

CITY OF OSWEGO

PLANNING BOARD

June 1, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cory Moshier, Jeffrey Hinderliter, James Scanlon, Daniel Breitweg, and Chairman Freeman.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brit Hallenbeck and Kim McPherson.

Chairman Freeman called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday June 1, 2021. Roll call was duly noted.

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 2021 meeting was made by James Scanlon and seconded by Daniel Breitweg; minutes unanimously approved.

Cory Moshier made a motion that all actions taken tonight are excluded, exempt or Type II actions for the purpose of the State Environmental Quality Review Law unless otherwise stated. Motion seconded by Daniel Breitweg, unanimous approval.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Uncoordinated Review of Short Environmental Assessment Form and Determination of Significance – 261 George Washington Boulevard, Case 21-53; to allow for the installation of a new control enclosure, emergency generator and diesel fuel tank within the existing 345 kV switchyard, NY-CRR, Title 6, Ch. VI, Part 67 SEQR.

DISCUSSION: Ben Weisel, attorney for National Grid, was present for the discussion. He said he is here tonight to review a proposal to upgrade and maintain one of National Grid's existing electric substations located on Washington Boulevard. He said the existing substation is located between 6th Avenue and 3rd Avenue. He said in the 1970s Niagara Mohawk built this electric substation. He said for approximately 50 years this substation has provided safe and reliable electricity to homes and businesses in Oswego, the SUNY Oswego campus, and many other homes and businesses in New York State. He said the existing controls for the substation are currently located on property owned by NRG. He said this is because back in the 1970s when Niagara Mohawk built the substation and controls, Niagara Mohawk actually owned the entire steam station property. He said for that reason it made sense to locate the controls within the steam station. He said in 1999 Niagara Mohawk sold the steam station property to NRG and the substation controls remained on NRG property. He said National Grid is merely asking for permission to relocate the controls for the substation from the NRG owned steam station property to the National Grid owned substation property. He said in addition to relocating the controls National Grid will also be installing new protective relays within the enclosure which will significantly increase reliability. He said they are proposing to install a diesel backup generator and a fuel tank within the substation fence. He said in case of a large scale power outage the diesel generator will provide the necessary power to restore power to the station. The new enclosure will be located in the south east corner of the substation property. He said its dimensions will be approximately 30'x65' and have approximately 13 foot tall roof. He said it will be a typical public utility structure with a gray exterior and white roof. He said the City's industrial zoning district provides a minimum front setback of 25 feet. He said their enclosure will be in full compliance with this requirement. He said existing vegetation along Washington Boulevard will provide sufficient visual buffer to the surrounding community. He said National Grid is proposing to start construction in September 2021 and anticipates completing the enclosure in approximately six months. He said on the application he mentioned they're actually removing one enclosure and replacing it with a new enclosure. He said this is not the case. He said they are proposing to take the existing enclosure on the property and repurpose it. He said there is not enough space in the existing building to house the relocated controls from the NRG building which is the reason they need to build the new building. Chairman Freeman asked about the high-pressure gas line. Tyler Fish asked if he is asking about the gas line that runs parallel to Washington Boulevard. Chairman Freeman said it runs parallel to Washington Boulevard and then turns and heads north. He said it is the gas line that feeds the steam station. He was told the area where the gas pipeline is is closer to location P and the location of the control enclosure is not going to be located in the blue arrow area. Jeffrey Hinderliter asked their thought process for the short Environmental Assessment Form. He said it feels more like a Type II that wouldn't require any further environmental action. Mr. Weisel

said that sounds good to them. Mr. Caraccioli said the city is comfortable with that unless they think that there is some further oversight or regulatory agency that is going to look at it and question it. Mr. Weisel said he doesn't believe there is coordinated review associated with this so if the Board made that determination it would not be second-guessed by anyone. Mr. Caraccioli said there is a whole list of Type II actions. He said the two that hit the mark here include "replacement, rehabilitation or reconstruction of a structure or facility, in kind, on the same site, including upgrading buildings to meet energy code". He said technically they are moving a building from one site onto their property. He said that is from Section 617.5, Subsection C, Sub-paragraph 2. He said C Sub-paragraph 11 talks about project that includes the "extension of utility distribution facilities, including gas, electric, telephone, cable, water and sewer connections to render service in approved subdivisions or in connection with any action on this list". Jeffrey Hinderliter asked how many square feet of building. Mr. Weisel said 30x65. Mr. Caraccioli said less than 4,000. Jeffrey Hinderliter said another Type II action is "construction or expansion of a primary or accessory/appurtenant, non-residential structure or facility involving less than 4,000 square feet of gross floor area and not involving a change in zoning or a use variance and consistent with local land use controls, but not radio communication or microwave transmission facilities." He said they have three possible avenues to call this a Type II action. Mr. Caraccioli said a motion was made to declare all actions a Type II unless otherwise specified. He said this is an advertised action on the agenda so it would be his recommendation to adopt a motion to formally declare this action a Type II action.

DECISION: Jeffrey Hinderliter made a motion to declare this a Type II action. Motion seconded by Cory Moshier, unanimous approval.

2. Site Plan Review & Approval – 261 George Washington Boulevard, Case 21-54; to allow for the installation of a new control enclosure, emergency generator and diesel fuel tank within the existing 345 kV switchyard, Sections 280-35 thru 280-37.

DISCUSSION: Chairman Freeman asked if the diesel fuel tank is going to be enclosed. Mr. Weisel said yes. Chairman Freeman asked if it will be a concrete containment and he was told it'll have a secondary containment. Chairman Freeman asked if they will coordinate with the plant to drain it. He was told it will have its own and it won't tie into the energy plant at all. Chairman Freeman said because they said it will have a secondary containment unless they put a roof over it it is going to fill up with snow and rain. He was told it'll tie into existing drainage at the site. Chairman Freeman said he remembers when they had to pump out the substructure under TB7 they had to call a technician in to sample the water. He was told they would do the same. Chairman Freeman asked if they would coordinate with the plant and they said yes.

DECISION: Cory Moshier made a favorable motion for site plan approval. Motion seconded by James Scanlon, unanimous approval.

Jeffrey Hinderliter made a motion to adjourn at 6:46 p.m. Motion seconded by James Scanlon, unanimous approval.

Approved: _____

Richard Freeman

Planning Board Chairperson

Jeff McGann

Planning Board Secretary