

Information about Amp and its Solar Energy Proposal for Shutesbury

Amp, a renewable energy infrastructure owner, developer and manager headquartered in Toronto, has held two preliminary meetings with the Town Administrator and individual Select Board members to discuss the possibility of building up to five solar energy “farms” in Shutesbury. Representatives of W.D. Cowls participated in the most recent meeting on December 16th.

It is important to note that, as of December 24, 2020, Amp has not filed any applications related to building these solar farms with any board or commission in the Town of Shutesbury. Throughout 2020, the Conservation Commission has been working with W.D. Cowls on going through the Abbreviated Notice of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) process – used to determine wetland boundaries on a parcel of land – for six different parcels of land in town where Amp has indicated an interest.

To keep everyone informed, here is what Amp and W.D. Cowls have discussed with town officials:

- W.D. Cowls plans to put almost 2,000 acres of land it owns in Shutesbury (roughly two-thirds of its total acreage in town) under permanent conservation restrictions.
- Approximately 130 acres of land within these sites would not be covered by the permanent conservation restrictions.
- Amp plans to file Special Permit applications with the Planning Board in 2021 to construct five separate solar installations as follows:
 - Lot ZG-2 (793.82 acres) on Pratt Corner Road: 12 Mw DC/5Megawatts AC
 - Note: This parcel is the site of the Lodestar Energy/Next Era solar farm.
 - Lot ZD-37 (263.0 acres) on Carver Road: 12 Mw DC/5 Mw AC
 - Lot ZF-15 (296.8 acres) on Leverett Road: 4 Mw DC/2 Mw AC
 - Lot ZU-2 (140.18 acres) on Pratt Corner Road: 12 Mw DC/5 MW AC
 - Lot ZW-6 (389.0 acres) on Pratt Corner Road 5 Mw DC3 Mw AC

TOTAL = 1,882.8 acres TOTAL = 45 Mw DC/20 Mw AC
- A sixth site on Baker Road, Lot ZQ-6 (212.68 acres) is being studied as well, but currently is not being considered for a solar installation due to the size of wetlands and being close to many residential neighbors.
- Amp will have to spend \$10 million to \$12 million to upgrade the National Grid substation on Pratt Corner Road and power lines over the next two-three years.
- The plan is for all solar installation sites will have battery back-up systems
- Because Amp has to pay National Grid for these upgrades by the end of March, 2021, Amp is looking for some type of commitment from the town that it wants to proceed with the five solar installations.
- Amp’s goal is to have the National Grid upgrades completed and the solar installations completed in the next two to three years (2023-2024).
- Amp also discussed a “public-private partnership” with the Town of Shutesbury, in which Amp would pay the town a annual fee over 30 years to handle all property work (snow plowing, grass cutting, security and access control) and solar work (preventative maintenance, emergency response and corrective maintenance) at the five sites. The “public-private partnership” is a new state program developed by the Department of

Energy Resources (DOER) revised regulations in April of 2020 for its Solar Mass Renewable Energy (SMART) program.

- AMP's two concerns with Shutesbury are that the new solar bylaw amendments are too restrictive and AMP indicated they would seek waivers of some conditions, and secondly that the permitting process will be slow.

Amp plans to contact town officials in early January to continue its discussions.

If Amp moves forward with these projects, the following town officials are responsible for handling certain aspects of them:

- Conservation Commission: Reviewing and approving/denying all matters related to wetlands delineation and any work done within wetlands resource areas or their buffer zones.
- Planning Board: Reviewing and approving/denying all matters related to applications for special permits to construct large-scale, ground-mounted solar installations.
- Select Board: Subject to Town Meeting approval, negotiating a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement and negotiating any public-private partnership agreement.
- Assessors' Staff: Calculating the valuations and tax impacts if any/all of the projects proceed.
- Historical Commission: Response, if any, to applicants written inquiries requesting locations of all known, mapped or suspected Native American archaeological sites or sites of Native American ceremonial activity per Section 8.10-4, Shutesbury' Ground-Mounted Solar Electric Installations.