


TO: Redwood County Planning Commission

FROM: Nick Brozek 
Land Use and Zoning Supervisor
Redwood County Environmental Office



DATE: December 16, 2020

RE: Planning Commission Hearing on December 28, 2020

A meeting of the Redwood County Planning Commission has been scheduled for Monday, the 28th day of December, 2020, beginning at 1:00 o'clock p.m. in the Board Room of the Redwood County Government Center, 403 South Mill Street, Redwood Falls, MN 56283.

The meeting will involve one (1) public hearing. A brief summary of the subject matter of the hearings is set forth below.

1. Public hearing on Application for Conditional Use Permit submitted by Scott Tempel.

Scott Tempel of Novel Energy Solutions is requesting to construct a community solar garden on an agricultural property located on County Hwy 7, about 3 miles north of the City of Belview. The property is owned by Paul & Kimberly Milbradt. Paul Milbradt signed off on the Conditional Use Permit application. The land will be leased from the landowner. The project will be owned by Novel Milbradt Solar LLC.

The proposed site is located on the east side of County Hwy 7, on the south edge of the Northwest Quarter of Section 29, Swedes Forest Township, parcel number 68-029-2020. The site is in the Agriculture District.

The facility will consist of a one (1) megawatt solar array, on approximately 8 acres, that will be connected directly to the power grid for the benefit of subscribers to the solar garden. Subscribers will save on their energy bills over the 25-year term of the interconnection agreement with Xcel Energy.

Equipment to be installed includes 3,780 solar panels, inverters, transformers, utility poles, and single-axis tracker racking installed on piles. The maximum height will be about 14'.

A 6' tall chain link perimeter fence, topped with three strands of barbed wire, will surround the site. The gate will be locked and accessible to Xcel Energy and emergency response personnel. A single light will be maintained at the point of interconnection, to be illuminated continually in evening hours for personnel safety.

Applicant is willing to provide screening on the west side (road side) of the site, consisting of trees to screen from the right-of-way.

Redwood County Government Center - Environmental Department

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A 15' wide access road will be constructed to serve the site from County Hwy 7. A temporary parking and loading area will be provided during the construction phase.

The ground underneath and between the solar panels will be seeded with a low maintenance grass seed mix and native grasses and pollinator plantings. The owner will control for noxious weeds during the life of the project. Construction is scheduled for the spring of 2021 and is expected to take 5 weeks.

There is no county drain tile or open ditch located on or near the project site.

The three nearest rural dwellings to the proposed solar garden are as follows: (1) 41724 CSAH 7, about 1130 feet north of the site; (2) 41766 CSAH 7, about 1230 feet north of the site; and (3) 41956 CSAH 7, about 2100 feet north of the site. The Paul Milbradt residence is located 2690 feet northeast of the site.

This is the ninth solar garden application in Redwood County since 2015. Of the other eight, six are operational or under construction and two have expired permits which have not been renewed. One site is a 3 MW site and the other sites are 1 MW each, for a total of 9 MW currently permitted. The proposed project would raise the total permitted MW in the Xcel territory to 10 MW.

The applicant has submitted a decommissioning plan addressing the disposition of the facility when it reaches the end of its useful life. At that time, the system will be shut down and the panels, racking, poles, cables, posts, inverters, trans-formers, concrete pads, fencing, and access driveway will be removed and properly disposed of. The site will then be restored to its pre-installation status as an agricultural field.

A copy of the Conditional Use Permit application, maps, plans, and proposed permit conditions are enclosed.

