

Durham Conservation Commission

December 20, 2023; 6:30 – 8:00 pm; Town Office

DCC Attendees: Roberta Brezinski, Sam Cuccaro, Jess Costa, Mike Friendly, Joe Roy

Guest Attendees: George Thebarger, John Talbot

Tax Credits and Efficiency Maine Presentation by Sam Saltonstall Jan 25 at 7pm

- Roberta to check with Devin on Teams meeting registration

USGS FEMA Risk MAP Project in Androscoggin County, Discovery Phase Dec 12 meeting update from George

Discussion of Dec 7th Community Meeting feedback on draft solar ordinance

Rooftop is exempt (code officer will determine if structure is able to support)

Adjust size ranges to make the medium scale more feasible:

- 8,000 sq feet/120 kw (where average house uses 8-10 kw) for max for small projects (businesses would need to go thru conditional use review) (Maine Audubon has 15,000 sq feet max for small projects)
- 8,000 to 20,000 sq ft is medium range
- Above 20,000 sq feet is large scale
- It was suggested to have 4 size scales but DCC supports 3 size scales

100 ft setback and 50 feet outside of fence is standard buffer and it needs to be vegetated to mitigate visual impact

Objective to preserve the Town's rural characteristics (avoid visual impacts)

Prevent Town from having burden of cost of decommissioning if project abandoned by financially irresponsible developer

Max height of panels

- Readfield 10 ft, Maine Audubon 12 ft, Topsham 15
- DCC supports keeping 15 ft max height

Footprint of projects: won't count space between panels but height above ground of panels in calc of square footage

Noise: 400-foot set back from noise producing-equipment

Battery storage projects:

- Fire Chief evaluation and planning board would review proposed separate battery storage projects
- Solar + battery storage: fire protection plan needs to be approved by fire chief

In summary, 2 updates discussed: rooftop exempt and updating medium scale to 8K - 20K square feet

DCC voted to accept the 2 updates, George will make updates and DCC will provide cover letter

January 3rd Planning Board meeting will cover land use ordinance (Jess and Mike to attend in case there are questions)

Meeting adjourned at 8 pm. Next CC meeting will be January 24.