

SunTribe Proposal – Questions/Comments from Staff

Summary:

SunTribe Development, LLC is proposing a PPEA to lease the entire acreage of the Aberdeen property for the development of a solar array facility. They have defined an area measuring approximately 110 acres within the former agricultural fields to situate their proposed solar array panels. The proposal includes a graduated annual option fee during the five-year option period.

SunTribe is proposing a 30-year lease with two (2) five (5) year extension terms and an exclusive option to lease all or a portion of the property during the five year option period and will pay the Town a fixed fee per acre and include a percentage increase for escalation. Within twelve months of the termination of the lease period, SunTribe agrees to dismantle and remove the facility.

See project summary as submitted by SunTribe for their presentation.

Questions:

1. Under Option Period Activities, will Sun Tribe pay for all reports, surveys and etc. required for all County permits?
2. Is a Solar Facility allowed within the restrictions of our Aberdeen conservation easement? Are solar panels an allowable use within this easement?
3. Under Access & Easements, will rock/gravel be placed for the access easements if vehicles are traveling through the property? If so, who is responsible for permitting, developing, maintaining the access roads. Access roads for water infrastructure are allowed within the restrictions of the conservation easement, but are they allowed for a solar facility?
4. Under Nutrient Credits, can the applicant/Town apply for nutrient credits in the area along the streams? The Town's nutrient bank at Aberdeen requires a stream buffer area around all streams.
5. Does Loudoun County have any restrictions relating to the "View Shed". Would Sun Tribe have to get approval from area residents because they are changing the existing view/landscape of the property? Is the intensity of this development a use that is contemplated in the County's AR-1 Zoning District.
6. Would Sun Tribe consider an alternative minimum acreage (such as 65 acres) and/or would Sun Tribe consider the use of the 5-7 acre parcel by the WWTP (the parcel with the Hirst Farm Well)?

7. Would electricity generated by the solar panels be available free of charge for use at the nearby Water Treatment Plant?
8. Would there may be push back from the neighbors? The use will be visible from Short Hill Road and the current view is quite beautiful.
9. The proposed terms call for SunTribe to lease 193.55 acres yet the exhibits show the potential leased area at only 110 acres. Please explain discrepancy.
10. The 110 acre area encompasses some areas reserved for critical water infrastructure as defined by the Town's commission permit with Loudoun County. Can the 110 acre area be modified to allow for specific site locations of critical infrastructure?
11. A solar array farm requires intensive weed control in order to prevent shading of solar arrays. This weed control is typically done with herbicides due to the intensive labor costs associated with weed control between panels. What does SunTribe propose to ensure that the Town's well supply is not contaminated?

Comments:

1. This proposed use has the advantage of not putting an additional easement on the land for perpetuity, and the Town would regain use of the land after the long-term use expires, preserving the land for water infrastructure that may be needed in the future.