

CITY OF MARLBOROUGH
PLANNING BOARD
MARLBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS 01752

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LEGAL NOTICE

Public Hearing –Proposed Zoning Amendment to Chapter 650 to add a new Section 38 creating the Large-Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Overlay District.

Notice is hereby given that the Planning Board of the City of Marlborough will hold a Public Hearing on **Monday, June 22, 2020 at 7:00 PM** in Memorial Hall, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 140 Main Street, Marlborough, Massachusetts to amend Chapter 650 by adding a new Section 38. *Should the current state of emergency still be in force at that time, the hearing will be held remotely.* The agenda for the Board's meeting will be posted on the following website: www.marlborough-ma.gov/planning-board 48 hours in advance of the meeting. Instructions for virtual attendance (if necessary) will be posted as part of the meeting agenda. All persons interested should plan to attend, be represented at the hearing, or submit written testimony to the Planning Board at 135 Neil St. Marlborough, MA 01752 or by emailing planning_board@marlborough-ma.gov prior to the meeting date.

The materials are available for viewing in the Office of the City Clerk, City Hall, 140 Main Street, Marlborough, MA 01752, 508-460-3775 and the Administrative Office of the Planning Board, 135 Neil St. Marlborough, MA 01752, (508) 624-6910 x33200 and online at www.marlborough-ma.gov/planning-board

THAT, PURSUANT TO § 5 OF CHAPTER 40A OF THE GENERAL LAWS, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARLBOROUGH, HAVING SUBMITTED FOR ITS OWN CONSIDERATION CHANGES IN THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MARLBOROUGH, AS AMENDED, TO FURTHER AMEND CHAPTER 650, NOW ORDAINS THAT THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MARLBOROUGH, AS AMENDED, BE FURTHER AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

1. That a new Section 38 be inserted into Chapter 650, as follows:

ARTICLE VI

§ 650-38 Large-scale Ground-mounted Solar Photovoltaic Overlay District

A. Purpose and Objectives:

- 1) The Large-scale Ground-mounted Solar Photovoltaic Overlay District (herein, also a “LGSPOD”) allows the application of supplemental land use controls within the boundaries of a certain overlay district as an alternative to land use controls that exist in the underlying district(s). The purpose of this section is to provide standards for the placement, design, construction, operation, monitoring, modification and removal of such installations that address public safety, minimize impacts on scenic, natural and historic resources and which provide adequate financial assurance for the eventual decommissioning of such installations.
- 2) The provisions set forth in this section apply to the construction, operation and/or repair of large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations.
- 3) This section applies to large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations proposed to be constructed after the effective date of this section. This section also pertains to physical modifications that materially alter the type, configuration, or size of these installations or related equipment.

B. Designation of overlay location; as-of-right use. For the purposes of this Section, the LGSPOD shall be superimposed on the other district(s) existing at the time that any land in any said underlying district is also included in the LGSPOD, as designated by the Marlborough City Council in accordance with M.G.L. c.40A, §5, where ground-mounted large-scale solar photovoltaic installations may be sited as of right. Except as specifically provided herein, uses and provisions of Article V of Chapter 650 relating to the underlying zoning district not otherwise impacted by this Section shall continue to remain in full force and effect. In the event of any conflict between the provisions of this section and any other provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, the provisions of this Section shall govern and control. The LGSPOD overlay zoning district is located on parcels identified in **Exhibit A** annexed hereto and incorporated by reference herein, and as indicated on the Zoning Map of the City of Marlborough. Said map is hereby made a part of this chapter and is on file in the office of the City Clerk.

C. Definitions. As used in this section, following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

As-of-Right Siting: As-of-Right Siting shall mean that development under this section may proceed without the need for a special permit, variance, amendment, waiver, or other discretionary approval, however said as-of-right development is subject to site plan review as provided under Chapter 270 Code of the City of Marlborough and this section. Projects cannot be prohibited but can be subject to reasonable regulation.

Large-Scale Ground-mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installation: A solar photovoltaic system that is structurally mounted on the ground, is not roof-mounted, and has a minimum nameplate capacity of 250 kW DC.

Solar Photovoltaic Installation: A solar photovoltaic array that is constructed at a location where other allowable uses of the underlying property may occur.

Site Plan Review: Review by Site Plan Review conducted administratively in accordance with the procedures as governed by § 270-2 of the Code of the City of Marlborough and this section.

Rated Nameplate Capacity: The maximum rated output of electric power production of the photovoltaic system in watts of Direct Current (DC).

Solar Photovoltaic Array: An arrangement of solar photovoltaic panels.

D. General Requirements for all large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations. The following requirements are common to all large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations to be sited in designated overlay locations:

1. **Compliance with Laws, Ordinances and Regulations.** The construction and operation of all large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations shall be consistent with all applicable local, state and federal requirements, including but not limited to all applicable security, safety, construction, electrical, and communications requirements. All buildings and fixtures forming part of a large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation shall be constructed in accordance with the State Building Code.
2. **Building Permit and Building Inspection.** No large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation shall be constructed, installed or modified as provided in this section without first obtaining a building permit.
3. **Fees.** The application for a building permit for a large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation must be accompanied by the fee required for a building permit.

4. Site Plan Review. Large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations shall undergo site plan review by Site Plan Review prior to construction, installation or modification as provided in § 270-2 of the Code of the City of Marlborough and in this section, as follows:

a. General. All plans and maps shall be prepared, stamped and signed by a Professional Engineer licensed to practice in Massachusetts.

b. Required Documents. Pursuant to the site plan review process, the project proponent shall provide the following documents:

i. A site plan showing:

1. Property lines and physical features, including roads, for the project site;
2. Proposed changes to the landscape of the site, grading, vegetation clearing and planting, exterior lighting, screening vegetation, fences or other screening structures;
3. Drawings of the large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation signed by a Professional Engineer licensed to practice in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts showing the proposed layout of the system and any potential shading from nearby structures;
4. One or three-line electrical diagram detailing the large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation, associated components, and electrical interconnection methods, with all National Electrical Code compliant disconnects and overcurrent devices;
5. Documentation of the major system components to be used, including the photovoltaic panels, mounting system, and inverter;
6. Name, address, and contact information for proposed system installer;
7. Name, address, phone number and signature of the project proponent, as well as all co-proponents or property owners, if any;
8. The name, contact information and signature of any agents representing the project proponent;
9. Emergency services access points and through points; and

ii. Documentation of actual or prospective access and control of the project site (see also sub-section E herein); and

iii. An operation and maintenance plan (see also sub-section F herein); and

iv. Zoning district designation for the parcel(s) of land comprising the project site (submission of a copy of a zoning map with the parcel(s) identified is suitable for this purpose);

v. Proof of liability insurance in an amount, and for a duration, sufficient to cover loss or damage to persons and property;

vi. Description of financial surety that satisfies sub-section L herein; and

vii. A public outreach plan, including a project development timeline, which indicates how the project proponent will meet the required site plan review notification procedures and otherwise informs abutters within 300' of the property line of the project site. Site Plan Review may waive documentary requirements as it deems appropriate.

E. Site Control. The project proponent shall submit documentation of actual or prospective access and control of the project site sufficient to allow for construction and operation of the proposed large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation.

F. Operation & Maintenance Plan. The project proponent shall submit a plan for the operation and maintenance of the large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation, which shall include measures for maintaining safe access to the installation, storm water controls, as well as general procedures for operational maintenance of the installation.

G. Utility Notification. No large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation shall be constructed until evidence has been given to Site Plan Review that the utility company that operates the electrical grid where the installation is to be located has been informed of the large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation's owner or operator's intent to install an interconnected customer-owned generator. Off-grid systems shall be exempt from this requirement.

H. Dimension and Density Requirements.

a. Setbacks. For large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations, front, side and rear setbacks shall be as follows:

- i. Front yard. The front yard depth shall be at least 10 feet; provided, however, that where the lot abuts a conservation use, residential use, or public way, the front yard depth shall be comprised of a no-clear vegetated buffer of not less than 50 feet and, as measured therefrom, a no-build buffer of not less than 50 feet. Site Plan Review may require plantings in the 50-foot no-clear vegetated buffer if none exist.
- ii. Side yard. Each side yard shall have a depth at least 15 feet; provided, however, that where the lot abuts a conservation use, residential use, or public way, the side yard depth shall be comprised of a no-clear vegetated buffer of not less than 50 feet and, as measured therefrom, a no-build buffer of not less than 50 feet. Site Plan Review may require plantings in the 50-foot no-clear vegetated buffer if none exist.
- iii. Rear yard. The rear yard depth shall be at least 25 feet; provided, however, that where the lot abuts a conservation use, residential use, or public way, the rear yard depth shall be comprised of a no-clear vegetated buffer of not less than 50 feet and, as measured therefrom, a no-build buffer of not less than 50 feet. Site Plan Review may require plantings in the 50-foot no-clear vegetated buffer if none exist.

b. Appurtenant Structures. All appurtenant structures to large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations shall be subject to reasonable regulations concerning the bulk and height of structures, lot area, setbacks, open space, parking and building coverage requirements. All such appurtenant structures, including but not limited to, equipment shelters, storage facilities, transformers, and substations, shall be architecturally compatible with each other. Whenever reasonable, structures should be shaded from view by vegetation and/or joined or clustered to avoid adverse visual impacts.

I. Design Standards.

a. Lighting. Lighting of large-scale ground-mounted solar installations shall be consistent with local, state and federal law. Lighting of other parts of the installation, such as appurtenant structures, shall be limited to that required for safety and operational purposes, and shall be reasonably shielded from abutting properties. Where feasible, lighting of the large-scale ground-mounted solar installation shall be directed downward and shall incorporate full cut-off fixtures to reduce light pollution.

- b. Signage. Signs on large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations shall comply with Chapter 526 of the Code of the City of Marlborough. A sign consistent with the City's sign ordinances shall be required to identify the owner and provide a 24-hour emergency contact phone number. Large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations shall not be used for displaying any advertising except for reasonable identification of the manufacturer or operator of the large-scale ground-mounted solar.
- c. Utility Connections. Reasonable efforts, as determined by Site Plan Review, shall be made to place all utility connections from the large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation underground, depending on appropriate soil conditions, shape, and topography of the site and any requirements of the utility provider. Electrical transformers for utility interconnections may be above ground if required by the utility provider.
- d. Screening. Every abutting property, private way, private driveway, and public way shall be visually screened from the project through any one or combination of the following: location, distance, plantings, existing vegetation.
- e. Topsoil. No topsoil shall be removed from the site. Said topsoil shall be stockpiled on site and used to stabilize the site with a minimum cover of 6 inches cover of loam. Any topsoil remaining after stabilization shall be stockpiled on site for use during decommissioning.

J. Safety and Environmental Standards.

- a. Emergency Services. The large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation owner or operator shall provide a copy of the project summary, electrical schematic, and site plan to the Chief of the Marlborough Fire Department. The owner or operator shall cooperate with local emergency services in developing an emergency response plan. Every means of shutting down the large-scale ground-mounted photovoltaic installation shall be clearly marked. The owner or operator shall identify a responsible person for public inquiries throughout the life of the installation.
- b. Land Clearing, Soil Erosion and Habitat Impacts. Clearing of natural vegetation shall be limited to what is necessary for the construction, operation and maintenance of the large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation or otherwise prescribed by applicable laws, regulations, and ordinances.

K. Monitoring and Maintenance.

- a. Large-scale Ground-mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installation Conditions. The large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation owner or operator shall maintain the facility in good condition. Maintenance shall include, but not be limited to, painting, structural repairs, and integrity of security measures. Site access shall be maintained to a level acceptable to the Fire Chief and emergency medical services. The owner or operator shall be responsible for the cost of maintaining the solar photovoltaic installation and any access or through road(s). Landscaping and fencing, including vegetation used for screening, shall be maintained in good condition.
- b. Modifications. After the required permits, have been issued, the Building Commissioner may approve minor non-material modifications to a large-sale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation. All major material modifications to a large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation made after issuance of the required permits shall require approval by Site Plan Review.

L. Abandonment or Decommissioning.

- a. Removal Requirements. Any large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation which has been discontinued by reaching the end of its useful life, reaching the end of a lease term without renewal or extension, or having been abandoned (as provided in paragraph L.b. herein) shall be removed as herein provided. The owner or operator shall physically remove the installation no more than 150 days after the date of said discontinued operations. The owner or operator shall notify Site Plan Review by certified mail of the proposed date of discontinued operations and plans for removal by decommissioning. Decommissioning shall consist of:
 - i. Physical removal of all large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations, structures, equipment, security barriers and transmission lines from the site.
 - ii. Disposal of all solid and hazardous waste in accordance with local, state, and federal waste disposal regulations.
 - iii. Stabilization or re-vegetation of the site as necessary to minimize erosion, including use of any remaining topsoil stockpiled on site. Site Plan Review may allow the owner or operator to leave landscaping or designated below-grade foundations in order to minimize erosion and disruption to vegetation.
- b. Abandonment. Absent notice of a proposed date of decommissioning or written notice of extenuating circumstances, the large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation shall be considered abandoned when it fails to operate for more than six months without the written consent of the Building Commissioner. If the owner or operator of the large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installation fails to remove the installation in accordance with the requirements of this section within 150 days of abandonment or the proposed date of decommissioning, the City may enter the property and physically remove the installation.
- c. Financial surety. Proponents of large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic projects shall provide a form of surety, either through a cash escrow account with interest retained for escalating decommissioning costs, bond or otherwise, to cover the cost of removal in the event that the City must remove the installation and remediate the landscape, in an amount and form determined to be reasonable by Site Plan Review, but in no event in excess more than 125% of the cost of removal and compliance with additional requirements set forth herein, as determined by Site Plan Review. Such surety will not be required for municipally owned or state-owned facilities. The project proponent shall submit a fully inclusive estimate of the costs associated with removal, prepared by a qualified engineer. The amount shall include a mechanism for calculating increased removal costs due to inflation. Site Plan Review may request the proponent to provide an update of the fully inclusive estimate of costs associated with removal every five years following the issuance of a building permit. Site Plan Review may require the proponent to provide additional surety based on the updated cost estimate.

M. The effective date of these amendments shall be the date of their passage.

EXHIBIT A

The newly established Large-scale Ground-mounted Solar Photovoltaic Overlay District shall include all or portions of the properties shown on the Zoning Map existing at the passage of this Ordinance, which properties include the following parcels of land (herein identified by the Assessors' Map and Parcel Number):

Assessors Map 30, Parcel 4

Assessors Map 30, Parcel 4C.

***Per Order of the City Council
#20-1007975***

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