



Civil Engineers • Land Surveyors
Land Use Planners • Environmental Consultants

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April 21, 2021

Jim Lamphere, Town Planner
Town of Hopkinton
Thayer House
482 Main Street, 2nd Floor
Hopkinton, RI 02833

Subject: Response to Comments
Major Land Development – Master Plan Application for Stone Ridge at Hopkinton
Palmer Circle (Plat 11 Lot 47A)
Hopkinton, Rhode Island

Dear Mr. Lamphere:

Cherenzia & Associates, Ltd. (Cherenzia) has reviewed the above-referenced review comments letter from Crossman Engineering dated April 5, 2021, and offers our responses to these comments below. Revised documents based on these comments are included with this resubmittal and are listed below:

1. Twelve (12) copies of the following:
 - a. Project Narrative prepared by Cherenzia & Associates; Ltd. dated April 2021.
 - b. Soil Report prepared by Avizinis Environmental Services Inc., dated January 29, 2021.
 - c. Wildlife Habitat Assessment prepared by Mason & Associates; Inc. dated April 14, 2021.
 - d. Major Land Development Project Plan Review Analysis prepared by Pimentel Consulting; Inc. dated April 18, 2021.
 - e. Noise Impact Assessment prepared by ESS Group, Inc. dated April 21, 2021.
 - f. Site Lighting Cut Sheet and Figure
 - g. Hopkinton Conservation Commission Letter dated April 7, 2021. (provided 4/7/2021 to Town Planner via email from Harvey Buford)
2. Twelve (12) full size (24"x36") copies and twelve (12) reduced (11"x17") copies of each of the following:
 - a. Master Plan Civil Plans (24"x36") prepared by Cherenzia & Associates, Ltd. titled, "Stone Ridge at Hopkinton" Sheet C-1, C-2, FIG-3, & FIG-4, revised April 20, 2021 and "Existing Conditions Plan", prepared by Cherenzia & Associates, Ltd., Sheet 1 of 1, revised January 13, 2021.
 - b. Landscape Plan (24"x36") prepared by Traverse Landscape Architects. titled, "Stone Ridge Solar Farm" Sheet L0.1 through L12.0, dated April, 2021.

The following items were previously submitted but have not been revised. Copies can be provided if required.

1. Completed Owner Authorization Form
2. Completed Application Notification List
3. Completed Master Plan Checklist
4. 500 Foot Abutters List.
5. 500 Foot Abutters Map.
6. Landscape Narrative.
7. Fiscal Impact Statement dated March 25, 2021.
8. Master Plan Stormwater Evaluation prepared by Cherenzia & Associates; Ltd. dated March 2021.

CROSSMAN ENGINEERING REVIEW COMMENTS:

1. **Checklist Waivers:** *The Applicant is seeking waivers from the following Master Plan checklist items:*

- *Construction Schedule*
- *Proposed Grading*
- *Stormwater Design (Plans & Computations)*
- *Soil Testing*
- *Lighting*
- *Architectural Schematic Drawings, Floor Plans, Exterior Elevations*

Response to Comment: A proposed Master Grading Plan, Soil Testing results, and Lighting Plan are included with the updated submittal. A Master Plan Stormwater Evaluation was previously provided. Construction Schedule and architectural drawings will be provided at preliminary plan stage.

Other items normally provided but not received include a Noise Study, Operations and Maintenance Manuals and Decommissioning Cost Estimates.

Response to Comment: A noise study is provided with this submittal. Operations and Maintenance Manuals and Decommission Cost Estimates will be provided at Preliminary Plan.

- *Checklist Item B.59 (hazardous materials). The response to comments indicates that no hazardous materials or batteries will be kept on site. A notation is recommended on the Plan to document the reply.*

Response to Comment: Design Note 6 has been added stating that the proposed building shall be used for storage of solar panels and other related materials of the solar facility, no batteries or other hazardous materials shall be kept within the building.

- *In regards to the **Stormwater Design**, a conceptual analysis is provided to demonstrate the intent to meet standards. As final design progresses, the applicant should also make sure that they address the cold-water discharge standards of the RI Stormwater Design Manual. At this time, we can only comment that when the design is performed, that local and State standards must be satisfied. We recognize the designer's intent to conform to standards but subsequent submissions will need much more detail.*

Response to Comment: All applicable local and state standards, including RIDEM cold-water discharge requirements shall be addressed at the preliminary plan level drainage

design. The full stormwater design will be submitted to RIDEM for review prior to Preliminary Plan submittal to the town.

2. **General Comments:**

- *On Page 11 of 20 of the Major Land Development Project Plan Review Analysis there is a statement that the solar panel development area has been reduced to 77 acres, on Page 3 of 5 of the Project Narrative there is a statement that the solar facility consists of a 91.7 acre fenced area and the Open Space Plan calls for a fenced area of 81.31 acres. The final fenced solar area should be confirmed and all impact narratives updated.*

Response to Comment: The unclear area in the Plan Review Analysis has been removed from the report. (this was the area of the solar panel area not including access drives or stormwater areas) The area of the fenced solar area is 91.7 acres. The Open Space Plan has been revised to include a total fenced area and the legend has been rearranged so the fenced solar/perimeter drive area (81.33 acres) and the fenced solar area (10.34 acres) are near each other so it is clearer that they are both part of the fenced area.

- *Minor item: It is recommended to combine the multiple Plan Sheets into one plan set with sequentially numbered sheets.*

Response to Comment: The civil plans have been combined into one planset. The landscape plans remain a separate planset.

- *The MW (ac/dc) of the facility should be identified on the Plans.*

Response to Comment: Design Note 7 has been added to the plan indicating that the solar facility has a capacity of 23.5 MW AC.

3. **Existing Conditions Plan:** *The submission includes a Class I Limited Perimeter Boundary Survey and a note states the topography was compiled from RIGIS LIDAR mapping. For final design, we recommend that the accuracy of the wetland flag locations, stream locations, site features and topography be verified and certified by a professional land surveyor.*

Response to Comment: Appropriate verification and certification will be provided for final design.

4. **Site Plans:**

- *The Typical Solar Layout Insert shows a 15-foot-wide crushed stone access drive. We understand that access is subject to Fire Marshal review but we recommend that a 20-foot access drive with adequate turning radius be provided to meet standard fire lane requirements.*

Response to Comment: The site plans have been updated to have a 20-foot access drive around the solar facility.

- *The Plan calls out "Approximate Narragansett Trail" on the site and Note 5 states that existing trails are present on the property and shall be located for future permitting. We recommend confirmation of their significance and if others have rights or easements to those trails prior to authorizing relocation.*

Response to Comment: The portion of the Narragansett Trail that once ran on this private property has not been traveled since the trail was bisected by Route 95. The significance of the trail on the property is now cultural in nature. There is an ongoing effort by the AMC to restore the Narragansett Trail south of Route 95. Over the last few years, the AMC has been working with neighboring communities and landowners to restore and relocate portions of the trail to once again achieve continuity of the trail. The applicant is very supportive of this effort and has worked tirelessly to design a plan that achieves balance between the trail restoration effort and the by-right solar project. The applicant has hosted the Hopkinton Conservation Commission (HCC) and Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) for 4 site walks of the property to confirm both location and significance of the Narragansett Trail on the property. Both of those organizations shall be providing their feedback on the project directly to the Hopkinton Planning Board.

- *Design Note 2 states that site topography will largely remain unchanged except for existing slopes greater than 25% and that grading plans will be provided at the Preliminary Plan submission. Town Checklist Item B28 does require proposed topographical changes. This requirement allows the Board to better understand the proposed land disturbance, therefore we recommend that the data be provided.*

Response to Comment: A Master Grading Plan has been included with the submittal showing proposed grade changes.

- *The Plan should identify the proposed use of the new 15,000 Sf building.*

Response to Comment: Design Note 6 has been added to the plan indicating the use of the proposed building.

- *A historical cemetery is noted on the plan. A dedicated access easement to the cemetery is recommended.*

Response to Comment: Based on the Rhode Island Historical Cemetery Commission Handbook dated December 2014, access will be provided to persons who are heirs or descendants of the persons buried in the cemetery.

5. **Chapter 246 Non-residential Photovoltaic Solar Energy Systems (PSES):** *We understand that the applicant will seek permission to delay submission of the noise, O&M and decommissioning but we do recommend that the any item that could impact abutters be included at the Master Plan phase, such as the Noise Analysis.*

Response to Comment: A noise study is provided with this submittal. Operations and Maintenance Manuals and Decommission Cost Estimates will be provided at Preliminary Plan.

6. **Landscape Plans:**

- *The LA Plans indicate a Limit of Disturbance (LOD) within portions of the 100 ft residential setback. Section 2 on Sheet L11.0 provides an example. The project narratives stated that the 100 ft separation would remain in a "present, natural vegetated state" (page 12 of 20, Major Development Project Plan Review Analysis). A clear delineation of all proposed clearing needs to be highlighted.*

Response to Comment: The Limit of Disturbance (LOD) is shown on all sheets. A LOD is not shown for the proposed trail. The trail location shall be coordinated with the Appalachian Mountain Club to meander around existing significant sized trees and minimize any required clearing. The LOD for the trail will be the minimum necessary to construct a 4-foot-wide trail. The Project Plan Review Analysis has been updated to state that the 100-ft area will remain mostly undisturbed with the exception of the area within approximately 15 feet of the proposed fence which will consist of a relocated stone wall and proposed plantings. Minimal disturbance for the installation of the hiking trail will also be within the 100-foot area.

- *LA Details call for a 14 ft separation from fence line to solar arrays. The Civil Plans call for a 15 ft crushed stone drive and we recommend a standard 20 ft fire lane, pending review by the fire official.*

Response to Comment: Plans have been updated to have a minimum of 20 foot access road around the solar facility.

- *Since final grading design is not provided, the LA Plans will need to be updated at the Preliminary Stage.*

Response to Comment: Updated Landscaping Plans will also be provided at Preliminary Plan to be consistent with the updated civil plans.

7. Wildlife Habitat Assessment Comments:

- *The report states that existing stone walls provide habitat for various species and will be preserved in situ or relocated on site. Therefore, the Plans need to address which walls will remain, which will be relocated and the relocated position.*

Response to Comment: Stone walls that are remaining, being relocated, and the relocated location have been colored on sheet C-2 of the site plan.

- *The report states a 12-inch gap will be provided at the bottom of the chain link fence but public safety officials typically require a maximum 6-inch gap to minimize trespass.*

Response to Comment: The report has been updated to identify a 6-inch gap.

8. Wildlife Habitat Assessment Comments: *We understand that the commission previously requested the following and it is unknown if their concerns were addressed:*

- *The applicant was requested at the Pre-Application meeting to have AMC flag their trail centerline which would be more accurate than the location from USGS maps.*

Response to Comment: The existing trails have been located during several site visits with Conservation Commission members. Not all trails could be located because they have been overgrown and are no longer identifiable. The plans have been updated with GPS locations collected.

- *The applicant was requested at the Pre-Application meeting to locate the stone structures that make up the ceremonial stone landscape on the property.*

Response to Comment: Several site visits have been performed with Conservation Commission members on the property to locate stone structures. Most of the structures

were found along and south of the east-west leg of the Narragansett Trail. Based on coordination with the Conservation Commission, the project was reduced in scope to leave this area undisturbed and preserve the portion of the trail in that area. A letter from the Hopkinton Conservation Commission is included describing their review of the project.

- *The applicants should research the legal aspects of established trails across private properties and on conservation easements or buffer areas to ensure that they are protected.*

Response to Comment: Refer to comment 4 bullet 2 related to Narragansett Trail.

I trust that these responses adequately address the comments received. Should you have any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 401-596-7747.

Sincerely,



Sergio F. Cherenzia, P.E.
President