

PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, May 14, 2025

The meeting of the Project Review Committee was held remotely. B. Buermann called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

ATTENDANCE:

Commission: Scholten, Marietta ☒ ; Demars, Howard ☐; Buermann, Robert ☒; Irwin, William; Julia Callan ☐; Yvon Dandurand ☒.

Staff: Emily Klofft.

Guests: Taegen Kopfler (Encore Renewable Energy), Shana Louiselle (VELCO), Frank Ettori (VELCO)

Changes or Additions to the Agenda:

None.

Public Comment

None.

Minutes

H. Demars motioned to approve the minutes of the March meeting. Y. Dandurand seconded. The motion carried.

Project Reviews:

Section 248- ER Dunsmore, LLC

Project Details: 4.95 MW solar located at 2642 Dunsmore Road, St. Albans Town.

T. Kopfler reviewed the project site plan and details. The project is roughly 30 acres of existing farmland.

Y. Dandurand asked the number of landowners. T. Kopfler stated she would double check but believed it was around 11. Y. Dandurand asked what the ROW for the project was. T. Kopfler stated that the access road is owned by the landowner.

M. Scholten asked if any of the neighbors had concerns about the screening plan. T. Kopfler stated that there were no aesthetic concerns, they have been coordinating improvements to the access road with one neighbor.

B. Irwin asked if there were any comments from the St. Albans Town Selectboard. T. Kopfler stated they did not have any in the 45-day notice.

E. Klofft reviewed the draft project review sheet. The project access road crosses Jewett Brook, which means it will have impacts to the floodplain and wetlands. The project will add a new bridge to the access road. There are two identified archeological sites which will be protected, with an additional area which still needs to be

1 studied. The project has visibility from Dunsmore Road and Lower Newton Road, with some additional
2 deciduous screening on the northeastern side. There are expected impacts to prime agricultural soils and
3 potential impacts to grassland birds.

4
5 T. Kopfler noted that it was unclear whether the grasslands bird survey would be required, ANR had initially
6 indicated it, but Encore noted that the field had been used for corn crop over the past several years, not hay.
7 The archeological survey will be completed in the fall after harvest.

8
9 B. Irwin asked who the customer for the electricity is. T. Kopfler stated it was GMP.

10
11 The Committee reviewed the viewshed analysis. There were no major concerns.

12
13 B. Irwin asked about the improvements to the access over the brook. T. Kopfler stated that it would replace a
14 failed culvert with a bridge.

15
16 B. Irwin asked what the mowing plan for the project was. T. Kopfler stated that there would be sheep grazing
17 on the site.

18
19 *H. Demars motioned to find the project in conformance with the Regional Plan and not a substantial regional*
20 *impact provided that after completion of the additional required archeological study, the applicant completes*
21 *any mitigation required by the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation. M. Scholten seconded.*

22
23 B. Irwin recommended adding a condition that, if required by ANR, the applicant would complete a study on
24 impact to meadowland bird species.

25
26 *H. Demars amended his motion to add a condition that if required by ANR, the applicant would complete a*
27 *study on impact to meadowland bird species. M. Scholten seconded. The motion carried.*

28
29 **Section 248- VELCO**

30 *Project Details:* 45 day notice for a 25 MW increase in capacity of the Highgate Interconnection Facilities.

31
32 S. Louiselle stated that the project did not involve any construction activities. The project involved the
33 Highgate Interconnection Facilities which allows power to pass between HydroQuebec and the ISO-NE grid.
34 The federal presidential permit for the project allowed up to 250 MW of electricity, but the state certificate of
35 public good (CPG) only allows for 225 MW. Increasing this to 250 will allow VELCO to improve reliability during
36 load-shedding events.

37
38 B. Irwin asked if it would improve the SHEI issues. S. Louiselle stated that it would not, but it is not expected to
39 make it worse. E. Klofft noted that the distribution utilities including Green Mountain Power, did not have
40 concerns with the increase. The Committee, S. Louiselle and F. Ettori discussed the SHEI constraints with the
41 Committee. S. Louiselle noted that there was new VELCO mapping of the SHEI area.

42
43 *H. Demars motioned to find the project in conformance with the Regional Plan and not a substantial regional*
44 *impact. M. Scholten seconded.*

1 The Committee discussed the definition of substantial regional impact. B. Irwin stated the project would
2 impact multiple communities in the region.

3
4 *H. Demars amended his motion to find the project in conformance with the Regional Plan and of a substantial*
5 *regional impact. M. Scholten seconded the amended motion. The motion carried.*
6

7 **Staff Reviews**

8 **Section 248a: T-Mobile Northeast, LLC**

9 E. Klofft reviewed the project site plan. The project is an additional 70 sq. ft. of telecommunications
10 equipment and addition of a 10' x 20' pad with equipment on an existing 75' silo with existing
11 telecommunications equipment. The Committee did not have any concerns about the project.
12

13 **Section 248a: Mobile/248a-at 2181 US Route 7-Highgate**

14 E. Klofft reviewed the project site plan. The project is a net addition of 7 sq ft of telecommunications
15 equipment on an existing silo tower. The Committee did not have any concerns about the project.
16

17 **Updates**

18 E. Klofft provided an update on the Act 250 – Malone 75 Swanton Road Properties project.
19

20 **Commissioner Announcements**

21 B. Irwin requested introductions and selection of vice chair be added to the next agenda.
22

23 **Adjourn**

24 *H. Demars motioned to adjourn. M. Scholten seconded. The motion carried. The Committee adjourned at 7:38*
25 *PM.*