

CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Project Review Committee

February 25, 2021 4:00 – 5:00 pm

Remote Participation via GoToMeeting

Draft Minutes

Project Review Committee Members

x	Lee Cattaneo, Orange Commissioner	1
	John Brabant, Calais Commissioner	2
x	Jerry D'Amico, Roxbury Commissioner (Alternate Seat)	3
x	Peter Carbee, Washington Commissioner	4
x	Janet Shatney, Barre City Commissioner	5
x	Robert Wernecke, Berlin Commissioner	6

Staff: Clare Rock, Zach Maia

Guests: Reagan and Valerie Howard, Landowners; Alex Bravakis, NOVUS Energy and applicant; Chris Violette, Barre Town Planning and Zoning Administrator

L. Cattaneo calls the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

Adjustments to the Agenda

C. Rock recommends conversation on Significant Regional Impact (SRI) and Conformance of these projects after preferred site agenda item.

Public Comments

None.

Act 250 / Section 248 Applications & Projects of Substantial Regional Impact

a) (1) Preferred Site Request by Alex Bravakis/NOVUS, 2 500 KW Solar Installations located at Bridge Street and Allen Street, Barre Town

Z. Maia begins by providing an overview of the projects and their locations regarding the Future Land Use Areas and Possible Constraints located on the sites. He outlines that the only possible constraint on the Allen Street site is the presence of mapped agricultural soils. A. Bravakis confirms that there are no "prime" agricultural soils located on the Allen Street site.

Committee members begin discussing the two projects, noting impacts to neighbors, site topography, concerns around amount of solar coming online in the County, and ensuring that these projects are permitted and installed as designed. A. Bravakis and landowners answer these questions, noting:

- neighbors have been in support of these projects generally;
- the northern slope of Allen Site will require more spacing between panels, and the site will be

larger than the Bridge Street location;

- this project will undergo an interconnection study prior to permitting to ensure that the grid can handle this amount of solar energy; and
- the applicant has worked with Barre Town to move the Allen Street project further back from the road, and the Town included a statement retracting their preferred site letter if the as-built facility differs by 50 feet.

C. Violette explains situation that led to the inclusion of the above statement in the Town's preferred site letter, adding that while these letters have the as-built stipulation, the Town supports these projects and has faith in NOVUS.

J. Shatney moves to designate NOVUS's Bridge Street project as a preferred site, seconded by P. Carbee. All in favor. Motion Carries.

R. Wernecke moves to designate NOVUS's Allen Street project as a preferred site, seconded by J. Shatney. All in favor. Motion carries.

a) (2) Consideration of Significant Regional Impact for NOVUS Bridge and Allen Street Projects

C. Rock introduces the need to consider SRI for these two projects, as the Committee can submit comments outside of support for the preferred site status.

The Committee recognizes the impact of larger scale (500 kw) solar facilities and has a conversation about whether the sufficient load in the surrounding area is enough to reduce the regional impact of increased energy capacity. A. Bravakis provides some information to clarify that this energy does go onto the grid, but there is high demand in the surrounding area.

R. Wernecke moves to find no Significant Regional Impact for NOVUS's Bridge Street project, seconded by P. Carbee.

Discussion:

Discussion ensues between the Committee and A. Bravakis, who explains that this project has an owner who can off-take all of the power to offset their usage, as they would lose the power they cannot use to the grid. Committee members and the applicant then have a brief discussion about decommissioning of this facility, and the possible recycling or sale of steel and modules. A. Bravakis recognizes that we are too early into solar development to understand the lifecycle of these products.

All in favor, motion carries.

G. D'Amico moves to find no Significant Regional Impact of NOVUS's Allen Street project, seconded by R. Wernecke. All in favor. Motion carries.

A. Bravakis, C. Violette, R. Howard, and V. Howard leave the meeting.

Committee members have a brief discussion about grid impacts, with L. Cattaneo citing his experience installing solar. The Committee recognizes the importance of Barre Town adopting G. Clain's recommendation and recommends that Staff include the dates of the maps/site plans in CVRPC's letters

1 of support. The Committee does recognize that these are planning documents, not engineering designs,
2 so there may be some changes.

3
4 **b) Review *Project Review Summary Sheet***

5
6 Z. Maia answers questions about the Sec. 248 Cabot and Montpelier biodigester facilities. He provides a
7 brief update on the Act 250 Mutchler application.

8
9 **Approve meeting minutes**

10
11 Committee members review the minutes and discuss their expectations for level of detail.

12
13 *R. Wernecke moves to approve the January 21, 2021 minutes, seconded by P. Carbee. All in favor. Motion*
14 *carries.*

15
16 **Adjournment**

17
18 *J. Shatney moves to adjourn, seconded by R. Wernecke. Meeting adjourned at 4:57pm.*