

January 5, 2017

Walter Ramsey
Town Planner & Conservation Agent
Town of Montague Massachusetts
One Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA 01376

Re: **Eversource Energy - Montague Solar Project**
Special Permit
Environmental Impact and Site Plan Review

Dear Mr. Ramsey:

Weston & Sampson on behalf of Eversource is hereby providing supplemental information to the Town of Montague Planning Board, as required by the Special Permit Application. According to Section 5.2.6(c) of the Montague Zoning By-Laws, Solar Energy Facilities exceeding 3 acres require a Special Permit from the Planning Board. According to Section 5.2.6(d) of the Montague Zoning By-Laws, Solar Energy Facilities exceeding 3 acres require an Environmental Impact and Site Plan Review from the Planning Board.

Eversource and Weston & Sampson met with Town of Montague representatives on September 9, 2016. During the meeting, the town indicated that a Special Permit and Site Plan Review would be necessary. We are submitting the enclosed Special Permit Application for review and consideration by the Town of Montague Planning Board. The plans and descriptions of the project presented herein contain details and design elements incorporated from comments from the various Town representatives.

The proposed solar PV site is located on parcels: 24-0-23, 24-0-24, 24-0-25, and 28-0-01, and will be accessed from Lake Pleasant Road. The four parcels are owned by Rocky River Realty Company and are located in the Industrial (ID) District, along the south side of Millers Falls Road. The proposed post driven solar PV system has an approximate size of 6.15 MW (DC). The system is composed of approximately 18,090 panels. The PV system would occupy 22.7 acres of land within an enclosed security fence and an additional 2 acres will be cleared to eliminate shading of the propose arrays.

Weston & Sampson is also planning to file a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) for review by the Town of Montague Conservation Commission. A qualified wetlands resource specialist has conducted a reconnaissance of the site and wetlands were not observed. The proposed project area is not located within the 100' upland review area of any offsite wetlands.

As part of the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) permitting process, a Conservation and Management Permit will be submitted to The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species program (NHESP). Refer to the Environmental Impact Statement for more information.

In accordance with the referenced By-Laws, the project is described as follows:

Section 5.4 Dimensional Requirements:

Requirement	Required	Proposed 28-0-01	Proposed 24-0-23	Proposed 24-0-24	Proposed 24-0-25
Lot area (S.F.):	NA	666,184	348,632	217,952	1,010,308
Lot area (Acres):	NA	15.29	8.00	5.00	23.19
Minimum front yard setback (from street line) (Ft.):	25	±170	N/A	N/A	±200
Minimum rear yard setback from property line for principal building (Ft.):	30	±270	N/A	N/A	N/A
Minimum side yard setback for principal building (Ft.):	15	N/A	±180	N/A	N/A
Maximum Building Height (Ft.):	36	<36	<36	<36	<36

Section 7.9.4 Solar Energy Facilities:

(a) Conditions of Approval:

1. A plan shall be provided for the general procedures of operation and maintenance of the installation including security measures, maintenance of emergency access and the clear and available means of shutting down the facility in the event of an emergency.

An Operation and Maintenance Plan has been included with this submission.

2. A fully inclusive estimate of the costs associated with removal and site restoration, prepared by a qualified engineer.

This has been included with this submission.

3. Notice of Public Hearing shall be provided to the utility company that operates the electrical grid where the facility is proposed.

Eversource is the utility company.

4. Adequate access and parking, shall be provided for service and emergency vehicles.

The site is accessible from Lake Pleasant Road. An existing gravel road will be upgraded to provide access for site maintenance and emergency vehicles. A 15-wide gravel road will be constructed around the solar array and is sized to accommodate fire department apparatus. The gravel road shall provide sufficient parking for maintenance visits; typically one vehicle per visit.

5. Clearing of natural vegetation shall be limited to what is necessary for the construction, operation and maintenance of the facility or as otherwise prescribed by applicable laws, regulations, and bylaws.

The proposed clearing limits shown on the plans have been determined to be the minimum necessary to construct the development, as well as prevent shading of the solar arrays to optimize performance.

6. An 8 foot security fence shall be installed no closer to a property line than the setback required for a principal building. In addition, the site and its fencing shall be screened by buffering vegetation from general view from the surrounding ground level unless the Board determines that there is no public benefit from such screening.

An 8 foot tall security fence will be installed approximately 200 feet from Millers Falls Road and Lake Pleasant Road. This distance exceeds the setback required for a principal building per the Dimensional Requirements (above). The 200' wide strip of wooded area (approximately 8.6 acres) located between the solar PV development and Millers Falls Road shall remain undisturbed in order to maintain natural screening from the public from Millers Falls Road and provide some added security to the project.

7. To the extent feasible, all network interconnections and power lines, to and from the facility, shall be via underground lines.

The proposed project shall have above-ground electrical transformers and inverters. All conduits and associated connections within the development shall be underground. Just prior to the interconnection to the existing distribution system on Lake Pleasant Road, the underground conduit shall transition to overhead wire. As part of the special permit, we are requesting permission to make this above-ground connection to the existing overhead distribution system on Lake Pleasant Road (See Sheet C-5, Development Plan).

8. Drainage from impervious surfaces shall be fully accommodated onsite.

The project includes five small (17 x 27 feet) concrete electrical equipment pads totaling only 2,295 square feet total of added impervious area. The gravel access roads are considered semi-impervious and the area below the panels are not considered impervious. Existing sandy soils and proposed high meadow grass shall have the combined effect of promoting infiltration and help offset the additional impervious or semi-impervious areas. The attached stormwater analysis and report, prepared in accordance with the MassDEP Stormwater Management Standards, indicates that the proposed project shall result in no net increase in the peak rate of runoff.

9. No array shall be floodlit.

The proposed project requires no site lighting.

10. Owners and successors in title shall provide a satisfactory form of surety, either through escrow account, bond or otherwise, to cover the cost of removal and restoration of the landscape, in an amount determined to be reasonable by the Board, but in no event to exceed more than 125% of the cost of removal. Such surety may be waived for municipally or state owned facilities.

As the utility provider and Owner, Eversource shall provide a form of surety acceptable to the Town.

The name of the Project Proponent is:

Boston Edison Company d/b/a Eversource Energy
 300 Cadwell Drive
 Springfield, MA 01104
 Contact: William T. Blanchard
 Phone: (413) 787-1029
 e-mail: willaim.blanchard@eversource.com

The name, contact information of the Engineer authorized to represent the Project Proponent:

Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc.
5 Centennial Drive
Peabody, MA 01960
Contact: Steve Wiehe, Project Manager
Phone: (978) 532-1900
e-mail: wiehes@wseinc.com

The name of the system installer is:

Company Name	T.B.D.
Address Line 1	T.B.D.
Address Line 2	T.B.D.
Contact	T.B.D.
Phone:	T.B.D.
e-mail:	T.B.D.

We believe the project Proponent has developed a well-conceived project which complies with the Town of Montague By-Laws and we trust that you and the Planning Board will find the application worthy of Special Permit and Site Plan Review Approval. We look forward to discussing the project and will be available to answer any questions or address any comments at the next scheduled planning board hearing.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or require any additional information, please contact me in our Peabody, MA office at 978-532-1900 x 2221 or by e-mail at wiehes@wseinc.com.

Very truly yours,

WESTON & SAMPSON ENGINEERS, INC.



Stephen Paul Wiehe, PG
Project Manager