



Darren O'Meara <omearasolar@gmail.com>

Re: Margo Avery Trust 297 Tucker Hill Rd, Norwich

1 message

Rod Francis <norwichvtplanner@gmail.com>
To: Darren O'Meara <omearasolar@gmail.com>

Wed, Jul 29, 2020 at 8:09 AM

Darren,

The Town has not needed a visual impact analysis for such a project since this Town Plan came into effect in March 2020.

The recent application from Norwich Technologies on Turnpike Road did include a visual impact analysis. This information may be available through the PUC (which means it would be in the public domain now). We don't hold the information because this part of the application was done to resolve issues with an abutter, the Town was not a party to the process, and therefore the work is not ours to share.

However, there are a few critical points to be made:

- The Turnpike Road site met the towns 'preferred site' status criteria
- The visual impact analysis and conclusions reached in regard to 'character of the area' used the so-called 'Quechee Test' which is NOT the threshold for analyzing visual impact in the Norwich Ridgeline Protection Overlay District

Rod Francis
Planning Director
Zoning Administrator
Town of Norwich

On Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 9:44 PM Darren O'Meara <omearasolar@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Rod,

I understand. Do you happen to have a similar visual impact analysis that has been submitted to the town in the past, that I could look at?

Thanks,
Darren

On Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 9:31 PM Rod Francis <norwichvtplanner@gmail.com> wrote:

Darren,
I am afraid that is not possible.

Even before covid-19 this would not be a solution. It is not a matter of my observation in the field.

You will need a technical visual impact analysis that demonstrates that any visual impact meets the standards set forth in the pertinent section of the Zoning Regulations I referenced. You can talk with your landscape architect about the specific methods used to conduct this work. There are companies that specialize in this work also.

It is up to you and the property owners to decide whether the project is viable without 'preferred site' status being conferred by the Town, and/or the expense of establishing that there is no meaningful visual impact.

Rod Francis
Planning Director
Zoning Administrator
Town of Norwich

On Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 9:03 PM Darren O'Meara <omearasolar@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Rod,

Thank you for sending this along. Could you meet me at the proposed site to determine whether the location of the array meets the intent of the Town's preferred site criteria? It is very well hidden, and sits below the ridgeline.

Thanks,
Darren

On Tue, Jul 28, 2020 at 2:52 PM Rod Francis <norwichvtplanner@gmail.com> wrote:

Darren,

I acknowledge receipt of your packet in the mail providing 45 day notice pursuant to 30 VSA Section 8010 and 248 and Public Utility Commission Rule 5.107 (B).

The Norwich Town Plan adopted March 7, 2020 contains the following policy on page 22:

3-2.h For solar generation projects sized from 15kW to 500kW the presumption is that all of Norwich meets the Public Utility Commission definition of 'preferred site', notwithstanding the existing areas of local concern including the Ridgeline Protection Overlay Area, Shoreline Protection Overlay Area and the historic village district as identified in the Norwich Land Use Regulations. (emphasis added)

As you can see from the accompanying map, the project is proposed for a parcel that lies in the Ridgeline Protection Overlay Area. The project is not located in an area of town where 'preferred site' status can be conferred.

The level of documentation provided prevents me from concluding that the development is not visible from a public road, or other standards as set out in the Norwich Zoning Regulations (NZR), as amended 2009 p29) These regulations may be downloaded here:

http://norwich.vt.us/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Norwich-Zoning-Regulations_Amended_07-01-09.pdf

Sincerely,

Rod Francis
Planning Director
Zoning Administrator
Town of Norwich

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