction of existing school buildings, some of which might affect availability of building roofs for solar panels. The School Department is apparently deferring discussion of the Master Plan options for now. Plans for installing solar panels on the rooftops of East Elementary and Cottage Street Elementary will also be deferred pending the outcome of the master planning process. It was noted that the School Department might redefine the Facilities Director position, which might affect coordination of the Committee with school solar PV projects going forward.

Projects moving toward construction

- Mountain Street Landfill solar PV project. George reported that areas of the southwest corner of the landfill where electrical equipment was to be located might in fact be holding buried waste not shown on design plans. DSD has surveyed and re-staked the site and might be able to limit the extent of changes to the site plan to avoid the need to modify the MassDEP Post-Closure Use Permit and other permits. DSD will provide George with a modified site plan when available.

DSD advised they had provided additional notice to the abutter at 155 Mountain Street but received no response.

- High School rooftop solar PV project. Racks and panels are now installed on the High School roof. Solect is starting to run conduit. Solect was able to find methods for anchoring workers during work on the roof that did not require drilling or penetrations. Allen advised that the facility could be mechanically complete by the end of March and ready for notice to witness interconnection by the end of May. Allen will advise George when the Solect provides Eversource with the notice of readiness for testing.
- DPW projects. The canopies are in place and racking is being installed on the Public Safety building roof. Trenching for conduit through the DPW yard was delayed to avoid interference with snow removal equipment. Still on track for mechanical completion in late spring/early summer and commercial operation later in 2024.
- Middle School project. Solect redesigned the installation as one large canopy of the same capacity and PPA rate and with a 27-foot setback. Trees lining the road can stay in place as a buffer. Solect expects to redo construction drawings by the end of March and get to the Planning Board sometime in April.

The Committee informally indicated receptivity to the new design. The Committee suggested that, when information is confirmed, Solect should prepare and mail a letter and sketch of the modified design to abutters as a courtesy.

Projects under development

- Well #5 ground mount project. Solect has issued several iterations of draft agreements for Town review, and full agreement should be reached shortly. 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. Solect hopes to go before the Planning Board within the next few months. Solect could be working on-site over the summer and mechanically complete later in 2024, with Eversource approval to energize with 8 to 14 months thereafter.
- Student Parking Lot Canopies. Solect developed a preliminary design involving three canopies to confirm project feasibility. The project would generate bill credits similar to the Well #5 project. The project capacity would be in the range of 357 kWDC (250 kWAC). Interconnection would be at one of four Eversource distribution poles along Pond Street. The project appears viable, even with powder-coated steel and an allowance for over-sized footings. The next refined design would modify the panel and canopy lay-outs to address the 25-foot setback, while considering the need to re-stripe parking and leaving space for bus traffic around the perimeter. Approval would be needed at the next Town meeting – likely in spring 2025. Note 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 Student Parking Lot Canopies. The Committee discussed the need to present the project to the Library Board of

Trustees, that could then indicate acceptance/support to the Select Board. Rob suggested inviting the Trustees to a MSOC meeting in April (Monday, April 15), or else attending the Trustees meeting on Wednesday, April 17. Chris suggested inviting the Standing Building Committee, which is overseeing construction. George will follow up and confirm dates with Cheryl Weinstein, with whom he has had some correspondence regarding the project.

- Rob asked about the Water Filtration Building on Tree Lane adjacent to the train station. Chris advised that the Water Advisory Committee and the Standing Building Committee are both aware of the potential for rooftop solar PV panels, as is Eric Hooper. The RFQ for the building is almost ready to be issued. Allen asked to look at the preliminary design to make recommendations. Chris will check into availability of preliminary site plans and general arrangements.

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, April 15, 2024.**

Agendas to be confirmed. Meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.