

BARRE TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR SPECIAL MEETING SEPTEMBER 27, 2022

Some members of the Barre Town Planning Commission had a joint meeting with the Selectboard on **September 27, 2022**, at the Municipal Building, 149 Websterville Road, Websterville, VT.

PC MEMBERS

In person: Cedric Sanborn, Mike Gilbar, George Clain, and Chris Violette
Remote: Terry Reil

SELECTBOARD

Paul White, Norma Malone, Justin Bolduc, Bob Nelson and W. John Mitchel

STAFF PRESENT

Chris Violette (Planning & Zoning) and Carl Rogers (Town Manager)

OTHERS PRESENT:

Berry Striker (landowner)
Virtual: Thomas Hand (MHG Solar) and Sheila Stone (Town of Orange)

Excerpt from the Selectboard meeting taken by Jennifer Bushway, Assistant Town Clerk

A. LOWERY ROAD SOLAR PRESENTATION:

Background: Lowery Road Solar is preparing to file an application for a Certificate of Public Good (CPG) with the Vermont Public Utility Commission (PUC), requesting approval to install and operate a 4.999 MW solar electric generation facility in Barre and Orange. The project is still in the pre-application phase. The Town has completed a site visit. This presentation is intended to help the Board and Planning Commission understand the proposed project.

Thomas Hand shared that MHG Solar has developed 15 projects in Vermont. This proposed project is a 4.999-megawatt photovoltaic electric generation facility in the towns of Barre and Orange. The project site is located on 30-acres and is to be built on a cornfield owned by Barry Stryker. The project will utilize approximately 10,295 650-watt solar panels. Mr. Hand explained that MHG will connect power using the access road to the cornfield and then run underground power along Lowery Road, where it will then connect to the existing Green Mountain Power 3 phase grid. Mr. Hand expressed environment and location are key aspects for these projects. Lowery Road Solar chose the proposed location for this solar array based upon its solar exposure, accessibility to existing roads, limited visibility, and minimal impacts on natural resources. Mr. Hand stated that as for the benefits to the Town it is expected to pay \$20,000 of personal property tax. Additionally, approximately \$20,000 per year would pay into the State Education Fund.

Chair White inquired about the underlying value of the land and if this would be affected by adding the solar equipment. Mr. Hand confirmed that the underlying value of the land would not change with the project being added to it. Mrs. Malone noted this land is in Current Use and the installation of the solar project will take this portion of the property out of Current Use.

Chair White inquired about Green Mountain Power's (GMP) ability to take on future projects. Mr. Hand stated this project will not impact future solar projects to this substation and it will still have a 54% capacity after this connection. Conversation continued as Board members and Planning Commission members asked Mr. Hand additional questions regarding the project site and decommissioning plans. Mr. Hand anticipates they are approximately a month out from submitting their application. He noted this is the best opportunity for the Board and Planning Commission to share their comments with him. Board consensus is to have a discussion next week regarding their comments. Those comments will then be passed along to the Planning Commission and a draft letter will be shared with MHG Solar.

Cedric Sanborn, Chair

Mike Gilbar

George Clain

Byron Atwood

Chris Violette

Craig Chase

Terry Reil