



LANDSCAPE BUFFER MEMORANDUM

To: James Lamphere, Town Planner
Town of Hopkinton

From: Lynda Rogers, Landscape Architect
Douglas Allam, PE

Date: August 24, 2020

Re: Memorandum to Memorialize Landscape Site Meeting for Frontier Road Solar

Per a request by Revity Energy, Crossman Engineering attended a site meeting on August 18, 2020 at the Proposed Frontier Road Solar Farm project in Hopkinton, Rhode Island to discuss proposed landscape revisions by the applicant to the Planning Board by John C. Carter & Company, Inc., Landscape Architects.:

The following is a summary of the items discussed at the site meeting regarding the treatment of existing plants on the plans submitted for permit, sheet 1 of 4, dated April 17, 2020:

AREAS DESIGNATED FOR “SELECTIVE CLEARING:

1. Existing trees and understory vegetation are to remain in their existing state along the street frontage (Maxson Hill Road).
2. The heights of the existing trees are to be maintained at a height determined by a solar matrix estimated by Revity Energy, LLC using appropriate scientific methods. The purpose of this matrix is only to reduce or prevent shading onto the proposed solar panels, particularly in areas to the north of the existing tree line. Accordingly, the height of the existing vegetation shall decrease with approaching distance to the panels.
3. Understory plants are to remain in their existing state throughout the “selective clearing” areas.
4. In the areas of tree height maintenance, existing evergreen trees will particularly remain in place, undisturbed to the greatest ability, so that a natural evergreen buffer shall advance in natural succession.
5. Existing evergreens shall be transplanted from other disturbed site locations as necessary for consistent screening from the street frontage (Maxson Hill Road).

August 24, 2020
Frontier Road Solar Project
Hopkinton, RI
Page 2 of 3

6. Trees are to be removed and maintained by a licensed arborist to promote health and to keep the above-mentioned area to the proposed height.
7. Dripline protection shall be placed along the existing tree border in anticipation and preparation of the grading for the proposed berms.

PROPOSED BERM AREAS:

1. Understory plants shall remain and be supplemented to encourage naturalization of the berms' outward faces.
2. Selective clearing is to be executed to maintain the above mentioned area to the proposed vegetative height.
3. The berms are to receive a minimum of 4" screened loam, and hydroseeded with Allen's Seed Store's Conservation Mix on slopes at a rate of 7 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft. to prevent erosion, and maintained to the desired height acceptable for the health and establishment of the grass.

Allen's Conservation Mix:

25% Perennial Rye
25% Creeping Red Fescue
25% Annual Rye
17% Tall Fescue
5% Kentucky Blue Grass
1% Colonial Bentgrass
1% Red Top
1% White Clover

4. The fence shall be placed on the berm in a manner consistent with the planning board's requirements.
5. The overall view of the solar field should effectively be screened from street views by the proposal. The berm should ultimately become covered in native plants for camouflage.

COMMENTS

A primary unknown is that since the height of the existing trees along the buffer (front yard setback) were not identified on the cross-section, the extent of tree cutting within the selective clearing areas (front yard) is not known. The PSES Requirements, Section C.1, paragraph 2 (page 6) was debated at the most recent Planning Board Hearing and we understand that the Town Solicitor indicates that this section prohibits any clearing within the front, rear and side yard setbacks, "unless explicitly approved by the Planning Board". Therefore, a more exact tree removal proposal is needed for the Board's understanding of the proposal.

Miscellaneous recommendations include:

August 24, 2020
Frontier Road Solar Project
Hopkinton, RI
Page 3 of 3

1. On Landscape Plan Sheet 1 of 4, the Barrier Construction Notation refers to solid wood fence but the legend indicates that all fences will be chain link.
2. On Landscape Plan Sheet 1 of 4, the legend identifies “Area of Selective Clearing”. It would be best to clarify the intent of “selective clearing”.
3. On the cross-sections, areas with only a chain link fence should show a sight line that can go through the fence, as opposed to being at the top of the fence.
4. On the Shade Analysis Detail, the notation (bullet 1) leaves the applicant with sole discretion to remove vegetation and add trees. The Town’s involvement is recommended.
5. Change the seeding rate from 20-25 lbs per acre to 7 lbs per 1000 sf for the slope seed mix.
6. Denote the promotion of native shrubs and groundcover with annual selective clearing on the outside berm face.
7. Add a seeding detail and notes reflecting the addition of a minimum 4” depth loam, jute mesh or other necessary treatments for the berm’s lawn establishment, and timing for hydroseeding.
8. The Energyscape solar low/slow grow mix needs seeding detail, rates and associated notes.
9. Where transplanted trees are used for buffering requirements, a two year replacement guarantee note should be added to the plan. Change the transplanting cut-off date from June 15 to May 15.
10. Dripline protection needs to be denoted on the plan, and in place prior to construction. Heavy machinery or equipment should be prohibited from areas within the dripline protection zone.
11. Consider the use of *Ilex opaca*, American Holly, 2 – 2 ½” caliper, B & B in some areas in lieu of Green Giant *Arborvitae* in planting area “B” for better deer resistance.
12. *Arborvitae* with extensive deer damage should be replaced at the town’s discretion.
13. As much as feasible, the preferred buffer would be to leave the vegetation, including trees, in the yard/buffer areas, build the earthen berm at the yard/buffer edge, place native shrubs on the public view side of the berm and add staggered row of evergreens on top of berm, along fence.