

July 29, 2024 meeting – solar ordinance

-Brad, Will, Sam

Chat with Peter Whitney from Bold Coast Energy

-Bold Coast is a consulting business – retails energy consulting – helps with electric and natural gas procurement including renewables

-Distributed generation (up to 50 acres) – large scale solar – smaller than utility scale solar (1000+ acres)

-5-10 acres of panels is typical 1-2 MW for Bold Coast Energy

-250 KW is about 1 acre

-Have to do storm water management, topography, NEPA, etc. review with the state

-Good solar ordinance (what he sees in bigger cities i.e. zoning):

- location – zoning – need a big chunk of land and the lands needs to be cheap

- Needs to be industrial zone (lease rates are about \$1000 per acre annually)

- Needs to be close to power line

- Set backs – 25 or 50 ft setback is common – leave as much natural vegetation buffer as possible – 5 acre array will have 8 acre cleared area – clear 100 ft to the south for example – what happens to topography? Sloping south or north? – panels are 4-12 ft off the ground

- Decommissioning plan – by state law there has to be a decommissioning plan – has to be DEP permit – bond in the amount needed – state reviews every 2 years based on salvage value, etc. – one concrete pad 12x20 – need to remove that and other wires, mounting, etc.

-Access to interconnection and utility – you need to connect to a distribution facility, not transmission

-35-40 years for typical lifetime of array – most of the money is in the panels – these sites will probably be reused when the panels are replaced at the end of the lease

-Cities typically reference state law for decommissioning – developer should have to provide copies of decommission plan to the city that it sends to the state

-Probably state incentives (Dirigo solar is doing this) – contaminated site so there is more concern there

-biggest hurdle is the interconnection – very expensive and time consuming – you need to be right on three phase power to interconnect for it to be cost viable

-Peter is already planning a 1 MW project on 4 acres on Water Works Dr in Biddeford

-What about heavy metals coming off solar panels? He has heard this concern before, but he has never had a problem with – no restrictions on disposal

-Some are 3 pages in length, Columbia Falls and Jonesboro have a robust plan, detailed ordinance that you might see in a bigger city – Biddeford has the resources to manage this, most places do not

-State doesn't want solar in agriculture land – towns are pushing back on clear cutting –

-100 vs 1 MW projects should be treated differently – treat them by area not MW – 0-10 acres of project area is small scale, 10-50 acres, more than 100+ acres (utility scale)