



# TOWN OF PALMER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Palmer Town Building  
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Robert Ring, Chair  
Donald Duffy, Vice Chair  
Peter Izyk  
Dennis Cote  
Tharyn Nein-Large  
Sean O'Donnell

Agent: Angela Panaccione

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## MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY July 15, 2014 @ 7:00 PM

**Members Present:** Robert Ring (Chair)  
Donald Duffy (Vice Chair)  
Peter Izyk  
Tharyn Nein-Large  
Angela Panaccione (Agent)

**Members Absent:** Dennis Cote  
Sean O'Donnell

**Also Present:** George Bousquet, 33 Onley Road  
Elizabeth Decelles, TRC Environmental  
Colin Duncan, TRC Environmental  
Siona Patistias, National Grid  
Charlie Roberts, Nexamp  
Chris Clark, Nexamp  
David Seigel, 83 Old Poor Farm Road, Ware  
Tony Wonseski, SVE Associates  
Kevin & Donna Pella, 845 Town Farm Road, Warren  
Michael J. Baril, Warren

**Meeting Opens:** 7:03 PM – Robert Ring (Chair)

### 7:03 PM Request for Determination (RDA): Peterson Road Solar; Peterson Road/Mason Street

Robert Ring opened the public meeting for the Request for Determination (RDA), submitted by SVE Associates c/o of Peterson Road Solar, LLC, for a proposed Solar Array, located at Peterson Road/Mason Street Turnaround, Palmer, MA and is also known as: Map 15-7. The proposed work will include installation of a 3.6 MW ground mounted solar array; including the clearing of 28 acres. Work will occur within the buffer zone of resource areas protected under the Wetlands Protection Act and the Town of Palmer Wetlands Ordinance. Representative Tony Wonseski, of SVE Associates was present; as well as property owner David Seigel and project developers Charlie Roberts and Chris Clark from Nexamp.

A site visit was conducted by Angela Panaccione, Tharyn Nein-Large and Tony Wonseski on Thursday June 26, 2014 to review and confirm the delineation presented in the determination.

Wonseski began by presenting Exhibit 1: Ariel Overview of the site. Nexamp is leasing 40 acres of the 161 acre parcel know as Map 15-7. The current plans presented only show a 38-acre lease but planning Board is requiring extending the lease area to fully encompass the access road.

The site has been logged several times in the past under approved Forest Cutting Plans. Site access will be by an existing cart path, which has an existing wetlands crossing and culvert. No road improvements are planned. Timber mats will be utilized for road stabilization over the crossing. Additionally, erosion and sediment controls will be installed along the side of the road through the wetlands crossing.

Clearing is proposed up to Palmer's 50-foot no disturb zone of wetland flags B18-B34. The area will not be stumped. The work limit is 130-feet away from wetland complex C (flags C9-C21). No work is proposed within Palmer's 50-foot no disturb zone.

The site will be cleared and grubbed, then the top soil will be stripped and stockpiled in the areas shown on the plans. A double perimeter of erosion and sediment controls will be installed around the soil stockpiles.

The applicant will comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), and prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPP) for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Ring inquired about the extent of earth removal and movement. Wonseski replied the plans pretty much follow the lay of the land. All dirt will stay on site, and no added fill is anticipated to be needed. The objective is to smooth out the site with what is present. Overall 18,000 cubic yards of soil will be redistributed over 20 acres of the site.

Ring asked about the current culverts stability and Wonseski stated the culvert has held up with logging trucks passing over it. He did inform the Commission, if culvert failure were to occur they would file a NOI for the culvert repairs/replacement.

Ring asked about how the runoff from the panels would be addressed and mitigated against. Wonseski informed the Commission straw matting would be added to the base of the panels for added protection.

Duffy inquired about how the grass would grow under the panels without light. Clark responded the applicants chose a specific seed mix used at solar sites which requires low light and is a low growing grass. Once grass is established, there will be no problem maintaining it.

Ring inquired about how often the site would be monitored. Clark informed him Nexamp would monitor the site remotely 24/7, with twice a year on the ground monitoring. The stormwater structures would be monitored separately by whoever was contracted to install them and would be regulated by the SWPP. On average, under the SWPP stormwater maintenance is quarterly. The Agent recommended incorporating a condition into the determination requiring copies of the SWPP reports.

Izyk asked how high off the ground the panels would be and Wonseski responded about 2-3 feet; enough to allow for hand mowing.

Ring expressed concerns about the stormwater basins being sized appropriately. Several other Solar project around the state have resulted in wetlands violations because the basins installed did not adequately handle spring flow, resulting in a breach of the basins and excessive sedimentation entering wetland complexes.

Ring requested the public meeting on the RDA be continued until the Commission received the revised site plans showing the 40-acre parcel per Planning Boards requirements. The applicants were agreeable with the continuance.

**Motion made by Donald Duffy to continue the Public Meeting until Tuesday August 5, 2014 at 7:00 pm**

**Motion seconded by Peter Izyk**

**No further discussion – vote taken: 4-0-0 – Motion Carries**

**7:35 PM Notice of Intent (NOI) DEP # 256-0306: National Grid; 24 Blanchard Street**

Robert Ring opened the public hearing for the Notice of Intent, submitted by TRC Environmental Corporation c/o New England Power Co. d/b/a National Grid (NEP) for the proposed R170 Transmission Line & Palmer #503 Substation Modification Project, located at 24 Blanchard Street, Palmer, MA. Specifically, the project proposes to construct 10.0 miles of overhead transmission line. This project will alter 29 square feet of Bordering Land Subject to Flooding (BLSF) associated with the Quaboag River. The location of the proposed project 24 Blanchard Street, Palmer, MA 01069, and is also known as: Map 2-86, 2-87, and 2-88.

Representatives Elizabeth Decelles and Colin Duncan, of TRC Environmental were present, as well as Siona Patistias, from National Grid.

A site visit occurred today with Agent Angela Panaccione, Commissioner Tharyn Nein-Large, Representatives Elizabeth Decelles and Colin Duncan, of TRC Environmental was present, as well as Siona Patistias, from National Grid. No issues were present and all work is proposed within a previously disturbed/paved area.

New England Power Company d/b/a National Grid proposes to construct, operate and maintain approximately 10.0 miles of 115 kV overhead transmission line within the existing NEP 69kV O15S transmission line right-of-way in the towns of Palmer, Monson, and Hampden. The new 115 kV transmission line, to be called the “R170 Line”, will replace the O15S Line, and connect the existing Palmer Substation to the West Hampden Substation. This Notice of Intent is being filed with the Palmer Conservation Commission is for installation of the approximately 0.1 mile portion of the R170 Line within the Town of Palmer.

The only resource area in the vicinity of the Project site is BLSF associated with the perennial Quaboag River. The northern bank of the Quaboag River, which forms the town boundary between Palmer and Monson, is located approximately 40 feet south of the existing substation facilities fence line which designates the limits of the Project Area. Approximately 14 square feet of permanent impact will occur to BLSF associated with the single pole structure foundation. The other 37 square feet of the poles foundation is located outside of the BLSF. The foundation will be raised approximately one (1) foot above the existing grade. However, this pole is located on a steep bank at the very upper limit of the floodplain and floodway. Therefore, installation of the structure and foundation will result in a *de minimus* loss of flood storage and no compensatory flood storage replacement is proposed for the project.

This project also lies within Palmer’s 25-foot Densely Developed Riverfront Area (DDA) for the Quaboag River instead of the typical 200-foot Riverfront Area (RA) regulated under Section 310 CMR 10.58 of the MWPA. This 25 foot DDA applies to the Quaboag River in the vicinity of the Palmer #503 substation parcel. Although the proposed R-170 Line will continue south crossing the river, structures will be spaced so that no impacts are proposed within the 25 foot DDA.

The Project is being filed as a Limited Project in accordance with the WPA Regulations at 310 CMR 10.53 (3)(d) for “the construction, reconstruction, operation and maintenance of underground and overhead public utilities, such as electrical distribution and transmission...”. Work is anticipated to begin this fall.

DEP issued no comments of the Notice of Intent. Additionally, National Grid has already secured permits from Monson and Hampden, as well as a 401 WQC for the project in entirety.

**Motion made by Donald Duffy to close the Public Hearing**

**Motion seconded by Peter Izyk**

**No further discussion – vote taken: 4-0-0 – Motion Carries**

**Motion made by Donald Duffy to issue the Order of Conditions with conditions as discussed**

**Motion seconded by Tharyn Nein-Large**

**No further discussion – vote taken: 4-0-0 – Motion Carries**

**7:45 PM Administrative Matters: Minute Approval June 17, 2014**

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**Motion made by Donald Duffy to accept the minutes from Tuesday June 17, 2014**

**Motion seconded by Tharyn Nein-Large**

**No further discussion – vote taken: 3-0-1 (Peter Izyk Abstains)**

**7:50 PM Member Reports: Donald Duffy – Midura Property**

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Donald Duffy inquired about getting the field at Midura mowed. The Agent informed him she has already submitted a request to DPW for the field mowing. Duffy also asked if she would investigate the construction occurring near Midura, to ensure no work is occurring on the Commissions property. The Agent said she would. Ring stated he did not think the work occurring was on our parcels.

**7:51 PM Administrative Matters: MACC Payable \$320.00**

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**Motion made by Donald Duffy to approve the payable to MACC in the amount of \$320.00, for FY 15 Membership dues**

**Motion seconded by Peter Izyk**

**No further discussion – vote taken: 4-0-0**

**7:53 PM Administrative Matters: NHESP Payable \$24.00**

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**Motion made by Donald Duffy to approve the payable to NHESP in the amount of \$24.00, for the purchase of two copies of A Field Guide to the Animals of Vernal Pools.**

**Motion seconded by Tharyn Nein-Large**

**No further discussion – vote taken: 4-0-0**

**7:55 PM Amended Notice of Intent DEP # 256-0269: Palmer Motorsports Park; West Ware Road**

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**\*Donald Duffy recuses himself from the proceedings and left the room during this discussion.**

A request to amend a Notice of Intent submitted by Pioneer Environmental c/o Palmer Motorsports Park, to amend the existing Order of Conditions for the proposed construction of a motorsports facility. The amendment is proposed to retract sections of the permit that will be revised in a subsequent Notice of Intent, to avoid having two (2) Orders of Conditions with contradicting proposals. The location of the proposed project is on West Ware Road Palmer, MA 01069, and is also known as: Map 49-4; Map 51-1; and Map 52-8; Map 44-33 and Map 44-35.

The applicant requested a continuance. DEP is currently investigating possible violations and has requested the Commission stay the hearings until further notice.

**Motion made by Peter Izyk to continue the Public Hearing until Tuesday August 19, 2014 at 7:00 pm**

**Motion seconded by Tharyn Nein-Large**

**No further discussion – vote taken: 3-0-0 (\*Donald Duffy Recuses) – Motion Carries**

**8:00 PM      Notice of Intent: Palmer Motorsports Park; West Ware Road**

\*Donald Duffy recuses himself from the proceedings and left the room during this discussion.

A Notice of Intent submitted by Pioneer Environmental c/o Palmer Motorsports Park, to revise portions of the motorsports park facility that is currently under construction. Revisions are proposed to the track layout, stream crossings, pit lane location and paddock locations. A drinking water supply well and septic system have been designed and new work includes the construction of clubhouses with parking and the filing of a previously crossed wetland. The location of the proposed project is on West Ware Road Palmer, MA 01069, and is also known as: Map 49-4; Map 51-1; and Map 52-8; Map 44-33 and Map 44-35.

The applicant requested a continuance. DEP is currently investigating possible violations and has requested the Commission stay the hearings until further notice.

**Motion made by Peter Izyk to continue the Public Hearing until Tuesday August 19, 2014 at 7:00 pm**  
**Motion seconded by Tharyn Nein-Large**

**No further discussion – vote taken: 3-0-0 (\*Donald Duffy Recuses) – Motion Carries**

**8:05 PM      Public Inquiry: George Bousquet – Onley Road ATV Access**

George Bousquet attended tonight meeting to request motorized access to Onley Road. Bousquet is a disabled vet who lives on Onley Road and wished to access the area and town property for hunting and mushroom picking. Bousquet supplied the Commission with his Veterans Identification Card, as well as his handicap tags for his vehicle. Due to lack of quorum, Robert Ring granted Bousquet approval for the next 30 days, until the Commission could formally vote on approving his access request.

**8:15 PM      Administrative Matters: Discuss Maternity Leave**

The Commission discussed the Agent leaving on Maternity Leave. Panaccione expects to leave around the middle of September (if all goes well her last day will be September 12) for 12 weeks. Former Agent Glen Coluburn said if needed, he could temporarily fill in but use him as a last resort. The Agent did send an inquiry to all western Mass Conservation Commission seeking an interim Agent. She has heard back from two potential Agents, who will attend the August 5 meeting.

**Next Meeting Date:** Tuesday August 5, 2014 at 7pm

**Meeting Adjourned:** 8:15pm

Sincerely Submitted,  
Angela Panaccione, Agent