

Chen, Zachary

From: Redacted
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2016 2:16 PM
To: Chen, Zachary
Subject: Fwd: FW: VCE Solar Update 10/12/15 - Vermont Solar Siting Task Force

Categories: M-Files

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: FW: VCE Solar Update 10/12/15 - Vermont Solar Siting Task Force
Date: Tue, 3 Nov 2015 11:27:55 -0500
From: Redacted
To: Redacted

From: vce@vce.org
Date: Mon, 12 Oct 2015 13:13:31 -0400
Subject: VCE Solar Update 10/12/15 - Vermont Solar Siting Task Force
To: vce@vce.org

Vermont Solar Siting Task Force
<http://solartaskforce.vermont.gov/announcements-meetings>

Announcements

10/12/15: The third meeting of the Task Force will be held October 22, 2015 from 1-3 p.m. in Room 11 of the Vermont Statehouse, Montpelier (directions to the Statehouse can be found here <<http://legislature.vermont.gov/the-state-house/visiting-the-state-house/hours-map-and-directions/>>),

and the location of Room 11 here <<http://legislature.vermont.gov/the-state-house/visiting-the-state-house/state-house-floor-maps/>>)

Thereafter, the schedule for the meetings is as follows:

Tuesday, November 3, 2015 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM Friday, November 13, 2015 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM Thursday, December 3, 2015 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM Thursday, December 17, 2015 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM

***News Coverage of Renewable Energy Vermont conference with protesting* WPTZ**
<http://www.wptz.com/news/renewable-energy-showcase-targeted-by-wind-turbine-protesters/35733366>

Burlington Free Press (contains a video) <http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/life/green-mountain/2015/10/08/wind-powers-future-vt-lauded-critiqued/73585158/>

VTdigger (contains audio)

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/08/renewable-energy-advocates-acknowledge-public-pushback-on-wind-and-solar-development>

Video of people protesting

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU8Ggp2bris>

Not about solar but related to renewable energy and the public interest:

Video made by some of the people who were protesting — share this one far and wide, it is short and potent and needs to go viral.

<https://youtu.be/9XtCKtCrr9w>.

PSB approval of Bondville Solar — off Route 30, involves cutting 15 acres of forest

<http://psb.vermont.gov/sites/psb/files/orders/2015/2015-10/8443%20Final%20Order.pdf>

<http://www.rutlandherald.com/article/20151011/OPINION06/151019896>

Opinion

<<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION>>

| Perspective

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Going solar

October 11, 2015

Solar development has been likened to a gold rush, and whether you like it or not probably depends on your attitude toward gold.

The gold in this case is the golden sunlight streaming down on the state that, with increasingly efficient solar technology, is transformed into electricity. That it does so without carbon emissions means it is a crucial weapon in the battle against climate change.

Solar proposals are coming fast and furious. Last week state officials described plans by one solar company for a 20-megawatt project somewhere in Brandon. Twenty megawatts is huge — 10 times larger than the largest now in the state. The project, in its early stages, would be one of six sites developed by a company called Ranger Solar. The company has already proposed a 125-acre project in Ludlow. An off-the-cuff estimate of the size of the Brandon project would put it well above 100 acres.

But that's not all. The Public Service Board has approved a 500-kilowatt project for a former farm field in Guilford. The project is in a remote area, and it met no opposition from local residents. It would occupy about 3.5 acres.

Additionally, school officials in Springfield are considering whether to join a consortium of schools to invest in solar projects. Springfield school officials estimate the solar project would save the school district \$86,000 a year on their electric bill. Other schools interested in the project are in Rutland, Bennington and Windham counties.

The school project would be similar to the many community solar projects that allow homeowners to sign up for electricity from a solar array, with no money upfront and their contribution to the project coming straight out of their electric bills. The array doesn't have to be nearby. It's like signing up for community-supported agriculture, with a delivery of vegetables coming from a farm in the next town. These community projects are widely available from a variety of solar companies for whoever wants to sign up.

The rush to solar is fueled in part by state and federal tax incentives, proving to solar critics that solar is untenable. But as Darren Springer told a renewable energy conference last week, the federal government will be providing nuclear and fossil fuel companies subsidies amounting to \$100 billion over the next 10 years, compared to subsidies of \$35 billion for solar. Springer is chief of staff for Gov. Peter Shumlin, who has been a champion for renewable energy development.

In the case of solar, those subsidies have done what they were supposed to do — help to effect a dramatic reduction in the cost of solar panels.

One result is that Vermont has 10 times more solar power than it had in 2009.

The development of renewable energy in Vermont has been the target of criticism by those who accuse utilities of double-counting energy credits. Utilities can sell energy credits to out-of-state utilities seeking to take credit for solar development. The inflow of money from the sale of solar credits is having the proper effect — fostering the development of solar power. But if Vermont utilities then count the solar power on their ledger of solar credits, they are guilty of double-counting, which is essentially a bookkeeping transgression.

In any event, the rapid development of solar power has been the occasion of criticism by those who believe solar arrays are a visual blight and who criticize developers for insensitivity to neighbors. The visual effect is something we are going to have to get used to; indeed, many people find the sight of a solar farm to be an arresting and welcome sign of progress.

Still, as reported on Vtdigger.com <<http://Vtdigger.com>>, backers of solar power are aware of the need to proceed carefully in order to prevent a backlash. Rep. Tony Klein, chairman of the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee, said the Public Service Board has the authority to take into account local concerns when judging solar projects. In the past, the PSB has taken the odd view that neighbors'

views must not be considered because neighbors are not objective. In fact, the siting of a solar array and its proximity to neighbors are relevant factors, and Klein hoped the PSB would not shirk its responsibility for considering local concerns.

At the same time, renewable energy development is crucial to the future of the state and the planet, and it must not be unduly hindered by NIMBYism. That's why energy projects are in the hands of the PSB rather than of local boards. The presumption must be that a solar project, well-conceived, is good for us, and the burden of proof for showing that it is not should be high.

<http://www.rutlandherald.com/article/20151011/OPINION06/151019900>

Opinion

<<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=OPINION>>

| Perspective

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Multi-purpose solar solutions

October 11, 2015

The goal of Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan is to meet 90 percent of our energy needs from efficiency gains and renewable sources by 2050.

But many stakeholders are polarizing around the challenges of building Vermont's renewable energy future. A solution that could help to unite stakeholders lies in developing what we might call multi-purposed projects.

A good example of a multi-purposed project is the Church Street Marketplace in Burlington. In the 1980s, the city wanted to boost its economic profile, so it decided to build a mall. This mall, unlike many other malls in Vermont and around the country, ended up not in a farm field outside the downtown, but rather right in the downtown. It landed there because Burlington stakeholders took seriously the importance of meeting a variety of the needs of its diverse constituents. The outcome was a multi-purposed economic development project that avoided direct impacts to natural resources while giving new life to its aging downtown infrastructure. It's been an environmental and cultural success and economic boon for Burlington ever since.

We can apply this multi-purposed approach to the siting of renewable energy projects in a similar way. In Brooklyn, N.Y., for example, a Whole Foods grocery store has built a multi-purpose 325-kilowatt solar canopy over its parking lot. The canopy not only produces enough power to run a quarter of the store, but it also shades the parked cars beneath it.

Plus, the canopy contains an internal rainwater collection system that controls polluted runoff and provides grey water to the store's restrooms.

Why not explore the portion of our total solar demand that could potentially benefit from helping to resolve some of a community's other, perhaps unrelated issues — as Brooklyn and Burlington have done. These might include projects that could be slated for large flat roofs, barns, parking lots, brownfields, closed mines and landfills or industrial zones. Although Vermont has started to develop a few sites like these, we need to understand the available acreage, costs and challenges in order to consider the appropriate strategies and incentives to allow a project to move forward. They hold some promise to lead us to creative solutions.

And they reveal to us that other New England states are well on their way to finding solutions to multiple concerns. Here are just a couple of many ideas that could be explored.

— What if we could dual-purpose solar sites on agricultural lands by continuing to farm or graze them?

A key argument for not putting arrays on farmlands is that tractors could not drive through nor animals graze under a solar array, and it would therefore take these sites out of agricultural use. There are concrete examples in Massachusetts and Wisconsin of dual-use solar arrays that are high enough for cows to graze under and wide enough for tractors to pass through. They allow farmers to reduce electric costs and offset taxes while continuing their agricultural use. Why not have a couple of test cases to see how this would work in Vermont? The costs might be higher, but then we would know what level of incentives would be needed to help encourage this type of development.

— What if we could make it more economical to develop solar power on built surfaces, like in parking lots and rooftops?

Many people say that most flat roofs were built to a standard that cannot support solar, or that the costs are simply too high to obtain the structural integrity necessary. Why not test this assumption by finding examples of where it has worked and what the additional costs might be?

Many say that parking lots won't be feasible because of snow removal requirements and additional costs. On the other hand, dozens of solar parking canopies (many with electric car chargers) are being built in climates similar to ours, like New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts.

Why not pilot one in Vermont with private partners and test the feasibility, assess the additional costs per kwh produced and consider incentives? Wouldn't this be perfect for park-n-rides?

There are creative solutions just waiting to be implemented right now, many of which serve multiple purposes, making them more economical for developers and more desirable for neighbors, customers, communities, regulators and conservationists.

Let's help them along.

Elizabeth Courtney is the co-author of "Greening Vermont: The Search for a Sustainable State." She may be contacted at elizabethcourtneyvt@gmail.com <<mailto:elizabethcourtneyvt@gmail.com>>.

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/07/kevin-jones-too-good-to-be-true/>

KEVIN JONES: TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

OCT. 7, 2015, 7:00 PM BY COMMENTARY

<<http://vtdigger.org/author/opinion/>> 2 COMMENTS <<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/07/kevin-jones-too-good-to-be-true/#comments>>

/Editor's note: This commentary is by Kevin B. Jones, PhD, who is a professor of energy technology and policy at Vermont Law School. He can be contacted at energyclinic@vermontlaw.edu
<<mailto:energyclinic@vermontlaw.edu>>./

The sharing economy and solar energy seem like such a natural combination, kind of like apple pie and vanilla ice cream. Green Mountain Power and Yeloha's recent press release announced that "Yeloha and GMP will make it possible for individuals who don't have a roof suited for solar to subscribe online to power produced by other homeowners and businesses, essentially going solar on someone else's roof."

It almost sounds too good to be true and perhaps it is, as demonstrated by the multiple communications I received, raising concerns about the potential deceptive nature of GMP and Yeloha's claims. In order for GMP and Yeloha's claims about "going solar on someone else's roof" to be accurate, these companies would have to provide the sharing partner with the renewable energy certificates (RECs) associated with these claims.

Contrary to the marketing claims, going to the frequently asked questions on Yeloha's website supports that Yeloha sells the renewable energy certificates to a third party, and the solar host and sharing partner do not receive the RECs or payment for them.

See <http://support.yeloha.com/knowledgebase/articles/603654-does-my-solar-energy-system-produce-solar-renewabl>

In the press release, GMP CEO Mary Powell states, "This is a unique opportunity to empower more people to be able to harness the power of the sun. ... We see a tremendous opportunity in leveraging more rooftops around Vermont for the benefit of all those who may currently be renters, or own homes that are not well suited for solar."

If the Yeloha website is accurate and the RECs are sold separately for profit, what GMP and Yeloha's version of the sharing economy will provide to these "renters" is electricity largely powered by fossil fuels and nuclear isotopes rather than local, low carbon, solar energy.

Making false green claims is not legal as the Federal Trade Commission pointed out to GMP in a letter earlier this year.

When electric customers believe they have purchased solar energy, but instead their solar energy is sold to a third party, less solar power is produced than consumers demand. Deceptive claims by a marketer harm the consumer, the solar industry and the environment.

Making false green claims is not legal as the Federal Trade Commission pointed out to GMP in a letter earlier this year, "By selling RECs, a company has transferred its right to characterize its electricity as renewable." Accordingly, the Code of Federal Regulations advise that, if "a marketer generates renewable electricity but sells renewable energy certificates for all of that electricity, it would be deceptive for the marketer to represent, directly or by implication, that it uses renewable energy." See 16 C.F.R. § 260.15(d) at <http://goo.gl/s8xzQ0>.

Unfortunately the concerns raised by this press release are not an isolated issue. In 2013, following a press release from GMP and the national energy firm NRG that marketed an NRG project in Rutland as community solar, Powell stated to the Vermont news media: "Through this partnership, customers who have no space for solar or can't afford to build it themselves will be able to rely on solar energy and support its construction through a low-cost lease program. ... Many participants are likely to pay less for solar energy than they are paying today on their electric bills." Contrary to these claims, the fine print on the NRG agreement notes that the RECs are retained and sold separately by NRG and the agreement informs the customer that "{Y}ou may not claim publicly that You are using renewable energy or solar energy."

If, as the Yeloha website states, Yeloha separately sells the RECs to a third party and not to the host or the sharing partner, then GMP and Yeloha have some explaining to do. What is this product that GMP is marketing to its customers if customers are not being sold solar energy?

What if any financial benefit does GMP receive from Yeloha in regards to marketing this product?

GMP has previously been warned by the FTC, which concluded in its 2015 letter to GMP that, “while Vermont consumers do not have a choice of electricity providers, they can choose to use less electricity, generate their own electricity at their homes, or switch fuel types. Accordingly, we urge that GMP carefully review its current and future communications to ensure that Vermont customers, and other market participants, clearly understand that GMP sells RECs for many of its renewable facilities and thus has forfeited its right to characterize the power delivered from those facilities as renewable, in any way. If we identify concerns in the future, we reserve the right to take further action.”

When inaccurate green claims are made about solar energy, honest Vermont solar companies are harmed, the consumer is harmed, and the environment is harmed.

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/07/steve-thurston-industrial-wind-and-solar-is-a-death-sentence-to-vermonts-landscape/>

STEVE THURSTON: INDUSTRIAL WIND AND SOLAR IS A DEATH SENTENCE TO VERMONT'S LANDSCAPE

OCT. 7, 2015, 7:05 PM BY COMMENTARY

<<http://vtdigger.org/author/opinion/>> 25 COMMENTS <<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/07/steve-thurston-industrial-wind-and-solar-is-a-death-sentence-to-vermonts-landscape/#comments>>

/Editor's note: This commentary is by Steve Thurston, of Ferrisburgh, who is a retired general contractor and home builder committed to energy efficiency and conservation as the critical path to reducing fossil fuel consumption. He was a founding member and co-chair of the Citizen's Task Force on Wind Power in Maine. In 2011 he helped initiate a successful citizens petition to create a special section in Maine's noise regulations to address wind turbine noise./

Due to federal and state subsidies for wind projects, which reimburse about two-thirds of the construction and operating costs of these projects, over 80 miles of New England's mountain ridges have been clear cut and blasted for the two lane highways that must be built to the top of the mountain and along the ridgeline to transport the enormous components of wind turbines to their destinations. Upon completion these machines rise hundreds of feet above the treetops with blade tips that move through the air at Class 5 hurricane force speeds – creating instant death to any bird, bat, or raptor that strays into its path. The roar created by the blades ripping through the air travels down the mountain to homes in the valleys below and at night, when all is quiet, many people who are sensitive to the pulsating low frequencies emitted by these enormous machines experience chronic, debilitating sleep disturbance.

Eighty miles of turbine-covered ridges amounts to 800 megawatts of installed generating capacity but during the summer months, when demand for electricity is highest, these machines operate at about 10 percent of their rated power, providing only about 1 percent of the 16,000 MW of electricity required by the New England electrical grid during an average day. This can easily be confirmed by visiting the ISO-NE website <<http://www.iso-ne.com/isoexpress/>> and viewing the real time charts showing how much electricity is being consumed and which generation types are providing it. For example, at the moment 10:30 a.m. on Sept. 25, 2015, grid demand is just over 15,000 MW and wind is supplying less than one tenth of 1 percent.

In Vermont the free money given to solar developers is rapidly transforming our scenic highways into solar panel corridors that would make any strip mall developer envious.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that to achieve the 20 percent wind goal that ISO-NE is planning for, our politicians, under the spell of well-funded special interests, will allow developers driven by the lure of free money, to continue raping the landscape until there are 1,000 miles or more of turbines strung out like enormous pinwheels on the iconic, high value landscape that New Englanders have heretofore protected with laudable environmental and conservation

policies. In Vermont the free money given to solar developers is rapidly transforming our scenic highways into solar panel corridors that would make any strip mall developer envious.

Vermont wind and solar developer David Blittersdorf unabashedly states that his own plan for Vermont includes more than 300 miles of turbine-covered ridges and 65,000 acres of solar arrays. Despite the disastrous effect he alone would have on Vermont's sense of place, the sporadic generation of his wind and solar installations would amount to no more than a symbolic gesture, with no real effect on the need for natural gas, nuclear and hydro generators to provide the low cost baseload power that the grid cannot operate without, and which must be ready on a moment's notice when the breeze slows, or the sun goes behind a cloud or over the horizon.

Many Vermonters, especially those directly impacted by the proliferation of turbines and solar panels have become rightly concerned about the direction we are heading in. Only the combined action of each of our legislators can stop this runaway train. By blindly embracing the 90 percent renewable by 2050 mantra they are giving a death sentence to Vermont's landscape, unnecessarily raising our electric rates, without a shred of evidence that such policies will benefit Vermonters in any way.

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/local/2015/10/09/bed-expands-solar-footprint/73668334/>

BED expands solar footprint

Free Press Staff 4:10 p.m. EDT October 9, 2015

20151009 BUR BED solar array

(Photo: Courtesy Burlington Electric Department)

COMMENTEMAILMORE

The Burlington Electric Department says a new 124-kilowatt rooftop solar array at its Pine Street headquarters facility is now online.

The utility said the array is the latest project in the city's ongoing commitment to add more community solar to its portfolio and brings Burlington's total installed solar portfolio to 88 projects, which generate 1.93 megawatts of power. Burlington Electric expects to save up to \$900,000 in power and related costs during the 25-year life of the array.

"Burlington continues to be a national leader in energy innovation," Mayor Miro Weinberger said in a statement. "Prioritizing and building community-scale solar has been one of the City's key energy initiatives for more than three years, and we are honoring that commitment with announcements like the one today and this summer's unveiling of the Burlington International Airport solar array."

Weinberger said by installing solar arrays on city buildings, Burlington is encouraging private businesses and organizations to do so, too.

The arrays help ensure low-cost and locally generated power will be available during times of high use, such as hot summer days when demand for energy is greatest, BED said. Consequently, peak energy production and peak energy usage will coincide, offsetting costs and reducing reliance on more expensive energy sources.

“Adding locally sourced, renewable power in Burlington is an important component of our energy future,” Burlington Electric General Manager Neale Lunderville said in a statement. “Local power is resilient power that we can count on when the New England grid is strained.”

Lunderville said Burlington Electric is committed to building a sustainable energy future that benefits the city's growing economy.

As with the rooftop solar project at Burlington International Airport, which has produced more than 580,000 kilowatt hours of electricity since it came online, this new solar array will reduce the need to buy power from outside sources, BED said.

The solar array will be city-owned like the McNeil Generating Station and the Winooski One Hydro Plant. Solar power systems have the advantage of integrating low maintenance, non-moving mechanical parts, which provide quiet operation, the department said.

The municipal utility partnered with DC Energy Innovations, a Vermont company with offices in Burlington that has been increasing its renewable energy focus during the past decade.

“It was exciting to work with the team at BED to turn an underutilized city rooftop into a valuable, renewable energy site,” said Ben Gordesky, Renewable Energy Manager at DC Energy. “As a Vermont company, we were grateful to partner with Mayor Weinberger and BED’s team, who understand the importance of such a project. Burlington truly is leading the way for other cities around Vermont and our country.”

Burlington Electric began work on the project in 2012 request for proposals to grow solar installations on city-owned properties. The utility and the University of Vermont recently announced a similar process for solar development on the UVM campus.

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/09/state-oks-first-large-solar-array-in-guilford/>

STATE OK'S FIRST LARGE SOLAR ARRAY IN GUILFORD

OCT. 9, 2015, 8:17 AM BY MIKE FAHER

<<http://vtdigger.org/author/mike-faher/>> 1 COMMENT <<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/09/state-oks-first-large-solar-array-in-guilford/#comments>>

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<<http://vtdigger.org/2015/10/09/state-oks-first-large-solar-array-in-guilford/#>>

GUILFORD – The town’s first large-scale solar array has received state approval, but it might be hard to find even when construction is complete.

In granting a certificate of public good this week for a 500 kilowatt, group net-metered solar facility on former agricultural land, the state Public Service Board noted that the array “would have limited visibility from public viewpoints” and “would be substantially shielded by the existing vegetation and topography.”

That relative seclusion was a big reason that the site, at 1600 Guilford Center Road, was chosen, one of the project’s developers said.

*Read VTDigger’s two part series on the “Solar Gold Rush”

<<http://vtdigger.wpengine.com/fullimagestory/solar-is-everywhere/>>*

Data <<http://vtdigger.wpengine.com/fullimagestory/solar-is-everywhere/>>

“When you think about responsible and appropriate development practices and orderly development of the region, we think this project rates really high,” said Luke Shullenberger, managing partner of Waterbury--based Green Lantern Group. “It’s set back from public view and from neighbors.”

Fueled by financial incentives and Vermont’s net-metering law, the state’s solar industry has been booming. But it wasn’t until this past summer that several photovoltaic proposals began to surface in Guilford.

Guilford’s fire department already is drawing power from a small set of solar panels on the station’s roof. But the town does not yet have any arrays the size of Blanchard Hill Solar, which is the local business name for the project pursued by Shullenberger’s company and Guilford-based developer Dan Ingold.

Nevertheless, there was no opposition to the Blanchard Hill Solar proposal. Guilford Selectboard is just beginning to explore the complex regulations governing solar development, but Chairwoman Anne Rider said Ingold’s participation in the Blanchard Hill project made the process go smoothly.

Ingold has noted that the project’s access point – and even its initial name – was changed based on interaction with nearby residents. And he met several times with the Selectboard to discuss solar development.

“Dan gave a very thorough presentation .. he really addressed the concerns that we might have such as the aesthetic impacts and any other issues that might have come up,” Rider said. “He also helped us in trying to understand what questions Selectboards should be asking.”

In the end, “we felt comfortable with the specifications and thought they met the Public Service Board’s criteria pretty well,” Rider said.

The Public Service Board agreed, granting a certificate of public good for the project on Oct. 5.

State documents say the array will occupy about “3.5 acres of an approximately 5 acre, undeveloped, formerly agricultural parcel.”

Solar panels will be set back at least 250 feet from Guilford Center Road and at least 50 feet from other property lines, the board’s ruling says. After construction, the property will be reseeded, mowed as needed and “may be used as a seasonal pasture for sheep.”

“Potential visual impacts will be largely mitigated through the project’s design and siting on a 95-foot rise above the road. The project site is somewhat isolated, and potential visual impacts are minimal,” board members wrote. “From locations where the site would be visible, the project would be a minor element within the landscape because of the project’s high elevation and the low profile of the arrays.”

Under Vermont’s net-metering regulations, an electric customer – or a group of customers – can receive utility bill credits for generating power via small-scale renewable energy systems. And those “off-takers” don’t need to be anywhere near the actual array.

Net-metering credits associated with Blanchard Hill Solar will be transferred a few hours north to Warren-based Summit Ventures NE LLC, which runs Sugarbush Resort. State documents say the Guilford solar array “would be one of a group of net-metered systems that offset Sugarbush Resort’s electricity usage.”

Shullenberger said there’s no particular reason Sugarbush was linked to the Guilford project; the resort simply was selected as the next in line for net-metering services. “We have a whole long list of off-takers who have expressed interest in our projects,” he said.

Though state approval has been granted for Blanchard Hill Solar, Shullenberger said it will take several weeks to finish preparing the project for construction. Work ideally would start within the next 45 days and can continue even as cold weather approaches, he said.

“The biggest factor is really getting posts into the ground before the ground freezes,” he said.

There are several other solar projects in the works in Guilford, including a 150 kilowatt array on Guilford Center Road; a 500 kilowatt array on Kirchheimer Drive; and another 500 kilowatt proposal at the Exit 1 Industrial Park. The latter is on land owned by Brattleboro Development Credit Corp. and is situated partly in Guilford.

http://www.benningtonbanner.com/localnews/ci_28940335/vermont-psb-approves-solar-projects-guilford-londonderry

Vermont PSB approves solar projects in Guilford, Londonderry

By Robert Audette

raudette@reformer.com <<mailto:raudette@reformer.com>> @audette.reformer on Twitter

POSTED: 10/08/2015 01:22:11 PM EDT 0 COMMENTS

<http://www.benningtonbanner.com/localnews/ci_28940335/vermont-psb-approves-solar-projects-guilford-londonderry#disqus_thread>

GUILFORD >> The Vermont Public Service Board recently approved a pair of solar projects in Windham County.

In Londonderry, Integrated Solar received a certificate of public good for a 150 kilowatt interconnected group net-metered system on land owned by C&C Family Trust on Route 11. And in Guilford, the PSB approved a 500 kilowatt project that will be used to offset electricity usage at Sugarbush Resort in Warren.

The applicant for the Guilford project, GLC Powersmith Tinker Hill Solar LLC, submitted its request for a certificate on Aug. 13. Since the submission of the application, said Dan Ingold, technical director of the project, the name has been

changed to Blanchard Hill Solar, in recognition of the nearby Blanchard Hill Cemetery, following meetings with neighbors to the project. The developer for the project is listed as Waterbury-based Green Lantern Capital.

"The parcel is a former pasture that has been unused for more than 30 years and is currently covered with invasive brush," wrote Ingold in a letter to the town. "A buffer of mature vegetation along Guilford Center Road will mitigate views of the majority of the project from Guilford Center Road and residences."

Ingold told the Reformer that Sugarbush is the client for the project only because it was the next entity in the state queue for a solar agreement. The project "will employ local and regional Vermont companies during construction; will generate local and state tax revenue; will maximize the economic use of this parcel; and will further the state's renewable energy goals," Ingold's letter stated.

Ingold, who has lived in Guilford for 30 years, said all his interactions with residents, the Selectboard and the Planning Commission were cordial and mutually respectful.

There is no property tax benefit for the state, said Ingold, but Guilford and the state's education fund with split approximately \$4,000 in what is know as a capacity tax. "One of the great things about these projects is we don't require any town services but we are providing additional revenue."

Powersmith was the technical director for the 2 megawatt Winstanley Project at the end of Technology Drive in Brattleboro and is the technical director for a new net metered project just below that operating system, which was recently approved by the Public Service board. Powersmith is also working on a pair of projects in the North Springfield Industrial Park and a 500kw project at the Exit 1 Industrial Park operated by the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation. The application for that project, which is actually located in Guilford, was just submitted to the PSB, said Ingold.

The just-approved Guilford project will disturb 35,548 square feet of earth and create 10,248 square feet of impervious surfaces, which is below the jurisdictional limits of ANR's construction stormwater permit requirements. It will be sited on three-and-a-half acres of an approximately five-acre, undeveloped, formerly agricultural parcel located at 1600 Guilford Center Road and would be bound to the south by Guilford Center Road, and to the east, west, and north by agricultural lands and forest. The array would be set back at least 250 feet from Guilford Center Road, and at least 50 feet from all other property boundaries and the panels would be located on a rise of land approximately 95 feet above the road. The project will also require a new gravel road 775 feet long and 12 feet wide.

"The array would have limited visibility from public viewpoints. The Project site would be substantially shielded by the existing vegetation and topography (and) (p)erimeter trees and vegetation shorter than 25 feet would be maintained to further mitigate any future off-site visibility. A small number of larger perimeter trees on the west and northwest perimeters would be removed to reduce shading and facilitate the functioning of the arrays."

In Londonderry, one requirement for the 150kw-Integrated Solar project is a "50-foot undisturbed vegetated buffer from the top of the stream bank within the Project area, except for the area where there is a crossing. The crossing and driveway within the 50-foot buffer shall be as narrow as possible to cause the least amount of disturbance and vegetation removal."

Integrated Solar applied for the certificate on July 28 and under Title 30, Section 248 of Vermont state statutes, received an expedited approval for the project. The facility will be interconnected with the Green Mountain Power Corporation electric distribution system and there will be multiple meters included in the group system. The goals of Vermont's net metering statute are to encourage private investment in renewable energy resources, stimulate the economic growth of the state, and enhance the continued diversification of energy sources used in the state.

The solar construction activity in Windham County is not unusual in Vermont, said Ingold. In fact, he said, the counties of Addison, Chittenden and Rutland are seeing even more activity because they have good transmission systems and lots of flat land.

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<http://www.newsandcitizen.com/news-and-citizen/lamoille-news/hydeparksolarheatingup>

Hyde Park Solar Heating Up

posted 2 hours ago by Staff News & Citizen

* by Kayla Friedrich*

Over the last 17 months, Hyde Park Electric Department (HPE) and Stowe Electric Department (SED) have been working simultaneously to develop solar projects that will help them meet some of the requirements under the new Vermont Renewable Portfolio Standard.

The Vermont Economic Development Authority recently reserved \$3.5 million in Clean Energy Renewable Bonds (CREBs) for the Hyde Park Solar Waterhouse Project, named after 35-year linesman Don Waterhouse. Voters approved the application for the zero-interest CREBs by a four to one margin earlier this spring, and municipal and town officials will now go about completing the process essential to securing the \$3.5 million in zero-interest bonds that have been set aside for the project.

On Monday, September 28, the Village of Hyde Park held an informational meeting to update the public on their progress with the project. Only two residents turned out for the meeting, but Hyde Park Village General Manager Carol Robertson said they had a good discussion without any contention.

“There were two ladies there,” said Robertson. “One was Barb Potter who lives in the village, and the other one was Judy Womack whose home overlooks a part of this project. I had already met with [Judy] and her neighbors about the project, and she came with a lot of questions that she had after that. It was a great meeting.”

Womack’s main concern, according to Robertson, was that she would be able to see the solar field from her third story windows. Robertson says the village talked to a landscape architect, and they decided that to solve that issue by planting tall, fast-growing Junipers to block the view. From the lay of the land, there are very few people who can see it, but Womack can.

A 7-foot agricultural fence, not a chain-link fence, will surround the solar field and it will be very quiet, said Robertson. It will be a pad-mount transformer. The panels are fixed, do not move, and don’t make any sound at all. Each one will have an underground connection that will feed back to the transformer.

So far, Encore Redevelopment, a Burlington company led by environmental engineer Chad Farrell, has done the preliminary designs and site selections for both Stowe and Hyde Park.

Continuation of the process will consist of obtaining permits, a certificate of public good and public service board (PSB) approval.

Following the PSB order, the village of Hyde Park will hold a required public meeting, around November or December. Then in December or January, they’ll hold a special meeting and Australian ballot for the appropriate approvals. The hard deadline to secure the CREBs funding is February 2, and the village is hoping to begin work on the project in May 2016, providing they receive the funding. Their hope is to start producing power by that summer.

After the field begins producing power, the village can start selling renewable credits to other municipalities within the state.

“Our field is going to be cash positive from the day we turn the key,” said Robertson. “We will own it with nice stable power.”

The Waterhouse Project is tentatively going to be built at 1124 Silver Ridge Road in Hyde Park, a lot owned by Raymond and Carolyn Chauvin, located just behind the House of Troy. The Village of Hyde Park has a lease option on

that site on behalf of Hyde Park Electric. It will be a 25-year renewable lease that will go on for as long as both parties are willing.

"This is just the start," said Robertson. "As Barb Potter said in the meeting, she said 'Carol, this means that this is ours.' So, by building this, we are keeping all of our economics here. This landowner threw his land in the ring in the last month or so of the process. I think it's the right size, and the nice sweet spot for us."

Hyde Park is already working with Energy New England to get its name in the hat for people who would like to come in and pay to use this power once it's produced. Robertson believes Hyde Park can make everything local, and attract people in the future to invest some money and see how it's done.

By working with Stowe in each establishing a one-megawatt site, both towns can take advantage of discounts and save money.

We named this the Waterhouse project, because this is only the beginning," said Robertson. "Future projects may not be solar, it may just be energy storage from this. It could be anything, or it could be another solar project. We have looked at geothermal, and that's a possibility. There are things out there that haven't even been thought of that are possibilities, but the first rule is you have to generate cash from the first day."

St. Albans Messenger, Sept. 26, 2015

Solar array project topic for meeting

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By ELODIE REED Messenger Staff Write

ALBURGH — Time – and the ability to fall under the state's 15 percent net meter cap as well as receive a 30 percent federal tax credit ending Dec. 31, 2016 – is one reason for the Alburgh Selectboard to move fast on a municipal solar project.

In light of this, the selectboard will hold a special public meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 30, at 6 p.m. to inform local residents about the project and answer any questions they may have.

The 500-kilowatt project, proposed at an Aug. 25 selectboard meeting by developers and brothers William and Victor Veve of Reservoir Road Holdings, is intended for the site of the former

U.S. Dept. of Defense Atlas Missile Base. The site was found to be riddled with health and safety hazards in Dec. 2010, when the Alburgh Town Garage was there.

The Veves, who specialize in developing brownfields and other contaminated land, asked the town to consider putting solar panels on three to five acres of the site that would power Alburgh's municipal buildings under Vermont Electric Cooperative's net metering program. The expected \$1 million in expenses associated with the project, including development, permitting, construction, maintenance, insurance and later decommissioning, would be paid by Reservoir Road Holdings.

This would be done with help from the developers' Greenwich, Conn. financing partner, Altus Power America.

As for the town, it would lease the land to the developers over a 20- to 30-year agreement, and it also would be receiving its power from a renewable, emissions-free source.

After receiving a preliminary motion from the Alburgh Selectboard to enter negotiations a month ago, the Veves have made efforts to look at the project's feasibility, cost and other details.

"We're making good progress with our diligence and engineering," said William Veve at the selectboard meeting on Tuesday. "We've been on the property and fully delineated wetlands."

He said that the Agency of Natural Resources planned to be on-site on Oct. 6, and shortly after, the Veves plan to file their application for a Certificate of Public Good from the Public Service Board.

Veve added that he had been in touch with adjoining landowners, and asked that the Town of Alburgh, since it has been involved in the project from the beginning, waive the 45-day notice period usually required by the PSB process.

This request, he said, was in the interest of time and making sure the project can happen. "We're in a tight race right now to meet the net meter cap," said Veve. The cap has been met for 2015, and 2016 is almost full already. "[There's] approximately 1.2 megawatts left for capacity, and we're asking for 500 of that," said Veve.

There's also a 30 percent federal tax credit for renewable energy projects completed before Dec. 31, 2016. After that date, the credit is reduced to 10 percent.

To move things along, Veves asked the selectboard to sign a letter of agreement that indicates the town and the developers would negotiate a lease. This piece is required for the PSB process, said William.

At this point, the selectboard showed some hesitation.

"I can understand your urgency," said selectman Alton Brusio. "But ordinarily, when these [things], we usually have the town attorney look at them."

Veve responded, "This is not the lease agreement – this is what is considered a letter of intent, which is binding."

Local resident, delinquent tax collector and fire warden Terry Tatro asked from the audience, "Don't you think there should be a little more public information and public input?"

The board agreed, and they decided 5-0 to have the town attorney look over the letter. Later in the meeting, they had a second, unanimous vote to hold a public informational meeting next week for residents.

The Veves said they would be there to answer questions.

William Veve said, "We're 10 real days from filing our CPG (certificate of public good) 45-day letter," which can't be done without the letter of agreement signed by the Alburgh selectboard. "At this point, we've spent \$11,000 of our money on professional fees."

His brother, Victor, added, "We're trying to work with the town and take a brownfield that's not being used and do something good with it."

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