Petition No. 1385
Cobb Road LLC
Partial Development &Management Plan
20-1 Short Hills Road, Old Lyme
DRAFT Staff Report
March 5, 2021

On January 6, 2020, the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) issued a Declaratory Ruling to Cobb Road, LLC (CR), pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §4-176 and §16-50k, for the construction, maintenance, and operation of an approximately 1.95 megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) solar photovoltaic electric generating facility at 20-1 Short Hills Road, Old Lyme, Connecticut. In its Declaratory Ruling, the Council required CR to submit a Development and Management Plan (D&M Plan). On May 8, 2020, CR submitted a partial D&M Plan (Partial D&M Plan I) for site clearing activities; civil work including, but not limited to, the construction of the gravel access drive; construction of stormwater management features for the site; and establishment of vegetative cover at the site to allow vegetation to become established before construction of the posts, racking, modules, inverters, and the perimeter fence. Partial D&M Plan I was approved by the Council on May 26, 2020. Partial D&M Plan I work was completed as of December 2020. On January 8, 2021, CR submitted a second partial D&M Plan (Partial D&M Plan II) for the equipment installation, i.e. the remainder of the project.

The project will be on an approximately 120-acre parcel zoned Rural Residence RU-80. The parcel contains a single-family residence and a small cabin located in the northeastern and southeastern corners of the subject property, respectively. The site consists of primarily undeveloped land with an Eversource electric distribution right-of-way (ROW) located directly to the east that runs in a north-south direction.

The Declaratory Ruling requires the following information to be included in the D&M Plan:

a. A final site plan including, but not limited to, final solar panel layout, access roads, electrical interconnection, fence design, and equipment pads;

The final site plans illustrate the site design, solar array arrangement, access roads, electrical interconnection route, perimeter fencing, and equipment pads.

The site design was modified by reducing the total number of solar panels from 7,704 to 7,566. The original configuration consisted of 7,704 panels of 390 Watts each. In Partial D&M Plan II, the configuration is 2,340 bifacial panels of 395 Watts each and 5,226 monofacial panels of 405 Watts each. Thus, the inclusion of higher wattage panels allows for a net reduction in panel quantity while keeping the total DC MW approximately the same at 3 MW. The AC capacity will increase slightly to 1.975 MW.

The solar field will occupy a 12.69 acre area[1]. Inter-row spacing is approximately 13.5 feet. The width of the panel rows is approximately 12 feet. The solar arrays will be fastened to ground mounted racking that will be attached to screw anchors.

The site will be accessed via the existing gravel access drive that originates at the Great Oak Road cul-de-sac and extends north to the site. As part of Partial D&M Plan I, a new approximately 1,644-foot long and 20-foot wide gravel access has been constructed along the southern, western and northwestern portions of the site's perimeter between the solar arrays and the fence. The new access drive includes turnaround areas in the northwestern and southwestern portions of the drive.

[1] Total disturbance area of 12.69 acres will remain comparable to the original 12.72 acres.

A seven-foot high chain link fence, compliant with the National Electrical Code, will enclose the solar array area. A four to six inch wildlife gap will be included under the fence.

A 30-foot by 15-foot concrete equipment pad will be located in the eastern portion of the fenced facility.

CR has included its electrical interconnection route which will run underground from the equipment pad to reach a new riser pole to the east. A total of six new poles (including the riser pole) will be installed to facilitate the interconnection of the solar facility to existing overhead Eversource electrical distribution located in the ROW directly southeast of the solar array area.

b. Copy of DEEP General Permit;

CR submitted a Notice of Permit Authorization, dated May 20, 2020, from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), Water Permitting and Enforcement Division of the Bureau of Materials Management and Compliance Assurance issuing a General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater and Dewatering Wastewaters from Construction Activities for the Project.

c. Construction site plans that comply with DEEP-approved Stormwater Pollution Control Plan that include, but are not limited to, site clearing, grading, site phasing, construction laydown areas, erosion and sedimentation controls, and details regarding construction-related environmental mitigation measures;

Partial D&M Plan II includes construction related details as well as environmental mitigation measures.

CR's Stormwater Pollution Control Plan was submitted to DEEP as part of the Stormwater Permit review. The Stormwater Permit was issued on May 20, 2020. See Section (b) above.

Approximately 12.33 acres of tree clearing plus grubbing was already performed as part of Partial D&M Plan I.

Grading of the array field was part of the civil work that was also performed as part of Partial D&M Plan I.

The staging and construction laydown area will be located directly east of the solar array area. This location will later become part of a pollinator habitat area. See Section (e) below.

The project includes a "no disturbance" wetland buffer of not less than 100 feet.

A total of four grass-lined stormwater infiltration basins were installed west of the western fence line as part of Partial D&M Plan I. The stormwater basins will be used as temporary sediment traps. Baffles will be installed within the sediment traps.

Total amounts of cut for the site will equal about 2,876 cubic yards, and total fill will be approximately 2,266 cubic yards resulting a net cut of 610 cubic yards.

The site plans include details of erosion and sediment (E&S) controls including the use of filter socks, silt fence, temporary sediment traps, and a construction vehicle tracking pad.

Environmental mitigation includes on-site environmental monitoring; wetland, vernal pool, and species protection measures; and a Petroleum Materials Storage and Spill Prevention Plan to prevent and mitigate on-site fuel spills. See Section (d) below.

d. Final Wetland and Vernal Pool Protection Plan;

CR included its final Wetland and Vernal Pool Protection Plan which includes, but is not limited to, erosion and sedimentation (E&S) control measures; contractor education; plans to prevent and mitigate on-site fuel spills; protective measures for herpetofauna; and reporting requirements.

All Points Technology (APT) will serve as an on-site environmental monitor to ensure that project-specific best management practices are properly implemented. APT will provide contractor training, barrier inspections, species identification and relocation, monitoring of E&S controls, and inspection reporting.

e. Post-construction restoration plan for all disturbed areas of the site;

Perimeter E&S controls are already in place and will be removed after final site stabilization.

The solar array area and basins were hydroseeded as part of the Partial D&M Plan I. Significant grass growth has already been observed at the site.

A 1.23 acre area along the eastern and southern limits of the project will be seeded with a Pollinator Habitat Seed Mix.

Any areas that are disturbed during construction activities will be re-seeded as part of final post-construction seeding and/or otherwise stabilized in compliance with the DEEP Stormwater Permit.

f. Post-construction site maintenance and vegetation management plan; and

The facility will be monitored 24 hours per day, 7 days per week for system performance. Any alerts and/or alarms received will be reviewed, and technicians will be dispatched to the site as necessary.

Site inspections will be conducted twice per year for site components, infrastructure and vegetation. Site maintenance and repairs would occur as necessary.

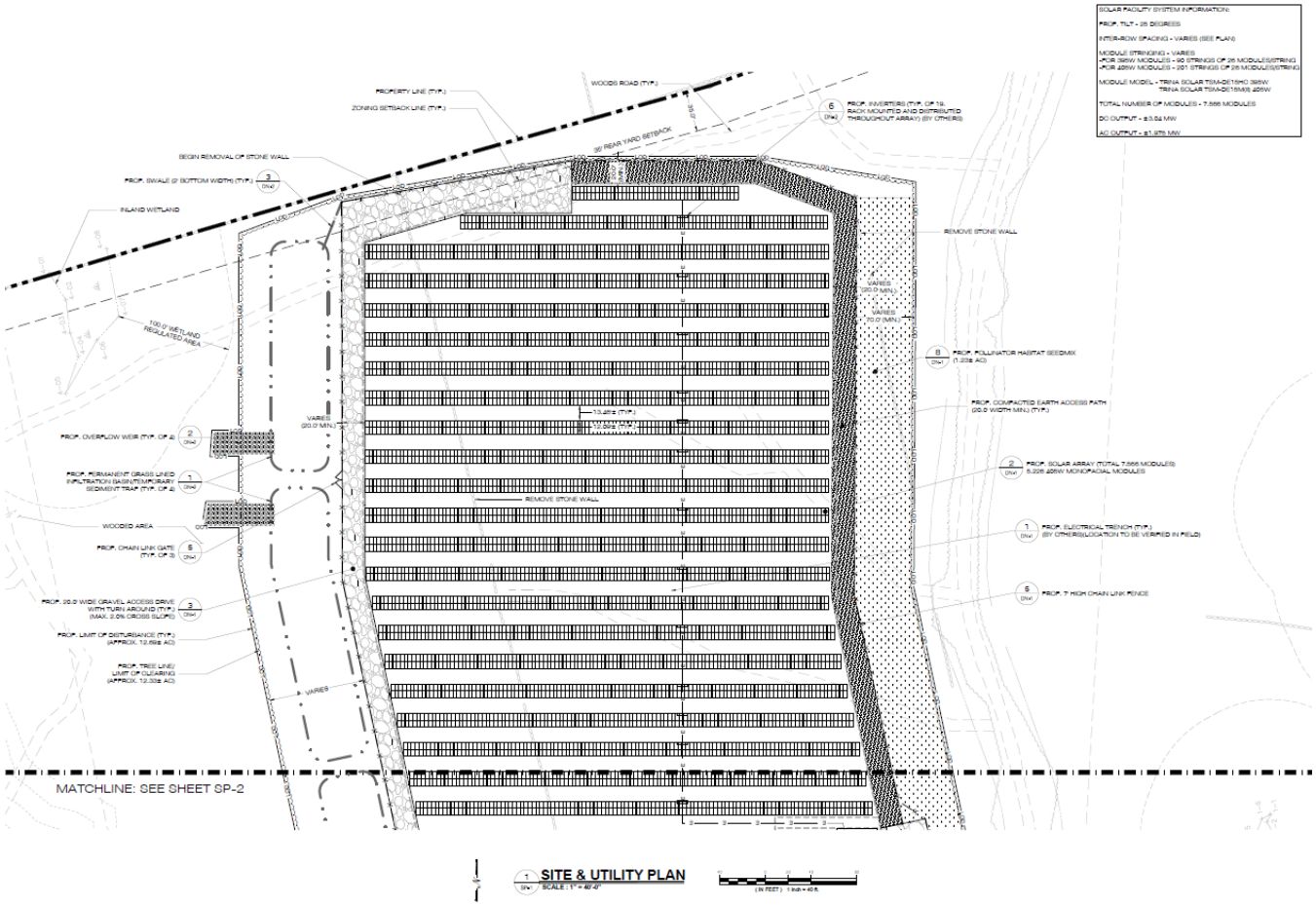
The stormwater management system will be inspected twice annually for damage including rilling and erosion; sediment acculumation; and to confirm there is no blockage of outlet control weir.

Vegetation around and under the solar arrays will be mowed twice per year. The pollinator habitat will be mowed once per year at the end of the growing season.

g. Contact information for construction contractor.

The construction contractor and contact information for the project has been provided.

Site Layout – Sheet 1 of 2



Site Layout – Sheet 2 of 2