

TOWN OF  
EAST MONTPELIER, VERMONT  
PLANNING COMMISSION

Zachary Sullivan, Chair  
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April 15, 2021

Holly R. Anderson  
Clerk of the Commission  
112 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05620

Re: Application of rb Technologies, LLC for a certificate of public good for a 44.2 kW solar net-metered electric power system (Case 21-1054-NM)

Dear Ms. Anderson,

The Town of East Montpelier Planning Commission is submitting this comment regarding case number 21-1054-NM.

The proposed solar array falls within East Montpelier's designated village zone, and it will be placed at the effective entrance to the village zone as one approaches on Route 14 from the south. Because of this, the Planning Commission has an interest in the criteria of 30 V.S.A. §§ 248(b)(1) – Orderly Development and 248(b)(5) – Aesthetics. The combination of the fact that this array will be close to the largest size envisioned as a “smaller net-metering project” (10-50 kW) in the Town Plan (p. 86) and the fact that it is in this strategic location means that this project will have a significant impact on an area identified as a significant cultural resource (Town Plan, p. 90), care will need to be taken to mitigate the project's impact on this area.

The town has an interest in maintaining orderly development because this array will take up a potentially buildable lot in an area specifically identified for development in the village, and aesthetics is a concern because this property marks the edge of the village and serves as the entry to it. Because solar arrays have long lifespans, the town has an interest in ensuring that mitigation measures promised by the applicant will also be honored by any future owners.

At the same time, the town plan specifically states that “All electric customers in the town should have a reasonable opportunity to offset their power usage using PV arrays adjacent to their homes or businesses – with due consideration of the views from local roads and neighboring property owners” (Town Plan, p. 86). This project will be used to offset power use to the applicant's business, and the array will be located on-site.

To address these competing interests, we request that this project be approved with conditions. The following conditions will allow the project to move forward while protecting the town's

interests in developing East Montpelier Village according to the Town Plan and Village Master Plan and relating to the 30 V.S.A. §248 criteria identified above:

Aesthetics:

1. **Maintenance of screening plantings:** plantings put in place to mitigate the visual impact of the array shall be maintained as long as the array is in place. Any replacement plantings shall be native species.

Orderly Development

2. **Decommissioning:** the applicant and any future owners should be required to decommission the project at the end of its life, returning the land to open space or developable land if the land has not been developed by that time (for example if a building was constructed on the site and the array moved to the roof).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zachary Sullivan', written in a cursive style.

Zachary Sullivan, Chair

East Montpelier Planning Commission