

1 **PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

2 **Wednesday, June 12, 2024**

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4 The meeting of the Project Review Committee was held remotely. Chair B. Buermann called the meeting to
5 order at 7:09 PM.

6
7 **ATTENDANCE:**

8 Commission: Scholten, Marietta ; Demars, Howard ; Buermann, Robert ; Irwin, William ; Garrett,
9 Harold

10
11 Staff: Emily Klofft.

12
13 Guests: Mike McCarthy (SunCommon for Lake and Maple Apartments L.P.), Thomas Grace & Robin Grace
14 (Grace Solar), Brian Sullivan (Bell Atlantic/Verizon)

15
16 **Changes or Additions to the Agenda:**

17 B. Buermann suggested moving minutes until after project reviews. The Committee agreed. E. Klofft asked the
18 projects be rearranged to move the Lake and Maple Apartments L.P. project to the start of the agenda as Mike
19 McCarthy had notified her of a commitment at 7:30 PM. The Committee agreed. The Committee moved the
20 three projects with applicants attending to the front of the agenda.

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22
23 **Public Comment**

24 None.

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26
27 **Project Reviews:**

28 **Act 250- Lake and Maple Apartments L.P.**

29 *Project Details:* 45-day notice for a 125 kW solar project.

30
31 E. Klofft reviewed the project site plan and draft project review sheet. The project is a 125 kW solar canopy
32 that will be installed over the parking lot for a new apartment development on 175 Lake Street, St. Albans
33 City. The project is a preferred site as it is over a parking area. The project is not expected to have any natural
34 resource impacts because it is over a parking lot. The front portion of the parking lot is covered by the
35 building, the canopy would be in the back portion of the parking lot.

36
37 M. McCarthy explained that the project would be located in the back portion of the parking lot, in the second
38 and third rows away from Maple Street. The project will be net-metered, since the apartment complex is
39 affordable the landlord will be responsible for the electric bill, this project will offset a portion of that cost. H.
40 Garrett asked if the array would generate enough power for the whole building. M. McCarthy stated it would
41 cover a significant portion but not all of the costs. The applicant had a separate array that would be located on
42 top of the building to further cover energy costs, that array would be directly connected to the building and
43 therefore is not part of the permit application.

44
45 M. Scholten asked if the parking lot would include electric vehicle charging. M. McCarthy said that the project
46 would include electric vehicle chargers.

1
2 H. Garrett asked about the structure of the canopy. M. McCarthy stated that the support beams would be a
3 structural wood laminate, and the solar panels would make up the roof. H Garrett asked if there was a risk
4 that snow would break the panels. M. McCarthy stated the panels were rated to 60 PSF with the typical snow
5 load in the area being 40 PSF. M. McCarthy stated that the panels were not watertight, as snow melted it
6 would drip down from the panels, gutters may be installed to direct melting water.
7

8 B. Irwin asked if the bankruptcy proceedings of the parent company of SunCommon would impact the project.
9 M. McCarthy stated that it would not, SunCommon is being sold to a new owner and it is expected that all
10 projects will be continued under that new owner.
11

12 B. Irwin asked if there was a reason the project did not cover the entire parking lot. M. McCarthy stated that it
13 was to avoid any impacts to public ROW and because certain funding incentives were better for projects under
14 150 kW.
15

16 B. Buermann asked if the applicant had a decommissioning plan. M. McCarthy stated that the panels would be
17 owned by the building owner who would be responsible for decommissioning.
18

19 H. Garrett asked what the maintenance plan for snow melt and possible ice was M. McCarthy stated that
20 gutters would be installed.
21

22 The Committee noted that they would review the full application but did not have any additional concerns at
23 this stage.
24

25 **Section 248- Thomas Grace and Robin Grace**

26 *Project Details:* 18.94 kW new-metered project in Fairfax.
27

28 E. Klofft reviewed the project site plan and draft project review sheet. The Committee reviewed the project at
29 the 45-day notice and had questions about possible wetlands impacts. The project location has since been
30 moved and the new location has no expected wetlands impacts.
31

32 E. Klofft noted that the Committee had questions about the mowing schedule. T. Grace stated that they would
33 mow it regularly along with their yard.
34

35 B Irwin asked if there had been any comments from the neighbors. T. Grace stated that one neighboring
36 property owner who did not live on the lot had stated concern about sightlines from his property. T. Grace
37 stated the new array would not be as visible as the current array from the neighbor's property and would also
38 not be visible from the road. H. Garrett noted the new array was further from the concerned property-owner.
39 T. Grace noted that the new panels would provide additional electricity to offset the use of their electric
40 vehicles and heat pump.
41

42 *B. Irwin motioned to find the project is in conformance with the Regional Plan and that it does not a substantial*
43 *regional impact. M. Scholten seconded. The motion carried.*
44

45 **Section 248a- Verizon Wireless**

46 *Project Details:* Installation of telecommunications equipment on an existing tower.

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2 E. Klofft reviewed the draft project review sheet. The project is co-location of a new antenna and generator on
3 existing tower which will increase the height of the tower from 110' AGL to 120' AGL.
4

5 E. Klofft stated the Committee had concerns about the noise of the generator during the 60 day notice period.
6 B. Sullivan stated that the generator was not expected to produce undue noise at the boundary line and that
7 the generator would only run during a power outage and during a 1 hour test during the day. The applicant
8 could move the testing time if it disturbed a neighbor, usually it is run in the middle of the day. B. Irwin noted
9 the site was not located close to other dwellings.
10

11 B. Irwin asked if the height extension was required to fit an additional carrier. B. Sullivan stated it was, after
12 two rows of other carriers' antennae and a whip antenna, the highest available spot was 65' AGL, which would
13 not meet coverage needs. The additional 10' would enable co-location of Verizon's service and cover a service
14 gap.
15

16 B. Irwin noted that the application met the goal of co-location. B. Buermann stated it seemed that the project
17 would have minimal visual impact based on the location. B. Irwin stated that it appeared the monopole design
18 was less visually intrusive than lattice pole design.
19

20 *B. Irwin motioned to find that the project was in conformance with the Regional Plan and does not have a*
21 *substantial regional impact.*
22

23 B. Buermann noted that the project was located close to a municipal boundary and would provide service to
24 multiple municipalities, and therefore suggested it may have a substantial regional impact.
25

26 *B. Irwin amended his motion to state that the project was in conformance with the Regional Plan and has a*
27 *substantial regional impact. H. Garrett seconded. The motion carried.*
28
29

30 **Act 250- Sandy Birch LLC**

31 *Project Details:* Proposed seven-lot, six unit residential subdivision.
32

33 E. Klofft reviewed the project site plan and draft project review sheet. The project is a second phase of a
34 residential development in Georgia. The project access road is not interconnected with the existing
35 development, likely because of intervening wetlands. There are wetlands on project site but the only impact
36 will be a force main for the wastewater system which will be directionally drilled under the wetlands. The
37 project includes a painted walk/bike path and an extended sidewalk on the Sandy Birch public road. E. Klofft
38 noted that in the application for Phase 1 the Committee had found that the project was not in conformance
39 with the Regional Plan due to the lack of sidewalks, and the striped path had been the compromise of the
40 Committee and applicant. E. Klofft noted that the project was not in a growth center but was adjacent to the
41 applicant's existing development. The project has individual wells but a shared wastewater system. The
42 project may be in a clayplain forest rare and irreplaceable natural area (RINA). There is a retained lot and a
43 right-of-way (ROW) to the lot, although it is not clear if there is an access trail or road.
44

1 B. Buermann noted that the ROW followed an existing farm road. The Committee discussed the clayplain
2 forest type and possible RINA area. The Committee agreed that this was a concern but could be best
3 addressed by ANR.
4

5 H. Garrett stated that he was concerned that with a 22' road, the bicycle and pedestrian shoulder would not
6 be wide enough for safety. B. Irwin noted that there appeared to be a gap in the sidewalk along the town road
7 between the existing development and the new development. B. Irwin stated that he believed it was
8 important for more dense developments to have sidewalk development.
9

10 *B. Irwin motioned to find that the project does not have a substantial regional impact and was in conformance*
11 *with the Regional Plan, conditional upon the connection of the existing sidewalk with new sidewalk along the*
12 *town-owned Sandy Birch Road. H. Garrett seconded. The motion carried.*
13

14 **Act 250-Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management District**

15 *Project Details: Construction of improvements at the existing recycling center.*
16

17 B. Buermann stated that he is on the board of the Solid Waste Management District and is part of the building
18 committee. Therefore, he stated that he would recuse himself from the project to prevent any conflict of
19 interest. He noted that he could answer any questions the Committee had about the project.
20

21 E. Klofft reviewed the project review sheet and project site plan. The project is located in the Georgia
22 Industrial Park, with no pedestrian or bicycle connections. The project is within the existing developed area of
23 the site, with no natural resources impacts expected. A 200' buffer for the existing stream will be preserved.
24 The project will reduce the amount of screening trees on the site, although there are no site lines beyond the
25 industrial park. The stormwater system is managed by the overall industrial park.
26

27 B. Irwin asked about where trees would be removed. E. Klofft stated that on three sides of the project site
28 trees would be removed to expand the parking area and add a dedicated exit. B. Buermann noted that the
29 project would change the site's traffic pattern so that traffic was no longer going through the building and
30 allow for better management of different types of waste.
31

32 B. Irwin asked how the park managed the stormwater and whether it was regularly updated. H. Garrett noted
33 that stormwater permits had to be regularly renewed. B. Irwin noted that with increasing rainfall in Vermont,
34 proper stormwater management would become more important. B. Buermann noted that the park divided
35 the stormwater allocation and that even with the new project they would be within their portion of the
36 allocation.
37

38 *B. Irwin motioned to find that the project has a substantial regional impact and is in conformance with the*
39 *Regional Plan. M. Scholten seconded. The motion carried.*
40

41 **Minutes**

42 *H. Garrett motioned to approve the minutes of the April meeting. B. Irwin seconded. The motion carried.*
43

44 **Updates**

1 E. Klofft stated that ANR had concerns with the placement of the Mill River Solar site relative to the river
2 corridor and that she would track the project for any potential new information that may affect regional
3 conformance,
4

5 E. Klofft stated that the schedule for the Howrigan wind project had yet to be finalized.

6 **Commissioner Announcements**

7 None.
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9

10 **Adjourn**

11 *B. Irwin motioned to adjourn. The Committee adjourned at 8:53 PM.*
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