

1 STATE OF CONNECTICUT
2 CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL

3
4 Docket No. 492

5 Gravel Pit Solar application for a Certificate of
6 Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for
7 the construction, maintenance, and operation of a
8 120-megawatt-AC solar photovoltaic electric
9 generating facility on eight parcels generally
10 located to the east and west of the Amtrak and
11 Connecticut Rail Line, south of Apothecaries Hall
12 Road and north of the South Windsor town boundary
13 in East Windsor, Connecticut and associated
14 electrical interconnection.

15
16 VIA ZOOM AND TELECONFERENCE

17
18 Public Comment Hearing held on
19 Thursday, November 12, 2020, beginning at
20 6:30 p.m. via remote access.

21
22 H e l d B e f o r e:

23 ROBERT SILVESTRI, Presiding Officer

24
25 Reporter: Lisa L. Warner, CSR #061

1 **A p p e a r a n c e s :**

2
3 **Council Members:**

4 **ROBERT HANNON**

5 **Designee for Commissioner Katie Dykes**
6 **Department of Energy and Environmental**
7 **Protection**

8
9 **DANIEL P. LYNCH, JR.**

10 **MICHAEL HARDER**

11 **EDWARD EDELSON**

12 **JOHN MORISSETTE**

13
14 **Council Staff:**

15 **MELANIE BACHMAN, ESQ.**

16 **Executive Director and**
17 **Staff Attorney**

18
19 **MICHAEL PERRONE**

20 **Siting Analyst**

21
22 **LISA FONTAINE**

23 **Fiscal Administrative Officer**
24
25

1 **A p p e a r a n c e s: (Cont'd.)**

2
3 **For Gravel Pit Solar:**

4 **PULLMAN & COMLEY, LLC**

5 **90 State House Square**

6 **Hartford, Connecticut 06103-3702**

7 **BY: LEE D. HOFFMAN, ESQ.**

8
9 **Also present:**

10 **AARON SVEDLOW, North Light Energy, LLC**

11
12 **Public Speakers:**

13 **JASON BOWSZA, First Selectman, Town of**

14 **East Windsor**

15 **DOUG KING**

16 **ROBERT URSO**

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23 ****All participants were present via remote access.**

1 MR. SILVESTRI: This remote public
2 hearing is called to order this Thursday, November
3 12, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. My name is Robert
4 Silvestri, member and presiding officer of the
5 Connecticut Siting Council. Other members of the
6 Council are Robert Hannon, designee for
7 Commissioner Katie Dykes of the Department of
8 Energy and Environmental Protection, John
9 Morissette, Edward Edelson, Daniel P. Lynch, Jr.,
10 and Michael Harder.

11 Members of the staff are Melanie
12 Bachman, executive director and staff attorney;
13 Michael Perrone, siting analyst; and Lisa
14 Fontaine, fiscal administrative officer.

15 As all are keenly aware, there is
16 currently a statewide effort to prevent the spread
17 of the Coronavirus, and this is why the Siting
18 Council is holding this remote public hearing, and
19 we ask for your patience.

20 If you haven't done so already, I ask
21 that everyone please mute their computer audio
22 and/or telephone at this time.

23 This is a continuation of a remote
24 public hearing that began at 2 p.m. this
25 afternoon. A copy of the prepared agenda is

1 available on the Council's Docket No. 492 webpage,
2 along with the record of this matter, the public
3 hearing notice, instructions for public access to
4 this remote public hearing, and the Council's
5 Citizens Guide to Siting Council Procedures.

6 This hearing is held pursuant to the
7 provisions of Title 16 of the Connecticut General
8 Statutes and of the Uniform Administrative
9 Procedure Act upon an application from Gravel Pit
10 Solar for a Certificate of Environmental
11 Compatibility and Public Need for the
12 construction, maintenance, and operation of a
13 120-megawatt-AC solar photovoltaic electric
14 generating facility on eight parcels generally
15 located to the east and west of the Amtrak and
16 Connecticut Rail Line, south of Apothecaries Hall
17 Road and north of the South Windsor town boundary
18 in East Windsor, Connecticut. The application was
19 received by the council on July 31, 2020.

20 The Council's legal notice of the date
21 and time of this remote public hearing was
22 published in the Journal Inquirer on September 30,
23 2020. Upon this Council's request, the applicant
24 erected signs, one near the proposed access
25 entrance at Apothecaries Hall Road, and one near

1 the proposed access entrance directly north of
2 Plantation Road so as to inform the public of the
3 name of the applicant, the type of the facility,
4 the remote public hearing date, and contact
5 information for the Council.

6 This remote public comment session is
7 reserved for the public for those who signed up in
8 advance to make brief statements into the record.
9 Public statements are not subject to questions
10 from the parties or the Council, and members of
11 the public making statements may not ask questions
12 of the parties or the Council. Public statements
13 will become part of the record for Council
14 consideration. Additionally, written comments may
15 be submitted by any person within 30 days of this
16 public hearing.

17 As a reminder to all, off-the-record
18 communication with a member of the Council or a
19 member of the Council staff upon the merits of
20 this application is prohibited by law.

21 I wish to note that parties and
22 intervenors, including their representatives,
23 witnesses and members, are not allowed to
24 participate in the public comment session.

25 I also wish to note for those who are

1 listening and for the benefit of your friends and
2 neighbors who are unable to join us for this
3 remote public comment session that you or they may
4 send written statements to the Council within 30
5 days of the date hereof by mail or by email, and
6 such written statements will be given the same
7 weight as if spoken at the remote public comment
8 session tonight.

9 Please be advised that any person may
10 be removed from the remote public comment session
11 at the discretion of the Council.

12 We ask each person making a public
13 statement in this proceeding to confine his or her
14 statements to the subject matter before the
15 Council and to avoid unreasonable repetition so
16 that we may hear all of the concerns you and your
17 neighbors may have. And please be advised that
18 public comments will be limited to three minutes
19 per participant. Also please be advised that the
20 Council cannot answer questions from the public
21 about the proposal.

22 A verbatim transcript of this remote
23 public hearing will be posted on the Council's
24 Docket No. 492 webpage and will be deposited at
25 the East Windsor Town Clerk's Office and the South

1 Windsor Town Clerk's Office for the convenience of
2 the public.

3 Please be advised that the Council does
4 not issue permits for stormwater management. If
5 the proposed project is approved by the Council,
6 the Department of Energy and Environmental
7 Protection stormwater permit is independently
8 required. The Department of Energy and
9 Environmental Protection could hold a public
10 hearing on any stormwater permit application.

11 Before I call on members of the public
12 to make a statement, I request the applicant to
13 make a very brief presentation to the public
14 describing the proposed facility.

15 And I believe, Mr. Svedlow, would you
16 be doing that this evening?

17 MR. SVEDLOW: Yes, sir.

18 MR. SILVESTRI: Very good. Please
19 proceed.

20 MR. SVEDLOW: Excellent. Good evening.
21 My name is Aaron Svedlow. I hope you're all doing
22 well tonight. I'm with Gravel Pit Solar, and I'm
23 just going to introduce the project and tell you a
24 little bit about our company.

25 Gravel Pit Solar is a 120 megawatt

1 proposed solar facility that will connect to the
2 existing Eversource transmission lines on site.
3 The project is located between Apothecaries Hall
4 Road and the South Windsor town line. The project
5 is being developed by D.E. Shaw Renewable
6 Investments, or DESRI for short. DESRI is a
7 leading owner/operator of wind and solar
8 facilities across the U.S. from Hawaii to
9 Massachusetts. DESRI owns and operates two
10 existing projects in Connecticut, Tobacco Valley
11 Solar in Simsbury at 26 megawatts, and Fusion
12 Solar in Sprague at 20 megawatts.

13 The Gravel Pit Solar team consists of
14 expert engineers, scientists and planners, and we
15 have drawn on their expertise and our own
16 experience to design a project that minimizes
17 impacts to sensitive natural resources in the host
18 community. In particular, DESRI has incorporated
19 the lessons we've learned at Tobacco Valley Solar
20 and Fusion in the development of GPS and the
21 design of the facility.

22 The Gravel Pit Solar project is
23 particularly exciting for Connecticut and the New
24 England region because it accomplishes a number of
25 goals. Gravel Pit Solar will general low-cost

1 energy to help Connecticut and New England meet
2 its renewable energy portfolio standards and
3 provides new generation capacity to the regional
4 grid.

5 Gravel Pit Solar will be sited on a mix
6 of brownfield property, the former gravel mines,
7 and farmland. And we are proposing to implement a
8 number of innovative soil restoration and
9 preservation measures throughout the facility to
10 improve soil quality.

11 And last, we have been working closely
12 with the relevant state agencies, the Town of East
13 Windsor, and the project's neighbors to design the
14 project to minimize impacts to the host community
15 and maximize economic benefits for the town.

16 One of the benefits of the project that
17 we've heard a lot about and from some of you on
18 this call, is a reduction in dust, noise and truck
19 traffic that will be accomplished by closing the
20 gravel pits. And by fencing the properties, we
21 will reduce the illicit ATV activity that has
22 become a nuisance to the neighbors. Thank you.

23 MR. SILVESTRI: Thank you. We will now
24 call on First Selectman for the Town of East
25 Windsor, Jason Bowsza. And I hope I pronounced

1 that correct.

2 MR. BOWSZA: You did, sir. Just give
3 me one moment, please, to put my earbuds in.

4 MR. SILVESTRI: Very good. Thank you.

5 MR. BOWSZA: Thank you. And thanks for
6 indulging me. I have a toddler at home, and it
7 would be quite disruptive to everybody if I didn't
8 have these in.

9 So first and foremost, I'd like to
10 thank the Siting Council for providing the
11 opportunity to provide comments on this project.
12 I've submitted written comments earlier today that
13 I ask to be adopted as my formal testimony, but I
14 would just highlight a couple of points for the
15 benefit of the Council that I think are important
16 to the town.

17 First, as Mr. Svedlow says, this
18 project, as proposed, solves a long-standing
19 attractive nuisance issue in town that has been,
20 just because of the sheer scope and scale of the
21 subject properties, we haven't been able to
22 curtail otherwise. That's a point that I hear a
23 lot from residents in and around the area
24 expressing their frustration with some of those
25 illicit activities that happen. And having a

1 neighbor like Gravel Pit Solar occupying that
2 space I think will go a long way towards resolving
3 that which we haven't been able to resolve
4 otherwise.

5 East Windsor is a community that I
6 think is very supportive of renewable energy
7 projects, especially when the projects make sense
8 for us. Certainly not all of these projects are
9 created equal, and there are circumstances that
10 need to be considered by communities when deciding
11 whether or not to be supportive of them. Gravel
12 Pit Solar makes a lot of sense for us, and mostly
13 that has to do with where it is. It is going to
14 have, as proposed, it will have very little impact
15 on abutting property owners. It's mostly, the
16 subject parcel is mostly out of sight with some,
17 only a few instances where that isn't the case.

18 A project like this is going to be a
19 quiet neighbor. They're not going to put a lot of
20 burden on municipal services. They're going to
21 install their projects, and then they're going to
22 be nice and quiet for the duration of their stay.
23 And we look forward to that. It's not going to be
24 something that becomes an eyesore. It's not going
25 to be something that becomes an attraction of

1 sorts. It's going to be largely hidden and out of
2 the way.

3 I would say that Gravel Pit Solar,
4 Mr. Svedlow and his team, have been nothing but
5 cooperative and communicative with us since the
6 first time they walked in my office almost a year
7 ago. They have repeatedly offered, and we have
8 accepted the offer, of them coming to various land
9 use boards in town and to the Board of Selectmen
10 to provide updates on the project, where it stands
11 at the moment, soliciting feedback and input from
12 stakeholders who in a not state sited project
13 would have input in the role. They've gone out of
14 their way to be inclusive of the thoughts and
15 concerns of our land use team here in town, both
16 from a staff level and from a volunteer level, and
17 I thank them for that.

18 I was listening on the evidentiary
19 hearing, I guess, earlier today, and I don't
20 recall if this was answered or not, but I don't
21 think there has been an issue raised by our
22 Planning and Zoning Commission or by our Wetlands
23 Commission that hasn't been addressed by the folks
24 at Gravel Pit.

25 So I know my time is short, and I'll

1 save some if there's any questions. And again,
2 I'll reference you to my written testimony, but I
3 would just end by saying that the town is very
4 supportive of this application and hope for a
5 favorable determination from the Council.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for
7 your comments. Our next speaker is Robert Urso.
8 And I see Robert is on the screen.

9 Mr. Urso, I did see you, and then you
10 kind of disappeared. Are you still with us?

11 (No response.)

12 MR. SILVESTRI: I'm not sure if there's
13 a technical issue on his end, but let me move to
14 Doug King, and I will come back to Mr. Urso, if he
15 reconnected.

16 Mr. King, are you with us?

17 MR. KING: Do you hear me?

18 MR. SILVESTRI: I could hear you, yes.
19 Thank you.

20 MR. KING: Thank you very much. I'd
21 like to say I've lived in town for 50 years, 40
22 years at my present address which is 341 Rye
23 Street. I abut the property. I have had numerous
24 conversations with Aaron. And I think it's a good
25 project for the town and for our people. It

1 brings us a good tax base with very little load on
2 our infrastructure.

3 I speak, you know, I think, for a lot
4 of people in town that we'd rather see this than
5 housing or any other type of development that
6 would happen here, you know, we would definitely
7 support the project in any way we can.

8 MR. SILVESTRI: All set?

9 MR. KING: Yes, sir.

10 MR. SILVESTRI: Very good. Thank you,
11 Mr. King.

12 And again, I'll go back to Robert Urso.
13 I did see him earlier on my screen. It
14 disappeared.

15 Attorney Bachman, do you have him at
16 all as a person that's on this call?

17 MS. BACHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Silvestri.
18 I literally just admitted Mr. Urso from the
19 waiting room, so his audio should connect
20 momentarily.

21 MR. SILVESTRI: Very good. Thank you.
22 Mr. Urso, if you could hear us?

23 MR. URSO: Yes, I can.

24 MR. SILVESTRI: Very good. It's your
25 time, sir.

1 MR. URSO: Okay. Thank you very much.
2 First of all, I'd like to thank the Council for
3 giving me the opportunity to give you some input
4 that I feel very confident about.

5 I am a resident of South Windsor. I've
6 been here approximately 50 years. And over the
7 years there's been many hearings, et cetera, over
8 the truck traffic that came from the gravel pit
9 out in that way previously. It was Manchester
10 Sand and Gravel many years ago, and on the roads
11 of Rye Street, Windsorville Road, Graham Road.
12 And they tried to curtail the truck traffic there
13 through the neighborhoods for the safety of
14 children over the years. And I think now that
15 hopefully this particular occupant, you know,
16 applicant goes forward, I think this will answer
17 many residents' wishes over the years. That's
18 number one.

19 Number two, I think that the project is
20 going in the right direction as far as being green
21 with clean energy. And as the First Selectman
22 said, you're going to have a nice tax base there
23 for the town, and they're not going to require any
24 town services either. So I am in favor of this
25 application. Thank you.

1 MR. SILVESTRI: Very good. Thank you
2 also for your comments.

3 Ladies and gentlemen, that was the last
4 of the speakers who had signed up in advance. So
5 the Council announces that it will continue the
6 evidentiary session of this public hearing on
7 Tuesday, December 1, 2020, at 2 p.m., and that's
8 via Zoom remote conferencing.

9 A copy of the agenda for the continued
10 remote evidentiary hearing session will be
11 available on the Council's Docket No. 492 webpage,
12 along with the record of this matter, the public
13 hearing notice, instructions for public access to
14 the remote evidentiary hearing session, and the
15 Council's Citizens Guide to Siting Council
16 procedures.

17 Please note that anyone who has not
18 become a party or intervenor, but who desires to
19 make his or her views known to the Council, may
20 file written statements with the Council until the
21 public comment record closes.

22 Copies of the transcript of this
23 hearing will be filed at the East Windsor Town
24 Clerk's Office and the South Windsor Town Clerk's
25 Office.

1 I hereby declare this hearing
2 adjourned. I thank you all for your
3 participation, and I wish you a good evening.
4 Thank you.

5 (Whereupon, the public comment session
6 adjourned at 6:47 p.m.)
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1 CERTIFICATE OF REMOTE HEARING

2
3 I hereby certify that the foregoing 18 pages
4 are a complete and accurate computer-aided
5 transcription of my original stenotype notes taken
6 of the PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING HELD BY REMOTE
7 ACCESS IN RE: Docket No. 492, Gravel Pit Solar
8 application for a Certificate of Environmental
9 Compatibility and Public Need for the
10 construction, maintenance, and operation of a
11 120-megawatt-AC solar photovoltaic electric
12 generating facility on eight parcels generally
13 located to the east and west of the Amtrak and
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16 in East Windsor, Connecticut and associated
17 electrical interconnection, which was held before
18 ROBERT SILVESTRI, Presiding Officer, on November
19 12, 2020.
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24
25

Lisa Warner

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