



TOWN OF READFIELD

8 OLD KENTS HILL RD. • READFIELD, MAINE 04355
TEL. (207) 685-4939 • FAX (207) 685-3420

Planning Board Decision

Applicant: Readfield Solar I, LLC
c/o Syncarpha Solar, LLC
Attn: Carter McCann
250 West 57th Street, Suite 701
New York, NY 10107

Agent: Power Engineers, Inc.
Attn: Gino Giumarro
303 US Route 1
Freeport, ME 04032

Location of Property:

Map 136 Lot 19
E-911 Address: 368 Main St. (Highland Ridge Farm LLC)

Decision:

The Planning Board APPROVES, WITH CONDITIONS, the application of Readfield Solar I, LLC to install a 4.95 megawatt, alternating current, ground-mounted photovoltaic solar array on 20 acres of an approximately 100-acre parcel owned by Dean Sciaraffa. The solar project is intended as a Shared Distributed Generation Resource (Community Shared Solar).

Findings/Reasons for the Decision:

The Planning Board held a public hearing on the application on August 19, 2020; the hearing was continued to September 9, September 23, and October 14. Comments from interested parties were received orally at the public hearing and were submitted in writing during the course of the application's review. Comments were made both in support of, and in opposition to, the proposal. Interested parties raised a number of concerns about the proposed project including, in part: visual/scenic impacts, siting on prime agricultural land, and impact on wildlife. In response to concerns identified by the Planning Board and by interested parties, the applicant made a number of revisions to the proposal including adjustments to the funding mechanism for decommissioning, a vegetative buffer plan, and a commitment by the property owner to establish an agricultural conservation easement with the Maine Farmland Trust which would include the 20 acre project site following its decommissioning.

The Planning Board has considered the application and its supporting documents, information and data, as amended; submittals and information obtained through the public hearing process; and, other related materials on file, and has concluded that subject to the conditions below the application meets the requirements of the Readfield Land Use Ordinance.

Conditions Imposed:

The approval is conditioned upon the following:

1. Unless otherwise modified or waived, the applicant must comply with the Town of Readfield Standard Conditions of Approval. See Appendix D of the Land Use Ordinance for the Town of Readfield. (A copy of the Standard Conditions of Approval is attached hereto.);
2. A **Certificate of Occupancy or Use** shall be obtained from the Code Enforcement Officer upon completion of all activities authorized herein, unless otherwise permitted to be completed at a later date;
3. The evergreen trees for the buffer shall be at least 5-6 feet tall at the time of planting and spaced no more than approximately 10 feet on center along the northern edge of the solar array, excluding, at the option of the applicant, those areas behind the existing buildings. The trees are to be planted prior to the end of the growing season in which the **Certificate of Occupancy or Use** is issued to the applicant. The applicant shall ensure proper care and maintenance of the natural buffer to a height adequate to screen the solar arrays;
4. No herbicides or pesticides shall be utilized on the site. Prior to the end of the growing season in which the applicant is issued a certificate of occupancy or use, the applicant shall plant (and thereafter maintain) *pollinator-friendly* species on the site for a cover crop;
5. Unless otherwise required by state or federal law or regulations, the perimeter fence shall be no more than 7 1/2 feet high as measured from the ground, and the fence shall be located at least 6-8 inches above the ground surface to permit small animals to traverse the property;
6. Prior to the issuance of the **building permit**, the applicant or its successor in interest, shall provide, and thereafter maintain, a bond in the amount of at least \$143,619.53 in order to secure the costs of decommissioning the site. The bond shall be held by and payable to the Town of Readfield on terms and conditions approved by counsel for the Town of Readfield. After 15 years, the bond shall continue in place for the life of the project, but the applicant or its successor in interest shall begin to fund an interest-bearing escrow account held by and payable to the Town of Readfield on terms acceptable to the Town of Readfield. The escrow account shall be paid in five equal annual installments, beginning no later than July 1, 2036 and until there is \$143,619.53 in escrow with the

Town of Readfield. The bond may be reduced each year concomitant with the amount of cash contributed into escrow, until the escrow account covers the entire projected cost of decommissioning;

7. Prior to the issuance of the **Certificate of Occupancy or Use**, the applicant shall provide proof to the Town of Readfield that the owner of the approximately 93 remaining acres of the parcel, outside of the approximately 20 acres leased to the applicant, has conveyed an agricultural conservation easement to the Maine Farmland Trust, or similar type entity, to permanently protect the remainder of the parcel from future development. This excludes the approximately 20-acre site for the solar project and a building envelope around the existing farm building. With respect to the 20-acre developed site, the applicant shall, prior to the issuance of the **Certificate of Occupancy or Use** provide assurances, satisfactory to the Town of Readfield that when the 20 acre site is no longer used for solar energy production that the site will be conveyed as an agricultural conservation easement or similar thereto;
8. Notwithstanding the terms of the Lease Option Agreement executed on September 9, 2019 between Highland Ridge Farm, LLC and Readfield Solar I, LLC, this approval for development of a solar photovoltaic electric generation facility on approximately 20 acres of the 104 acre parcel strictly limits development on the parcel to the approximately 20 acres described and delineated on plans as approved by the Planning Board. Any deviation from these plans requires prior approval of the Board.

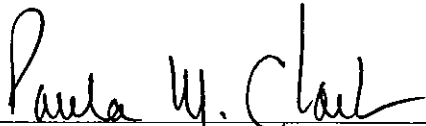
Expiration of Permit:

If no substantial construction start is made, or use of the property initiated, within one year of the date of the permit, the permit lapses and becomes void. A permit may be timely renewed. (This provision does not apply to recorded sub-division approvals.)

Appeal Rights:

Note: Until the expiration of the appeal period, and a final decision from any appeal, if any, the applicant proceeds at his/her own risk.

Any person aggrieved by this decision may appeal to the Readfield Board of Appeals within forty-five (45) days of the date of the Decision. **The date of the Decision in this matter is October 14, 2020.**



Chairperson, Planning Board

11/4/20

Date

