



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

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November 13, 2015

Philip M. Small, Esq.
Brown Rudnick LLP
185 Asylum Street, 38th Floor
Hartford, CT 06103

RE: **PETITION NO. 1181** – SolarCity Corporation petition for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need is required for the proposed construction and operation of a 4.93 Megawatt Community Shared Solar Photovoltaic Electric Generating facility located at 9 Stott Avenue & 292 Plain Hill Road, Norwich, Connecticut.

Dear Attorney Small:

At a public meeting of the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) held on November 12, 2015, the Council considered and approved the Development and Management (D&M) Plan submitted for this project on October 28, 2015.

This approval applies only to the D&M Plan submitted on October 28, 2015. Requests for any changes to the D&M Plan shall be approved by Council staff in accordance with Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies Section (RCSA) §16-50j-62(b). Furthermore, the project developer is responsible for reporting requirements pursuant to RCSA 16-50j-62.

This decision is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Council and is not applicable to any other modification or construction. All work is to be implemented as specified in the petition dated August 25, 2015, the D&M Plan dated October 20, 2015 and the Site Development Plan dated October 28, 2015.

Enclosed is a copy of the staff report on this D&M Plan, dated November 12, 2015.

Thank you for your attention and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Robert Stein
Chairman

RS/CH/lm

Enclosure: Staff Report dated November 12, 2015

c: The Honorable Deb Hinchey, Mayor, City of Norwich
John Bilda, Acting City Manager, City of Norwich
Peter Davis, City Planner, City of Norwich
Robert Miller, SolarCity Corporation
The Honorable Richard L. Matters, First Selectman, Town of Franklin
Ronald Chalecki, Zoning Enforcement Officer, Town of Franklin



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Petition No. 1181

SolarCity Corporation – 4.93 Megawatt Solar Project

Norwich, Connecticut

Development and Management Plan

Staff Report

November 12, 2015

On August 25, 2015, SolarCity Corporation (SolarCity or Petitioner, in development partnership with Brightfields Development, LLC (Brightfields) and the Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative (CMEEC), submitted a petition to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) for a declaratory ruling that no Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) is required for the construction and operation of a 4.93 megawatt (MW) Solar Photovoltaic Generating facility located at 9 Stott Avenue and 292 Plain Hill Road in Norwich, Connecticut. Pending the Council's decision of this petition, SolarCity submitted a Development and Management (D&M) Plan for the project dated October 20, 2015, and a Site Development Plan dated October 28, 2015.

Consistent with the Council staff's recommendations in the November 12, 2015 Petition Staff Report for the project, the D&M Plan contains the following items:

- a) **A final plan of site development to include specifications for the solar panels, supporting infrastructure, electrical equipment, equipment compound, access and maintenance roads, utility connections, and landscaping;**

The proposed solar field would consist of approximately 15,912 Trina Solar 310 Watt solar panels, each measuring approximately 64.95 inches by 39.05 inches by 1.37 inches. The panels would have an RBI Solar post-driven mounting system and individual panels would be placed at fixed 25 degree tilt to the south. The mounting assemblies holding the modules are built on I-beam foundations that are driven into the ground and then the rack is constructed on the posts. Once the rack is complete, the modules are bolted on to the rack.

The site would include six Solectria SGI utility scale inverters, of which four would be 500KW and two would be 750 KW. The inverters convert the DC power supplied by the panels into AC power that can be connected to the electric grid. The inverters would be mounted on four, small concrete pads with transformers that are connected to the grid via switch gear - two pads would have one inverter and one transformer, and two pads would have two inverters and one transformer. In addition to the four small concrete pads for the inverters, there would be one concrete pad on the southern side of the site that would hold 3 equipment cabinets, one of which would be for the batteries. The site's battery system would be a self-contained unit that would use sealed, rechargeable, lithium-ion battery cells. These batteries would be used for voltage regulation as well as "peak-shaving," eliminating the need for western orientation of the array. The battery system has its own transformer and would share the same interconnection switch gear as the proposed solar arrays. Protection systems are being engineered by the applicable utility company and will be implemented into construction plans once available.

The facility would be surrounded by a six-foot tall chain link fence, with two-inch mesh. Two 15-foot wide swing gates would be installed; one at the entrance to the southeastern portion of the site, and a second at the entrance to the western and northern portion of the site. The fence would be configured to keep the telecommunications tower access way free of obstruction.



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b) Construction details for site clearing, site phasing, grading, water drainage, and erosion and sedimentation controls consistent with the 2002 Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control, as amended;

The Site Development Plan includes erosion and sedimentation controls consistent with the 2002 Connecticut Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control. A construction phasing plan has been developed that specifies the clearing of 2.7 acres of woodland. Consistent with the spring/early summer seasonal clearing restriction, tree clearing will occur from August 15 to April 30 to avoid potential nesting birds. Once cleared, the logged trees would be chipped on-site and used to construct berms for use as a perimeter erosion and sediment control barrier. The wood chip berms will be installed down gradient of the proposed area prior to grubbing operations (primarily the west side of the site).

c) A final Drainage Report and associated site plans stamped by a Professional Engineer;

The site will be improved with a stormwater management system consisting of a crushed stone check dam/filtration berm backed by boulders, and two water quality basins formed with gravel berms backed by boulders on the west side of the site. The site plan has been developed to maintain existing sheet flow pervious flow patterns. The stormwater management system has been sized to maintain existing runoff rates from the site and provide groundwater recharge and treatment as recommend by the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Stormwater Quality Manual.

d) The Wetland Protection Program as provided in Petition Exhibit 2, Appendix G;

A wetland protection program was developed and provided. The wetland protection program consists of five components:

- Erosion and Sediment Controls;
- Contractor Education;
- Petroleum Materials Storage and Spill Prevention;
- Herbicide and Pesticide Restrictions; and,
- Reporting any incidents of sediment release into the nearby wetland to the Siting Council.

e) Construction work hours and days of work;

Construction is intended to be completed eighteen weeks after commencement. Work hours would be seven days a week, from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm.

f) The Wildlife Impact Mitigation Measures, dated August 2015;

Wildlife impact mitigation measures include the following:

- A narrow strip of land between the perimeter fence and forest edge would be mowed on a rotation basis every four to seven years, to allow the area to revert to late old field and create a "soft" ecotone, and also to prevent shading of the arrays
- Taking efforts to complete vegetation clearing work prior to the peak nesting period May 1st through August 15th, to avoid potential disturbance of breeding birds; or, if tree clearing has not been completed by May 1st, an avian survey may be conducted to determine if breeding birds would be disturbed.
- Avoidance of all activities within a quarter-mile of known occupied Northern Long-Eared Bat hibernacula, as well as avoidance of cutting down or destroying, or clear-cutting within a quarter-mile of, known occupied roost trees during the pup season of June 1st to July 31st.

g) Identification of an assigned environmental monitor for the project;

All Points Technology has been assigned as the environmental monitor for the project.

h) A facility decommissioning plan;

In accordance with the Site License Agreement, decommissioning will involve removal and disposal or recycling of all Project components. All recyclable materials will be transported to the appropriate nearby recycling facilities. Any non-recyclable materials will be properly disposed of at a nearby landfill. 95% or greater of the Facility's components will be recyclable.

i) The certification form for filling Wetland number 3 related to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Programmatic General Permit.

SolarCity provided a copy of the Category 1 Certification Form, dated October 16, 2015, as part of the Development and Management Plan.

Council staff recommends approval with the condition that approval of requested significant changes to the approved D&M Plan be delegated to Council staff in accordance with Section 16-50j-62(b) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. In accordance with that section, if advance written notice is impractical, SolarCity shall provide verbal notice of the changes and shall submit written specifications to the Council within 48 hours after the verbal notice.