

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

TOWN OF BROOKLYN

P.O. BOX 356
CONNECTICUT 06234

March 5, 2020

Melanie A. Bachman, Acting Executive Director
Connecticut Siting Council
10 Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

RE: Petition No. 1310A – Quinebaug Solar, LLC petition for a declaratory ruling for the proposed construction, maintenance and operation of a 50 megawatt AC solar photovoltaic electric generating facility in Canterbury and Brooklyn, Connecticut

Ms. Bachman:

The Brooklyn Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) has received notice of the above petition and has received preliminary plans for the development of a fifty (50) megawatt solar generating facility in Brooklyn and Canterbury.

In a public opinion survey conducted in 2009 as part of the Plan of Conservation and Development update, energy sustainability ranked as one of the most important issues facing the Town of Brooklyn today.

The Brooklyn PZC wishes to express the following comments to the Siting Council regarding certain facets of the project.

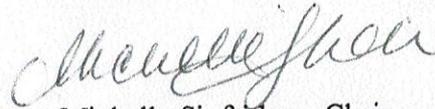
- Our main concern is for the preservation of the scenic view from Route 169, a federally-designated National Scenic Byway (one of only two in CT) as well as the second longest state-designated Scenic Road. The Brooklyn Plan of Conservation and Development states: “The Route 169 Corridor is the historic and cultural spine of Brooklyn, and maintaining its rural, scenic character is critical to the Town’s sense of place and identity.” A Corridor Management Plan (2016-2026) was recently completed for this National Scenic Byway. It is critically important that any impact on the Route 169 corridor viewshed be eliminated or minimized.
- In addition to the scenic views from Route 169, the views from the residentially-developed neighborhoods such as Almada Drive are also a concern. The residents of these neighborhoods will be directly impacted by the Quinebaug Solar project; therefore, it is also important to that any impact on these viewsheds be eliminated or minimized.
- Many stonewalls exist on the site that are not depicted in the Petition of Quinebaug Solar, LLC dated June 15, 2017 (Figure 25). The 2016 CT Lidar terrain data

- Many stonewalls exist on the site that are not depicted in the Petition of Quinebaug Solar, LLC dated June 15, 2017 (Figure 25). The 2016 CT Lidar terrain data (<http://cteco.uconn.edu/viewers/ctelevation/>) shows a more extensive network of stonewalls throughout the area of the proposed solar facility. The PZC requests that the stonewalls be properly inventoried and that the design of the solar panels and access roads seek to preserve as many of the remaining stone walls in place as possible. Where removal is necessary, the PZC requests that the stones be retained and stockpiled on-site.
- Cold Spring Brook is identified in the Plan of Conservation and Development as a wild trout stream. Wild trout populations require high water quality and cool temperatures for survival. The main concern for this important wildlife resource is the temperature and quality of the stormwater runoff water within the Cold Spring Brook watershed. The PZC requests an examination of the proposal to the wild trout population in Cold Spring Brook to minimize or eliminate impacts to this unique resource.
- Stormwater runoff in general is of concern with solar projects of this scope.
- The proposed perimeter fencing could interfere with wildlife movement. Blackwell Brook is identified in the Town plan as a significant wetland complex and shoreline habitat corridor. In order to minimize interference with wildlife movement, the perimeter fence should be evaluated for its ability to allow wildlife to pass.
- The project area is partially located on prime farmland soils and is further identified as an “active agricultural cluster” in the Town plan. The PZC requests that consideration be given to the possibility of future agricultural uses of the property. They further request that a creative solution be considered to allow an agricultural use to co-exist within the project area, compatible with the use as a solar generating facility.
- Vegetative screening is provided for the closest neighbors. Since the existing woods are almost entirely deciduous and do not provide screening year-round, additionally screening may be required. Species should be carefully selected to provide best screening that will not disrupt the native ecology of the area. Native evergreen species are preferred.
- The PZC requests that the use of any segment of Rukstela Road, particularly the unpaved portions, be kept to a minimum during the construction phase.
- Fire safety within the project area is another concern of the Commission and our community. Every reasonable effort should be made to prevent the occurrence of fires associated with the solar equipment, and access for first responders must be a consideration in the design of the project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important project.

If you have any further questions, please contact Jana Butts Roberson, AICP, Brooklyn Director of Community Development at 860-779-3411 x. 14.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michelle Sigfridson".

Michelle Sigfridson, Chair
Planning & Zoning Commission

CC:

Brooklyn Board of Selectmen

Quinebaug Solar c/o Nextera Energy (Aaron Svedlow, Scott Busa)

Tighe&Bond (Briony Angus)