



## **Project Review Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday December 3, 2024 at 3:00 PM  
via Zoom**

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*Members present:* Jack Cunningham (Chair), Bob Bois, Stephan Chait, Jim Pinkerton, Art Dufresne, Kathy Edgerly, Ann Golob

*Guests present:* Andy Cay (Integrated Solar)

*Staff present:* Alyssa Sabetto

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Called to order at 3:00pm with a quorum present and chaired by Jack Cunningham.

1. **Welcome**

2. **Minutes**

Minutes of November 6, 2024 meeting were approved with no changes on a motion from Bob and a second from Jim. All approved, with Ann abstaining because she was not present in November.

3. **Public Comment Period**

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

4. **Miller Farm Solar – Vernon - 24-2534-NM**

Address: land at 1732 Fort Bridgman Road, Vernon

Land Use District: Resource / Productive Rural

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

Background: Reissuance of a 45-day notice for the proposal of a 500-kW ground-mount solar array. The site is on a 275-acre parcel that includes the landowner's home and farm. The array will cover about 3-acres, with 800 new feet of access driveway, parking and support utility infrastructure covering an additional 2-acres. The reissuance moves the array 200-feet from the original proposal location. Original notice sent to the WRC on February 6, 2024. The Project Review Committee discussed this project at the March meeting and a preferred site letter was sent on March 13, 2024. On November 8, 2024 a new 45-day notice was sent out because not all parties were properly notified with the February notice.

Andy explained where the project is in process with the Public Utility Commission and there were only minor adjustments made to the project since March. The Town has re-reviewed the project and issued their joint letter of support for preferred siting on November 21, 2024. Alyssa asked Andy about how the land under the panels will be used and also about fencing of the project. Andy said they will hay the land under the panels, not regularly mow it, and cows will graze nearby with temporary fencing keeping them away from the array. Alyssa asked about when the site was deforested and Andy said that 20 acres were cleared in 2019 for a planned gravel pit expansion but that plan fell through. The family would like to operate a gravel operation in this area in the future but for now they are proposing it for solar.

Alyssa asked about who will purchase the power and Andy explained that Commonwealth Dairy will purchase all of it. The project has potential to be set up for a micro-grid to power the town office, emergency shelter, and elementary school during power outages, but at the moment that idea is pending improvements in battery technology. Alyssa asked about PFAs in the solar panels and Andy said they are not used in the panels. Bob asked about the designation of a nearby wetland that contains Black gum trees, a rare tree in this area. The Environmental Assessment suggested it be designated another rarer wetland type. Bob asked about if the RTE assessment had been completed, and Andy said it had been.

**ACTION:** Ann motioned that a preferred site support letter be sent. Bob asked that the letter include a request for ANR's consideration of the wetland type change suggested in the Environmental Assessment. Bob seconded the letter. All approved the letter with Bob's suggestion included. Alyssa will draft a letter and send it to Andy for their application.

**5. Review of draft Windham Regional Plan policies**

Discussion of comments to make related to Windham Regional Plan (WRP) policies shown on the draft website and in the additional separate policy materials that were shared with the Committee in November. The Committee discussed several policy change suggestions related to Land Use, Energy, Transportation, and Natural Resources. Some changes were specific and some were general. Ann and Alyssa both were unsure of what became of changes that have already been suggested as no feedback was given in the WRP update process on suggestions shared prior. Alyssa will write up and share all policy change suggestions with Matt Bachler for incorporation into the draft update. She will also ask Matt about why prior suggestions were not incorporated.

**6. Recent Decisions and Updates**

- Pinnacle Trail expansion – Athens – 2W1152-6 – permitted 9/9/24
- Composting facility upgrade – Brattleboro – 2W0511-11 – permitted 10/7/24

**7. Next meeting**

The next regularly scheduled meeting is Tuesday, January 7<sup>th</sup>. Determination of a need to hold that meeting will be made closer to that date and the Committee will be informed either way.

**8. Adjourned at 4:25**

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Respectfully Submitted, Alyssa Sabetto, Senior Planner