



## **Project Review Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, June 6, 2023 at 6:00 PM  
Via Zoom**

---

*Members present:* Jack Cunningham (Chair), Todd Davidson, Eric Stevens, Stephan Chait, Bob Bois, Jim Pinkerton, Ann Golob

*Guests present:* Peter Cortes, President and Oliver Brody, Member (Putney Rowing Club), Roger Jsaitas, Dummerston Zoning Administrator; Sam Carlson, Green Lantern Solar (Corey Hill Solar); Rex James, Solar Strategies (Barbers Park Solar); Andrea Seaton, Charma Bonanno and C.J. King (Grace Cottage Hospital)

*Staff present:* Alyssa Sabetto

---

Called to order at 6:00pm with a quorum present and chaired by Jack Cunningham.

1. **Welcome from the Chair**

2. **Minutes**

Minutes of February 7, 2023 meeting were approved with no changes by all members on a motion from Ann and a second from Jim.

3. **Public Comment Period**

No comments were made during this opportunity for members of the public to comment on non-agenda items.

4. **Putney Rowing Club boathouse – Dummerston –2W0317-6**

Address: 405 Dummerston Station Road

Land Use District: Productive Rural

Potential Policies (pages 12-51): Economy 9; Natural Resources 8, 9, 16, 17

Background: Construction of 38' x 100' boat house, with driveway and parking on the Connecticut River. This project will have a site visit and hearing on 6/15 and Alyssa will attend. ANR has concerns related to 1E (Streams) and 1F (Shorelines).

Discussion: Peter Cortes explained that the Putney Rowing Club has existed for 40-years and is a non-profit publicly open club. They are hoping to build a new boat house to replace a smaller boat house they have in Putney and they purchased this property to do that. The property is 150' at its widest, and mostly not that wide, extending about a half-mile along the River between the railroad tracks and the River.

This project considers both the boat house construction but also remediation of multiple areas of gully erosion on the property. There is one large gully that the Club wants to regrade and use as a ramp to a dock to get boats into and out of the River. The erosion is caused in part from a culvert under the railroad. The Club would use removable docks that would be on the River from April until early November and in storage otherwise.

The property is within the floodway of the Connecticut River. The boathouse is ~20' above the river elevation but the applicant did not know the elevation above the floodplain. ANR does not map River Corridor designated on the Connecticut. The building is not proposed to be floodproofed. ANR did not have comment related to floodplains and the town did issue a local zoning permit.

The foundation and the lower supports were constructed before the Club realized that there was Act 250 jurisdiction on the property as part of a previous subdivide. The Club purchased the property in November 2020 and did construction from early 2021 to October 2021. The applicant said that ANR has concerns related to buffer impacts and the preservation of a 100' buffer of natural vegetation and fluvial erosion concerns. Peter said that the property was already disturbed and the Club has cleaned up much trash and dumped material on the property, thus improving the situation for the River. They are addressing the erosion gullies with their own determined/calculated fixes of a catch basin and a buried culvert to the River. Bob asked if professional engineering studies were done as part of the stormwater design. Peter said he did the calculations himself and that he sized them based on the existing pipe under the railroad and the maximum flow through that pipe. The Club did not hire an engineer; the Club is designing and implementing their own stormwater measures without outside stormwater expertise. Peter said that no stormwater permits are required per ANR, though it was not noted whether a construction stormwater may be needed. They did get a stream alteration authorization from ANR.

The Committee wished to assure that stormwater concerns are satisfied with ANR and felt unsure based on the applicant's responses that the stormwater management was adequate. Eric and Bob had questions about the permissibility of the stormwater work they are proposing and were concerned about the stormwater management. There was unanimous agreement that the property is being improved through the Club's cleanup activities and the use of the property is reasonable from the perspective of the Regional Plan. Jim expressed that the applicant is 'improving the site and their use of the river is needed for recreation.' The Zoning Administrator said that ANR had approved the project in terms of stormwater and the Town has supported the project.

The Club cannot use the property as they intended without impacting the buffer, however projects regulated through Act 250 are required to adhere to 100' buffer regulations. The size and shape of the property prevent the boathouse from being located outside of the ANR required buffer. The applicant does seem to be trying to benefit the property, but the Committee was uncertain whether the stormwater management was adequate and permissible without professional engineering input or permitting. From the perspective of the Committee, what the applicant proposes is not out of line with the Regional Plan and supports outdoor recreation and tourism.

**ACTION:** Alyssa will attend the site visit and hearing and provide verbal testimony of the Committee's feedback about this project and its relation to the Regional Plan.

5. **Corey Hill Solar preferred site letter request – Rockingham – 23-1663-AN**

Address: 2 Corey Hill Road

Land Use District: Rural Residential, Productive Rural

Potential Policies (pages 12-51): Energy 1, 3, 11, 14, 15

Background: A proposal for a 500 KW solar panel array on property at the intersection of Corey Hill and Pleasant Valley roads. The applicant is seeking a preferred site support letter regarding the site, not the project.

This is a 3.25-acre site on a 21-acre parcel used for corn farming. The project would take down 25-30 trees greater than 40-feet will be cleared, which would impact visibility. Some visibility from Corey Hill Road and Pleasant Valley Road from about 500' away and visibility from 4 homes nearby. Visual mitigation is proposed through plantings.

Alyssa reviewed the draft Rockingham Town Plan update and found one relevant draft Town Plan policy: *Policy #3: Develop a set of criteria, based upon the guidance listed in “Rockingham’s Preferred Locations” section, to be used by the Selectboard, Planning Commission, and Windham Regional Commission for determining the preferred status of renewable energy generation sites.*

Alyssa could not locate a “Rockingham’s Preferred Locations” section and no mapping in draft Town Plan. ANR Atlas and WRC Energy Maps showed RTE concerns and agricultural soils. The Town and Saxtons River Village have issued preferred site letters.

Sam Carlson said that this part of the cornfield is low productivity and rocky. They had an environmental study and nothing was found of concern, though they have requested a waiver from ANR for one RTE species. They have done an archaeological study of the site with no concerns. They will be planting spruce trees and landscaping to fill in some gaps that will make the array invisible after several years. They will use underground power connections so no poles and wires. GMP has signed off on this project and approved its interconnection. Stephan asked about fencing and Sam said that the array will be fenced with agricultural fencing. Stephan asked why the transformer is outside the fence, and Sam explained that is needed by GMP for access. Bob asked if the site is in an exclusion area for energy production, and Alyssa said it is not. Bob asked about stormwater flow and Sam explained that the site is fairly flat and their engineers have not discussed stormwater yet. Jack reiterated the process and that we are just looking at the site for this letter, and we can discuss project specifics after the application is filed.

Bob motioned issuing a preferred site for solar, Ann seconded. All approved drafting the letter. Alyssa did ask about the possibility of not fencing the array, per another project they reviewed in 2022, and instead securing the inverters on the rear of the panels. Sam said that they need to fence the array for insurance purposes, but he will connect with Alyssa afterwards about this.

**ACTION:** Alyssa will draft and submit to the applicant a preferred site letter.

**6. 1 Barbers Park Solar preferred site letter request – Rockingham - 23-1654-AN**

Address: 1 Barbers Park Road

Land Use District: Productive Rural

Potential Policies (pages 12-51): Energy 1, 3, 11, 14, 15

Background: A proposal for a 500 KW solar panel array. The applicant is seeking a preferred site support letter. No written 45-day notice filed, only a site plan. Alyssa showed the site to the Committee.

Rex James said that the site is owned by Tim Allen, who owns Allen Brothers. This array would offset power from the Allen Brothers Market. There is an occupied rental house on the property, owned by Tim Allen, and that is the only home that the site is visible from. There is no visibility from outside of the site except from I-91 for a short span and they will do some vegetative mitigation for visibility. The soil on the site is sandy and not suitable for agriculture.

The array will be planted with clover underneath, so no mowing is proposed long term. The ground is level and the panels will be pile driven, so there are no stormwater concerns. The power will be used exclusively for Allen Brothers Market and other Allen Brothers businesses. The Town Selectboard and the Planning Commission have approved the site as a preferred site. The plans have been reviewed and okayed by Rebecca Chalmers of ANR wetlands. The array is proposed to be fenced.

Bob motioned approval of a preferred site letter; Todd seconded. All approved.

**ACTION:** Alyssa will draft and submit to the applicant a preferred site letter.

**7. Grace Cottage Hospital expansion – Townshend – Act 250 application not yet filed**

Address: 185 Grafton Road

Land Use District: Village

Potential Policies (pages 12-51): Land Use 1, 2, Economy 2, 3, 4, Human Services 42

Background: Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital is preparing for the construction of a 23,000 sq.ft. Primary Care Clinic on their campus, replacing two houses built in the 1840s, where 13 medical professionals provide more than 31,000 patient visits per year (up from 20,000 patient visits just four years ago). This has been identified as a Vital Project for the economic development of southern Vermont by CEDS (Southern Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, a partnership between the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation and Bennington County Regional Commission). Grace Cottage has applied for a Certificate of Need (CON) from the Green Mountain Care Board and, once the CON has been approved, they will be filing an Act 250 application. This discussion is an introduction to this project that will be formally reviewed in the future.

Andrea narrated and Charma shared a walk-through and exterior video showing the upgrade in a 3-D mock-up. Grace Cottage Hospital is a growing medical provider in the region. This expansion will allow for one or two new providers, but the point of this expansion is not specifically to grow but more to provide an adequate space for existing operations and providers. Right now, they are severely undersized for the providers and patients that they currently have, which means insufficient privacy needs for providers and having to repurpose small spaces. This new building will also increase efficiency and security. They have worked with architects to ensure it fits the architectural style of the Village of Townshend. There will be no loss of service during the renovation as things will be dismantled only when the replacement space is completed.

Bob asked about a nearby wetland buffer. Andrea said that they have a Garden of Grace memorial garden that will need to be relocated in that area. They are also taking down some tall pines that are a hazard to the structure. It was unclear if the garden will be relocated where the trees are being removed from. Andrea said they would do everything they could to keep the landscape as natural as possible.

C.J. said that US Congresswoman Becca Balint has supported this project with a one-million-dollar earmark in a house department of agriculture bill that is now being considered. The Townshend Selectboard supported the project in January.

Eric asked about negative pressure rooms. Andrea couldn't answer that for the expansion, but said that they are available at the hospital. The expansion will include one main entrance, and not three smaller entrances as is now the case, which enhances efficiency and security. Grace Cottage has a contract with the Sheriff's Office and they have a Sheriff on-site 9-5 Mon-Friday, because the off-site law enforcement is not nearby so response times are longer. Hunter North provides security at night. They are seeing an increase in mental health patients and combative patients, especially in the ER. Staff is also taking security trainings now. Grace Cottage is having a second community forum about this upgrade on 6/15. Grace Cottage is being featured in an upcoming issue of Vermont Business magazine.

**ACTION:** No action necessary at this time. The Committee will review this project after the Act 250 application is filed.

## 8. Recent Decisions and Updates

- Terwilliger Hill Rd 75kW three turbine wind project – Wardsboro - 23-0954-AN – 45-day notice filed 3/28/23. The developer did not return Alyssa's call to learn more.
- Meyer-Brown 40x60 steel building construction – Halifax - 2W1383 – permit issued 5/23/23
- Mad King Quarry – Londonderry – 2W1283-3 - Hearing Recess Order issued 5/23/23
- Mary Rafferty previous home construction above 2500' feet – 2W1382 – permit issued 4/26/23
- Manitou Green Cemetery – 2W1278-2 – Newfane – permit issued 3/13/23

- Discontinuation of ferric sulfate treatments in the former Hamm Mine pit lake and removal of treatment elements – Windham – 2W0551-3D – permitted 2/27/23

9. **Next meeting**

The next regularly scheduled meeting falls on July 4<sup>th</sup>, thus the Committee cancelled the July meeting and plans to next meeting August.

10. **Meeting adjourned at 8:10.**

---

Respectfully Submitted, Alyssa Sabetto, Senior Planner