

## Town of Dublin Energy Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 10, 2024

7 PM at Town Hall, ground floor

In attendance: James Finnegan, Blake Minckler, Jack Munn, Susan Peters (Select Board), June Brening, JB Mack (Southwest Regional Planning Commission), Jason Cooper (SWRPC), John Kondos (Clean Energy NH).

**Dublin Transfer Station - capped landfill.** Jack explained that Novis Engineering has looked at the site (wetlands, slope, etc.) using maps and aerial photography. A ground solar array could tie into the 3-phase power lines, which have unused capacity. The capped landfill itself is quite small, and they have suggested including some adjacent land for a larger array. Within the overall Town parcel, Novis has identified four possible sites that could be combined. The potential impact on natural resources (including woodlands, wetlands, wildlife corridors) and abutting properties must be considered.

JB Mack explained that SWRPC is focused on identifying development opportunities on Brownfields sites including municipal landfills. A solar array could be any size. An array under 500 kilowatts would tend to be behind the meter (connected to a building).

The EPA has funding available to help with Brownfield assessments as an incentive to build on damaged land rather than on green space. There is some technical work they are willing to pay for including: geotechnical study of waste management; stormwater analyses; electrical infrastructure - how protected from landfill gas; vegetation and other control; and other aspects.

The EPA can provide grant assistance with feasibility studies. Grants are available until September 2026. It is a competitive program. Our project seems to be eligible but is not a shoe-in. The EPA wants to see a successful redevelopment project and tries to determine whether the community is organized enough to get this done. It is important to define the project as best you can. There is a nomination process, application, and public engagement process. Towns and individuals can nominate a brownfields project to the Brownfields Advisory Committee (BRAC) which includes members from the Monadnock Economic Development Corporation, a bank, and others. Applicants need to provide basic info about the project and property on the nomination form.

The SWRPC can assist with the nomination process. It would work for the nomination to come from the town of Dublin. SWRPC wants to do what's in line with our goals. They have agreed to survey all the landfills and determine their potential. The Dublin landfill was capped in 1984; has no liner and some drainage mitigation; one well is showing PFAS. The DES has a lot information on our landfill but not a lot of info on the surrounding area which could include up to 7 acres or more.

John commented that our site has great promise, with the grid connection a huge asset. It is harder to sell a smaller system to an investor. It is important to consider what would be an attractive project for a developer. There is a great need for more municipal solar projects.

A one megawatt array would be large enough to attract developer interest in a lease, under which the Town could get revenue/income from the property - plus contribute clean energy. There is a 10% Federal adder for brownfields as an incentive for investors. Use of Brownfields funds could be restricted to the landfill site. If we are interested in a larger array, we would need to talk to the EPA to determine whether having a brownfield component is enough (as part of a larger array).

Next steps

- Talk to the Dublin ConCom about scheduling a joint meeting to get their input.
- JB will email some links including best practices for siting solar on municipal landfills
- Role of SWRPC - can advise on public engagement plus help with mapping our natural resources. Can get us initial info to understand the site better including surface to bedrock; wildlife habitat/corridors; wetlands; slopes (want 3% or less), geology. Every site has particular characteristics. We would need fencing and/or natural screening of electrical components. Aesthetics are extremely important.
- Schedule SWRPC to come and talk about how they can help all the Dublin Boards
- EPA Grant Funding - nomination process. It shouldn't cost the town money to study this. We should seek nomination when we can convince them we have a good project - after some community engagement where we have a sense whether there is community support. Shoot for spring 2024 for community engagement. Feasibility study, site survey, Environment Assessment - some could be paid for by EPA. Dublin has never used SWRPC for a brownfields assessment - so that's in our favor.
- Public engagement - Be as transparent as possible. Formulate a decent concept before going to the public. We would need to sell this to the town as a "low impact industry" and show the projected revenue (lease; taxes) - premature to estimate now.
- Investors will do their own financial analysis; there are many incentives for investors
- Decision-making process won't happen quickly, it's long road over a couple year period.

John and SWRPC are developing a list of developers who might be interested in doing capped landfills - including identifying the size projects they are willing to do. For 200 kW arrays, they don't expect much interest. For a 1 megawatt array (minimum of five acres), they expect a few developers would be interested. In Dublin, the array could be three acres but would likely need five acres with taking down trees for sun exposure.

**Grant Funding for Small Municipal Solar Projects.** John Kondos explained that State grant funding for small municipal solar projects is still in flux. The Town match may change from 20% to 50%, except the low income town match would be 5%. The grant process is in draft, and it may be late winter when the application process is finalized.

**Energy Capital Reserve Fund warrant article.** Susan will share the draft language with the committee for review and comment.

**November 29, 2023 minutes**

On motion made by Blake and seconded by Jack, the minutes of the November 29, 2023 meeting were approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan W. Peters