

1 PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

2 Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023

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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 6:03 PM.

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7 ATTENDANCE:

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

10  
11 Staff: Emily Klofft.

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13 Guests: None.

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

16 None.

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19 **Public Comment**

20 None.

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23 **Project Reviews:**

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26 **Section 248- Advance notice-Thomas Grace/21.78 kW-Fairfax**

27 *Project Details:* 45-day notice of a project to add 9.6 kW to existing solar array for a total 21.78 kW array off  
28 384 Sam Webb Road, Fairfax, VT.

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30 E. Klofft reviewed the project site plan and draft project review sheet. The project is a relatively small net-  
31 metered solar facility. The main expected impacts are to wetlands and wetlands buffers. E. Klofft stated that  
32 she had asked the applicant to contact ANR to determine if wetlands permitting was required. The project will  
33 have limited visual impact, based on the site plan it seems only 1 neighbor might have views of the new  
34 panels, and that neighbor has solar panels in their backyard as well. The project is not located in a regional  
35 prime or base solar area.

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37 B. Irwin asked if the Town of Fairfax had provided comment or if the Town had general policies on solar  
38 facilities. E. Klofft stated that Fairfax had adopted an enhanced energy plan, which has a preference for  
39 facilities of less than 5 MW. The Town had not provided any comments on this project.

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41 B. Irwin stated that the wetlands impacts would likely be limited since the solar requires only poles in the  
42 ground. B. Buermann noted that the applicant should provide a decommissioning plan. B. Buermann stated  
43 that the panels would only be 3 feet above the ground, and asked how the applicant would mow and manage  
44 vegetation. The Committee discussed use of solar panels for animal grazing areas.

1 H. Garrett asked if the applicant planned to use battery storage as well as the panels, and if so, if there would  
2 be a recycling plan in place. The Committee discussed energy storage plans in the region.

3  
4 E. Klofft stated that based on the Committee’s discussion, she would ask the following questions/requests of  
5 the applicant

- 6 • Please provide a decommissioning plan after the useful life of the panels
- 7 • What is the applicant’s plan for mowing and vegetation management?

### 8 9 **Review of Project Review Policies**

10 E. Klofft presented on the NRPC Project Review Policies and major changes to the project review forms as a  
11 result of the new Regional Plan. She noted that the current set of policies are nearly a decade old. The policies  
12 around which projects require staff review could be updated: there is no specific policy for small solar projects  
13 and the housing unit threshold is higher than actual practice of the Committee. E. Klofft also reviewed the  
14 major changes to goals and policies in the Regional Plan reflected in the new project review checklists. Major  
15 changes include an environmental justice policy, more clearly referencing the complete streets table,  
16 removing “character of the area” as a consideration for housing projects, and a policy on projects with  
17 negative health impacts.

18  
19 The Committee discussed the changes to the project review sheets. B. Irwin asked what had replaced the  
20 policy on character of the area. E. Klofft stated the policy was replaced with “Encourage the design of housing  
21 developments that fit into the cultural, aesthetic and natural landscape in which they are located.” H. Garrett  
22 asked if the new policy would allow neighbors to state a more affordable home was not allowed in a  
23 subdivision. B. Buermann stated the new policy was designed to prevent that from happening. M. Scholten  
24 asked the definition of environmental justice. E. Klofft reviewed the EPA definition and stated that the state as  
25 whole is also working on how to implement this into review processes.

26  
27 The Committee reviewed the policies. B. Irwin recommended that staff make proposed edits and return to the  
28 Committee for review.

### 29 30 **Updates**

31 E. Klofft stated that the scheduling conference for the Howrigan wind project would be held on January 18<sup>th</sup>,  
32 this conference would set the schedule for the project moving forward.

### 33 34 35 **Commissioner Announcements**

36 None.

### 37 38 **Minutes**

39 B. Irwin motioned to approve the minutes of the December special meeting. M. Scholten seconded. The  
40 motion carried.

### 41 42 **Adjourn**

43 *B. Irwin motioned to adjourn. H. Garrett seconded. The motion carried. The Committee adjourned at 7:02 PM.*  
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