

**Town of Boscawen
ENERGY COMMITTEE
Boscawen Municipal Complex
FINAL MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, March 16th, 2022, 5:30 P.M.**

Members Present: Edward J. Cherian Jr— Chair.; Charles Niebling— Vice Chair; Gary Tillman, Nate Preisendorfer & Ex-Officio- Paul Dickey

Excused: Scott Maltzie-PHD

Guest Speaker: SunJet Energy, Paul Michaud-Michaud Law Group

Staff: Kellee Jo Easler— Planning and Community Development Director; Kearsten O'Brien- Deputy Planning and Community Development Director

Chair Edward Cherian opened the meeting at 5:30 P.M.

Mr. Gary Tillman motioned to accept the draft minutes as amended. Seconded by Vice Chair Charlie Niebling. All in favor. None opposed.

Mr. Gary Tillman requested one change on line 40, add a period after 'interested'.

Mr. Tillman requested one change on line 50, change 'sound' to 'sun'.

Mr. Niebling requested one change on line 118, change 'ONM' to 'O&M'.

PCD Director Kellee Easler requested one change on line 28, add 'back' after 'sending it' and replace 'Planning Board' with 'Energy Committee'.

New Business: Mr. Paul Michaud-Managing Attorney & Principal at Michaud Law Group practices law for solar projects all over New England. He put together a presentation to represent who they are and what they're thinking. Michaud Law Group represents three clients in this project; SunJet Energy: the developer, Tritec America's (a private solar company): the owner of the project and Solved Energy: the entity that constructs the project. Tritec Americas is based in Switzerland, and they built some of the first solar projects in Europe. Mr. Michaud said they are very dominant in Europe and South America. Tritec Americas has an American subsidiary and is investing over \$200 million into the New England region. Michaud Law Group has been working with them and SunJet Energy on various projects in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and the Caribbean. Tritec Americas have proven to build efficient projects which result in their success. They purchase the land and build the projects off their balance sheet. Solved Energy is the EPC contractor (Engineering Procurement Construction), one of the largest in the country that know how to build these projects efficiently. They also do the operation maintenance on these projects. Mr. Michaud said for the group net metering program, New Hampshire is still waiting for the tariff to come out. In Connecticut they have a similar program that allows up to a 5-Megawatt project. It is called virtual net metering which basically means you have subscribers.

If towns have the same service such as Unitil, they can subscribe to the solar system. Michaud Law Group is working with other entities within NH that are also Unitil customers. They are interested in a site in Boscawen because it is regional and very suitable for a solar system. It can bring clean energy to the whole area. Mr. Michaud said they are close to securing site control for the gravel pits. They are working with the owner now and it has over 100-acres. Michaud Law Group has their own civil and electrical engineers. Engineers complete a desk top analysis where they overlay the site for slopes and wetlands. They determined that the site in Boscawen can easily fit a 5-Megawatt project. In the future, depending on the connection, they could possibly expand to a 15-Megawatt project. They are submitting an application to Unitil and confirm if they can fit the site into the grid. If it is big enough, they could build a mini substation to help fit it into the grid. It must be large enough to support the cost of a small substation. The reason the gravel pits are a great site is they don't need to cut down trees, it is simple to bulldoze and create a nice grate for solar. It is also in a hidden area where the panels aren't visible to the public. It could bring substantial economic and green energy benefits to the Town of Boscawen.

Ex-Officio Paul Dickey asked if it benefits the Town and residence in any way. Mr. Michaud said Boscawen could be a partner in the project. Concord along with other towns are also interested in being a partner in this site project. Mr. Michaud said it would make a great regional green facility that could help bring clean green carbon free energy to the entire area. Ex-Officio Dickey asked what the cost would be for homeowners. Mr. Michaud said there is no answer yet because the Public Utility Commission hasn't put out the tariff. They haven't looked closely at the property tax situation. Tritac Americas has done a pilot with most towns even if their tax exempt so their tax base can benefit from it. A project this size has a considerable tax base provided. Tritac has done this program with other cities, and they've constructed, operated, and saved lots of money. Tritac has warehouses in Long Beach and Boston. They have enough equipment already purchased and sitting in the warehouses ready so it wouldn't delay any projects. Vice Chair Niebling stated for the record he is the most significant abutter for the property. His property is a 60-acre permanently protected conservation land on the backside. The property to his north is owned by Sarah Millard and is also protected by a conservation easement, permanently protected conservation land. Vice Chair Niebling reserved his rights to all comments on this site plan review process. Vice Chair Niebling referred to the diagram reflecting the crosshatch, green and red blocks where they're proposing to install the panels. It is not gravel pit; it is all completely forested. Mr. Michaud said they walked up on the hill today and it is open. They are instructing them to put it on the gravel pit but the reason they didn't is because you're not allowed to change the grades. The green down below in the gravel pit reflected on the diagram shows grades greater than 15%. They can bulldoze it and make it flat because it's a gravel pit. Vice Chair Niebling said they previously stated they were building it in the gravel pit and weren't going to have to remove any trees. Mr. Michaud said they physically walked the lower and higher levels and there were no trees. Vice Chair Niebling thinks they need to be sensitive to surrounding properties because it is a very significant development and a significant site disturbance. They need to be aware of the context of the property. To say there is nothing around it, is not accurate. Mr. Michaud said they saw nothing around the area when they did a walkthrough today, so he is going by his personal observation. Vice Chair Niebling said 5-Megawatts is roughly 25-acres of disturbed area. It is 145-acres, and they are only developing 25-acres of it. Mr. Michaud said they want to work closely with Boscawen because they think there is good and bad places for solar and they don't want to put it anywhere bad. They will resubmit the diagram with a GPS satellite so the Committee can see exactly where they are

planning to construct. Vice Chair Niebling said they are in discussion with a Hydro Facility owner in the community about a group net metering arrangement. Vice Chair Niebling said they can't use the same load that the municipality represents with two separate entities. Chair Edward Cherian asked the possibility of the low to moderate income community project. He asked if it's only an adder on top of a political subdivision. If they signed up with Hydro, they can't do a pilot net metering deal with the town. Mr. Michaud said they would focus on a low to moderate income community solar project while taking on other loads. There will be more than one town involved in this because of the size. Chair Cherian said there is also other load in the town that meet these requirements including the school district, county nursing home and county prison. Mr. Michaud would have to review the final tariff from PUC and if it is allowed, they will commit to Boscawen that they will do it. Mr. Nate Preisendorfer asked if individual homeowners can sign up for the program. Mr. Michaud said they are still trying to understand the program because there needs to be a Town plan submitted to PUC and they need to confirm that. If they can go down to that gradual level, they will but it is uncertain right now. Vice Chair Niebling asked what about Boscawen attracted them to this community. Mr. Michaud said the gravel pit that was already disturbed attracted them to Boscawen because it wasn't a farm or forest where they would need to disturb land. Their next step is interconnection. They are working with the landowner. Under NH rules, the landowner must submit the interconnection application, but they funded the landowner to do it. The landowner is submitting the application tomorrow. There was another purchaser at the site, but Mr. Michaud is not sure where that is going. There was an indication that it may open back up. If it opens back up, Tritec must purchase the site. The capacity handled on the distribution line will determine what size project they can take on. Once they determine the size, they will work with all the towns they can and Unitel, to potentially have them as part of the group. They would also need to seek permit approvals from the Town of Boscawen. Vice Chair Niebling asked PCD Director Kellee Easler if this would trigger the development of regional impact given the property abuts Salisbury. PCD Director Easler said it could and the Planning Board would send it to CNHRPC for their feedback. It would give the abutting community serving rights to comment on Site Plan Review. Mr. Preisendorfer asked where the OM would be based out of. Mr. Michaud said Solved Energy (the contractor) would hire a local operating maintenance company. He said if Boscawen has any recommendations on local OM companies, they would be open to them because they want someone who can fix problems within an hour of them arising. They also want to hire a local lawn maintenance company to maintain the land. Chair Cherian said the committee doesn't have a decision or recommendation on the project thus far. It would be up to the Planning or Zoning Board if needed. The Select Board approval would be needed for a pilot. Chair Cherian said the committee would be happy to review any updates going forward on the project.

Old Business: Ms. Stephanie Alexander worked on revisions to the Master Plan-Energy Chapter. Chair Cherian suggested doing another term via email to review the track changes on the PDF. The Committee will send final changes and rejections to Ms. Alexander before sending it to the Planning Board. At the next meeting the committee will finalize their comments for Planning Board. Chair Cherian will send the first email out tomorrow or Friday to start the thread.

PCD Director Easler said they haven't heard an update for Briar Hydro. She said Madeline was to contact her after her discussion with Concord. PCD Director Easler will send Madeline an email.

Chair Cherian was thinking of doing the Briar Hydro tour in April. Vice Chair Niebling will reach out to Briar Hydro to find out available dates. He said the school district may be interested in visiting the energy facility. If they confirm a date for Briar Hydro, they can focus on planning other tours. They need to find out the occupancy limit for tours. Tours are open to the committee members, but they are hoping to include the public. Geothermal is another touring opportunity. They would like to tour it when it is operating. The committee may try to tour Geothermal first.

Other Business: Vice Chair Niebling said the situation with SunJet is different because they're buying the land and developing the project. There is no competitive dynamic with the project because it is theirs. It won't work unless Sun Jet can find the load to justify the investment. The load does not have to be within the Town of Boscawen. PCD Director Easler said the site plan review isn't a utility who owns it. Chair Cherian suggested having it fall under Garden Variety Commercial Industrial development. Chair Cherian explained that the pilot would be a payment in lieu of taxes, they are not exempt. Boscawen could not deny Sun Jet a pilot.

Next meeting is Monday, April 11th, 2022, at 5:30 PM.

Vice Chair Niebling motioned to adjourn. Mr. Tillman seconded. All in favor. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner.