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MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION

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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

July 3, 2024

SUBJECT: Tentative Sketch Plan Review- Solar Groundmount System for Upper Montgomery Joint Authority (MCPC #24-0145-001)
Upper Hanover Township

TO: Anne W. Klepfer, Township Manager
Solar Renewable Energy, LLC (Applicant)
Seth Berry - Solar Renewable Energy, LLC (Applicant's Representative)

FROM: Erin Feehily, PLA, Design Planning Assistant Manager
610-278-3757 – erin.feehily@montgomerycountypa.gov

We have reviewed the above-referenced preliminary sketch plan for a land development proposal as you requested on June 24, 2024 for special review. The applicant, Solar Renewable Energy, LLC. is seeking tentative sketch plan review for a Groundmount Solar Array in the R-1 Agricultural Low Density Residential Zoning District, a permitted use per Ordinance No. 2024-03. Waivers are being requested for Land Development and Drainage Plan. The development will impact 4.7 acres of the 26.48 acres on parcel number 570002517405, owned by Upper Montgomery Joint Authority.

The nominal size of the proposed solar array is 1.6 MWdc with a total of 2,782 solar panels. The panels will be post mounted. No regrading of the site is proposed, and total impervious coverage will be limited to the pads below the inverts and transformers, totaling less than 2,000 Square feet.

The applicant is requesting the Township waive the requirement to process a preliminary and final land development plan, as the applicant feels the requirement would be unreasonable as a minimal area of land will be disturbed to install the solar array posts, perimeter fencing, and concrete equipment pads. Section 500-842 to the Zoning Ordinance, states that upon an initial presentation demonstrating compliance with Ordinance 2024-03, land development may be waived by the Board of Supervisors (§ 500-842.E). The applicant has provided a narrative demonstrating compliance with the requirements of Ordinance 2024-03, enacted May 24, 2024.

An additional request has been made to waive the requirement to process a Drainage Plan. The proposed project does not require any regrading of the site and there is less than 2000 SF of impervious cover proposed (less than 0.2% of the site, and installing stormwater management facilities would create an unnecessary hardship and more unnecessary land disturbance.

The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) has reviewed the sketch plan and we present the following comments to serve as preliminary feedback based on the contents of that plan. We encourage the

applicant to consider the following comments as the land development process progresses as we believe that they will lead to an improved preliminary plan which better achieves local and regional planning goals.

Please note that these comments are preliminary and are subject to change upon the submission of a preliminary plan. Our comments are as follows:

WAIVERS

A. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE: Section 415-22 – Submittal and Processing of a Drainage Plan

1. While it appears that the limited disturbance of the proposed development would not require extensive stormwater management facilities, we defer to the Township to confirm that the physical circumstances of the site would allow for the waiving of a Drainage Plan and associated stormwater management facilities.
2. The applicant has noted that the proposed areas under the solar panels will be maintained in a mowed grass condition, not to be cut to less than four inches in height, allowing the stormwater to infiltrate into the vegetated areas. While this is a great alternative to gravel or a less pervious surface, we recommend the applicant consider the potential to plan native pollinator species, as recommended by the Office of Energy & Renewable Energy. Pollinator-friendly seed mixes not only provide much needed habitat, but are also a better alternative for stormwater management. More information can be found here: *https://www.energy.gov/eere/solar/articles/buzzing-around-solar-pollinator-habitat-under-solar-arrays*.

Attachment A: Aerial Image of Site
Attachment B: Reduced Copy of Applicant's Proposed Site Plan



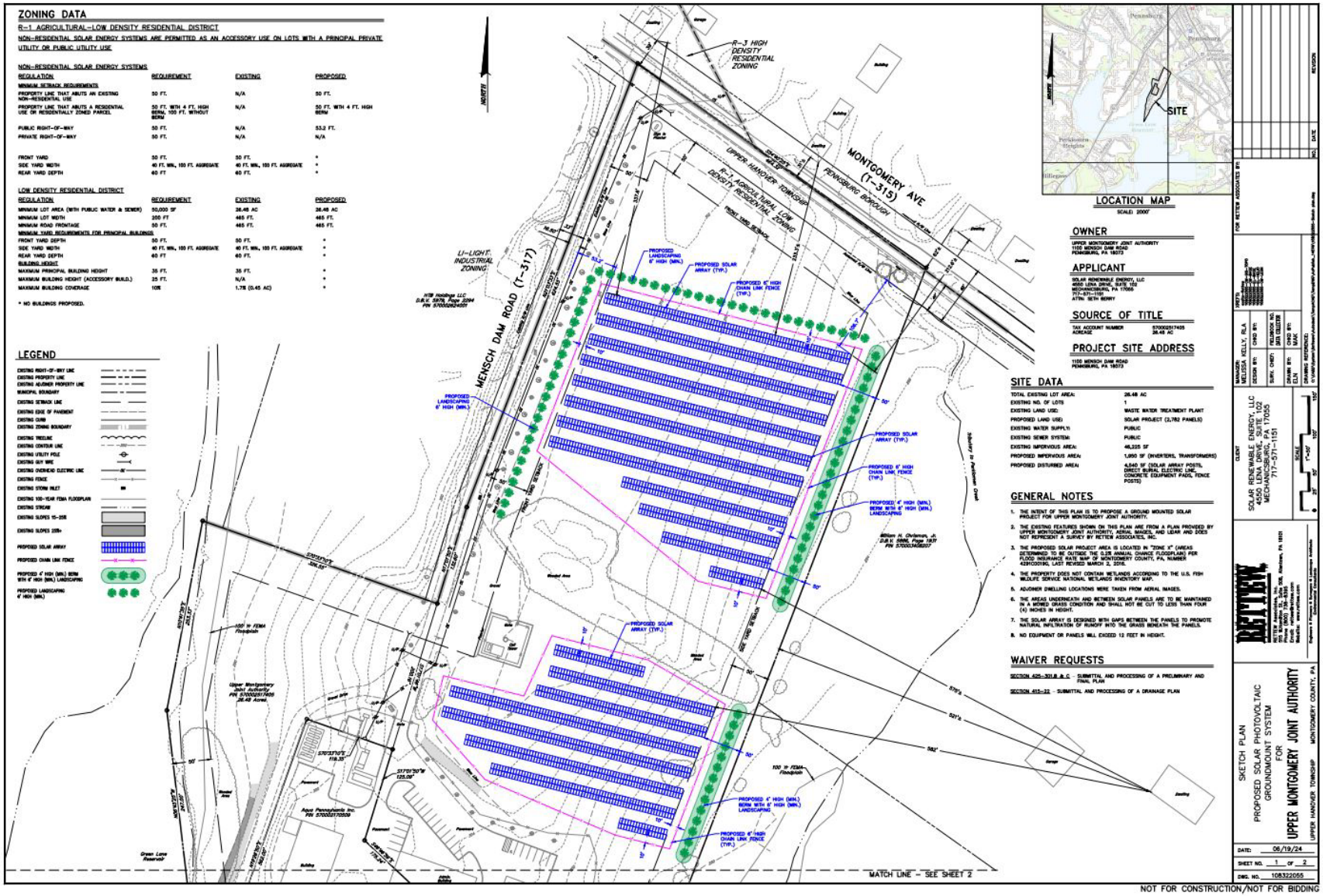
Solar Groundmount System for
Upper Montgomery Joint Authority
MCPC#240145001

Montgomery County Planning Commission

0 100 200 400 Feet

N

Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
PO Box 311 Norristown PA 19404-0311
(p) 610 278-3722 (f) 610 278-3941
www.montcopa.org/plancom
Aerial photography provided by Nearmap


ZONING DATA
R-1 AGRICULTURAL-LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
NON-RESIDENTIAL SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS ARE PERMITTED AS AN ACCESSORY USE ON LOTS WITH A PRINCIPAL PRIVATE UTILITY OR PUBLIC UTILITY USE
NON-RESIDENTIAL SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS
REGULATION | REQUIREMENT | EXISTING | PROPOSED
MINIMUM SETBACK REQUIREMENTS
PROPERTY LINE THAT ABUTS AN EXISTING NON-RESIDENTIAL USE | 50 FT. | N/A | 50 FT.
PROPERTY LINE THAT ABUTS A RESIDENTIAL USE OR RESIDENTIALLY ZONED PARCEL | 50 FT. WITH 4 FT. HIGH BERM, 100 FT. WITHOUT BERM | N/A | 50 FT. WITH 4 FT. HIGH BERM
PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY | 50 FT. | N/A | 53.2 FT.
PRIVATE RIGHT-OF-WAY | 50 FT. | N/A | N/A
FRONT YARD | 50 FT. | 50 FT. | *
SIDE YARD WIDTH | 40 FT. MIN., 100 FT. AGGREGATE | 40 FT. MIN., 100 FT. AGGREGATE | *
REAR YARD DEPTH | 40 FT. | 40 FT. | *
LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
REGULATION | REQUIREMENT | EXISTING | PROPOSED
MINIMUM LOT AREA (WITH PUBLIC WATER & SEWER) | 50,000 SF | 28.48 AC | 28.48 AC
MINIMUM LOT WIDTH | 200 FT. | 465 FT. | 465 FT.
MINIMUM ROAD FRONTAGE | 50 FT. | 465 FT. | 465 FT.
MINIMUM YARD REQUIREMENTS FOR PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS
FRONT YARD DEPTH | 50 FT. | 50 FT. | *
SIDE YARD WIDTH | 40 FT. MIN., 100 FT. AGGREGATE | 40 FT. MIN., 100 FT. AGGREGATE | *
REAR YARD DEPTH | 40 FT | 40 FT. | *
BUILDING HEIGHT
MAXIMUM PRINCIPAL BUILDING HEIGHT | 35 FT. | 35 FT. | *
MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT (ACCESSORY BUILD.) | 25 FT. | N/A | *
MAXIMUM BUILDING COVERAGE | 10% | 1.7% (0.45 AC) | *
* NO BUILDINGS PROPOSED.
LEGEND
NORTH
R-3 HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ZONING
R-1 AGRICULTURAL LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL ZONING
LI-LIGHT INDUSTRIAL ZONING
MENSCH DAM ROAD (T-317)
MONTGOMERY AVE (T-315)
UPPER HANOVER TOWNSHIP
PENNSBURG BOROUGH
PROPOSED SOLAR ARRAY (TYP.)
PROPOSED 6' HIGH CHAIN LINK FENCE (TYP.)
PROPOSED LANDSCAPING 6' HIGH (MIN.)
PROPOSED 4' HIGH (MIN.) BERM WITH 6' HIGH (MIN.) LANDSCAPING
100 Yr FEMA Floodplain
Upper Montgomery Joint Authority PIN 57000251705 28.48 Acres
Aqua Pennsylvania Inc. PIN 57000370559
Green Lane Reservoir
MATCH LINE - SEE SHEET 2
LOCATION MAP
SITE
OWNER
UPPER MONTGOMERY JOINT AUTHORITY
1100 MENSCH DAM ROAD
PENNSBURG, PA 18073
APPLICANT
SOLAR RENEWABLE ENERGY, LLC
4550 LENA DRIVE, SUITE 102
MECHANICSBURG, PA 17055
717-571-1151
ATTN: SETH BERRY
SOURCE OF TITLE
TAX ACCOUNT NUMBER 57000251705
ACREAGE 28.48 AC
PROJECT SITE ADDRESS
1100 MENSCH DAM ROAD
PENNSBURG, PA 18073
SITE DATA
TOTAL EXISTING LOT AREA: 28.48 AC
EXISTING NO. OF LOTS 1
EXISTING LAND USE: WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT
PROPOSED LAND USE) SOLAR PROJECT (2,782 PANELS)
EXISTING WATER SUPPLY: PUBLIC
EXISTING SEWER SYSTEM: PUBLIC
EXISTING IMPERVIOUS AREA: 48,225 SF
PROPOSED IMPERVIOUS AREA: 1,950 SF (INVERTERS, TRANSFORMERS)
PROPOSED DISTURBED AREA: 4,540 SF (SOLAR ARRAY POSTS, DIRECT BURIAL ELECTRIC LINE, CONCRETE EQUIPMENT PADS, FENCE POSTS)
GENERAL NOTES
1. THE INTENT OF THIS PLAN IS TO PROPOSE A GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR PROJECT FOR UPPER MONTGOMERY JOINT AUTHORITY.
2. THE EXISTING FEATURES SHOWN ON THIS PLAN ARE FROM A PLAN PROVIDED BY UPPER MONTGOMERY JOINT AUTHORITY, AERIAL IMAGES, AND LIDAR AND DOES NOT REPRESENT A SURVEY BY RETTEW ASSOCIATES, INC.
3. THE PROPOSED SOLAR PROJECT AREA IS LOCATED IN "ZONE X" (AREAS DETERMINED TO BE OUTSIDE THE 0.2% ANNUAL CHANCE FLOODPLAIN) PER FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA, NUMBER 42091C0316G, LAST REVISED MARCH 2, 2016.
4. THE PROPERTY DOES NOT CONTAIN WETLANDS ACCORDING TO THE U.S. FISH WILDLIFE SERVICE NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY MAP.
5. ADJOINER DWELLING LOCATIONS WERE TAKEN FROM AERIAL IMAGES.
6. THE AREAS UNDERNEATH AND BETWEEN SOLAR PANELS ARE TO BE MAINTAINED IN A MOWED GRASS CONDITION AND SHALL NOT BE CUT TO LESS THAN FOUR (4) INCHES IN HEIGHT.
7. THE SOLAR ARRAY IS DESIGNED WITH GAPS BETWEEN THE PANELS TO PROMOTE NATURAL INFILTRATION OF RUNOFF INTO THE GRASS BENEATH THE PANELS.
8. NO EQUIPMENT OR PANELS WILL EXCEED 12 FEET IN HEIGHT.
WAIVER REQUESTS
SECTION 405-301.B & C - SUBMITTAL AND PROCESSING OF A PRELIMINARY AND FINAL PLAN
SECTION 415-32 - SUBMITTAL AND PROCESSING OF A DRAINAGE PLAN
SOLAR RENEWABLE ENERGY, LLC
4550 LENA DRIVE, SUITE 102
MECHANICSBURG, PA 17055
717-571-1151
RETTEW
SKETCH PLAN
PROPOSED SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC GROUNDMOUNT SYSTEM
FOR
UPPER MONTGOMERY JOINT AUTHORITY
UPPER HANOVER TOWNSHIP MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA
DATE: 06/19/24
SHEET NO. 1 OF 2
DWG. NO. 108322055
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION/NOT FOR BIDDING