

January 18, 2021

Mr. Jason Pezzulo, Planning Director
Cranston City Hall
869 Park Avenue
Cranston RI, 02910

**RE: NATICK AVENUE SOLAR
PEER REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE PLANS FOR NATICK AVENUE SOLAR, REVITY ENERGY, LLC
PRELIMINARY PLAN REVIEW**

Dear Mr. Pezzulo,

I am pleased to provide this review for the revised landscape plans dated 1.14.21 and 1.15.21, submitted as Landscape Plans for the Natick Avenue Solar Preliminary Plan submission to the City Plan Commission.

As of the last submission remaining areas of concern included the following:

- Area D. Trimming limitations to state a minimum trim height to maintain a visual buffer at least 12' high and an extended buffer area.
- Area E. Formal protection of the north west corner woods in the A.P. 22-3 lot 119 parcel and introduction of meaningful evergreen screening in that corner of the site and similarly in south east.
- Warranty duration extended to assure adequate care during plant establishment.
- Minimum loam depth and quality for disturbed areas.
- Seeding for solar meadow and other graded or otherwise disturbed areas for environmental contribution as well as specific growing conditions.

The current plans have revisions in response to the written reviews and meeting comments.

Area D:

- An additional 50' grouping has been added at the west end of the proposed planting.
- The trim height limitation has been revised for trimming to a height of no less than 12'.

Area E:

- Formal protection for the woods north east of the solar field has been denied by the owner.

- Evergreen planting at the edge of the clearing has been denied by the owner and the previously proposed arborvitae along the security fence was not an effective solution. An acceptable compromise is 3 area 'D' type planting groups located 25' into the clearing west of the security fence. In this location the 'D' height limitations could allow the small trees to go untrimmed or grow to 25' before trimming.

The plant list has plants for an additional 'D' type planting group beyond those needed for 4 groupings in 'D' and 3 in 'E'. The additional group in either area E or D would be acceptable.

Area F:

- Area F planting is intended to add evergreens to buffer view from the south east. It had previously been agreed to plant red cedars and white pines between the gravel access road and the clearing edge at the south east corner of the site where plantings were far enough away from panels to grow naturally without trimming. The present plan has backed off that, putting the plants along the security fence where they would be trimmed to the minimum of 12'. Admittedly, planting young 5-6' tall evergreens east of the road and at the toe of the access road slope or along the edge of the clearing is a long term solution with little initial buffering impact. However, the proposed planting along the fence seems to have minimal initial or long term buffer value.

Warranty has been extended to three years.

Loam depth:

- Topsoil will be stripped from the entire site, stockpiled and used with supplementary off site loam for the necessary seed bed. There have been communications that indicate that 'the site will have a minimum of 4-6" of suitable seed bed material'. Such a note, preferably indicating a minimum depth of 6", should be added to the drawings with specification of the character of that material as 'plantable soil' as defined in the planting detail.

Seed:

- In the previous meeting, it was acknowledged that plans could not comply with the requirements of Master Plan Conditions of Approval no. 11. The current plan seeding is however acceptable. It indicates a low maintenance seed mix for the solar field that is a mixture of short or floppy fescues that are drought resistant and shade tolerant. They however, also of relatively low wildlife value. Disturbed areas outside the solar panel area (except as otherwise specified by the DEM approval) will be seeded as noted with a more pollinator and wildlife beneficial mix of various grasses and broad leaf materials.

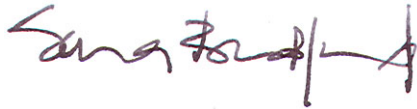
Conclusion

Most concerns have been satisfactorily addressed. Only the specific questions related to areas E, F and loam depth remain plus a reminder that final planting locations and materials shall be documented in "as built" drawings.

The applicant has worked responsively with the City in an effort to resolve project landscape issues and there is expectation that if the project is approved they will continue to do so through final approvals and the construction process.

If there are additional questions please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sara Bradford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a vertical line extending downwards from the end of the name.

Sara Bradford, RLA