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Medway Town Hall
155 Village Street
Medway, MA 02053
Telephone (508) 533-3291
Fax (508) 321-4987
Email: DRC@townofmedway.org
www.townofmedway.org

TOWN OF MEDWAY

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

September 11, 2024

Andrew Catania, Vice President, Development Acquisitions
VC Renewables
110 Edison Place, Suite 312
Newark, NJ 07102
Re: DRC Letter of Recommendation – Medway Grid, LLC - Battery Energy Storage System

Dear Mr. Catania,

The Design Review Committee [DRC] is grateful for the opportunity to provide this letter of recommendation that pertains to the proposed sound wall at the Battery Energy Storage System facility on Route 109 (Milford Street). Please note, the DRC is providing a letter of recommendation for the purposes of ensuring local input, pursuant to the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (D.P.U.) Final Order - 22-18/22-19 issued on June 30, 2023.

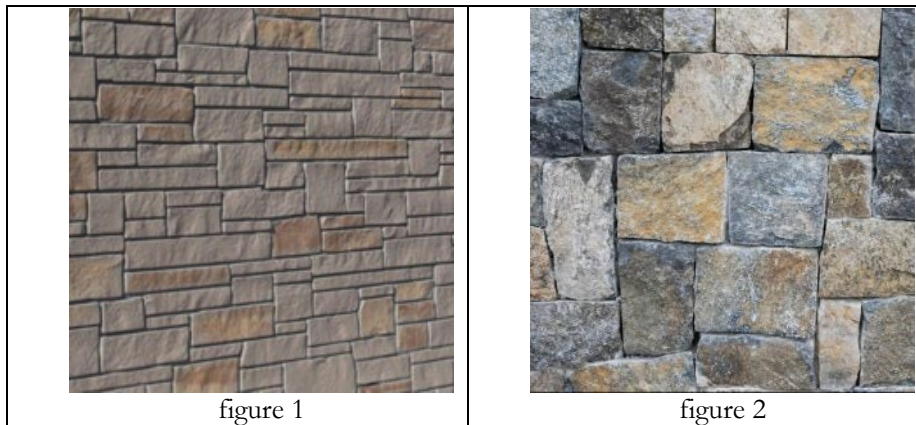
The DRC intends this letter to provide a lasting group of recommendations, that when properly implemented, will serve to reduce the negative visual and aesthetic impact of the sound wall. The DRC was careful to point out that this wall is to become a permanent fixture in the town of Medway, and as such, each of these recommendations should be maintained for the lifespan of the wall and not just merely installed at build out. The Town of Medway has been asked to accept this structure, which in no way aligns with aesthetics laid out in the Medway Design Review Guidelines. In turn, the DRC requests that a robust and clear maintenance plan be formulated and regulated to ensure that the goal of reducing the negative effects of this wall be upheld in perpetuity.

The DRC has met three times on June 24th, August 5th, August 19th, 2024 with members representing VC Renewables, McPhee Electric Ltd., and Langan Engineering and Environmental Services. At each meeting we reviewed the proposed site plan, landscaping and wall design. Graphic renderings were presented and constructive discusses took place. During these meetings, discussion focused on the layout, design, and appearance of the proposed soundwall, ranging from structural materials, architectural elements, exterior surface materials, and color and shading preferences, as well as the planting locations, all-seasonal screening capabilities, species diversity, and indigeneity of the proposed vegetative screening. Input was received and welcomed from the public. As the representative for the Battery Energy Storage System facility, you and other project team members received recommendations at each meeting and provided updates at subsequent meetings. While the project team was receptive to many of the recommendations provided, the finer details, although discussed in part, were not fully conceived over the course of the three meetings. The DRC requests that these details be called out in the site plan and designs. The DRC recommendations are as follows:

Sound Wall:

The two sections of sound wall will be installed, each at 22 feet high. The section along the northern property line, adjacent to Milford Street, is 607 feet long and the section along the eastern property line is 710 feet long. The proposed product is Aftec Sound Tec Wall. These are concrete sound wall panels installed between vertical supports.

The DRC recommends the pattern of “Ledge Stone” in the grey color tone as proposed by the applicant and illustrated here in figure 1



- This pattern includes a varied color pattern to simulate natural stone. It has been indicated to the DRC that the coloration to this wall system is done in the field at the time of installation and can include assorted color tones and shades.
- The DRC recommends in addition to the grey and oxidized iron color, a darker gray color be included to more closely replicate the stones found in the area as illustrated in figure 2.
- This coloration should be randomized and varied, so as not to develop a pattern and appear artificial.
- The coloration is meant to be permanent, and the maintenance plan should assure it remains.
- The maintenance plan should also provide solutions for vandalism and graffiti as well as damages of any kind that effect or alter the appearance of the material.
- The joining columns and headers should match the grey color recommended.

Vegetative Screening and Landscape:

The two sections of sound wall are to include a landscaping plan that is designed to buffer and screen the wall visually. The section along Milford Street will include a more detailed plan that is designed to be more ornamental and have a larger visual impact. The easterly section is adjacent to wetlands and abuts a grove of forest. There will be a restoration of landscape along this northeast corner. Each of the plans are shown on the site plan. It has been indicated that existing trees will be maintained. The DRC has not reviewed a document demonstrating this inventory of existing trees to be kept.

- The DRC has stated that the only means of screening this large and lengthy wall is with a permanent and robust landscaping plan. This can only be achieved through proper maintenance. At no time should this wall system be unscreened. A long-term perspective must be adopted at the outset of this project.
- The landscape maintenance plan must be detailed and provide clear solutions for loss of elements for the entire life of the wall. Realistically, most plantings will surpass their lifespan and require replacement at some point.
- The landscape maintenance must address the growth and upkeep of the various plantings. Upkeep is critical to the aesthetic of the screening. An overgrown or untidy landscape with create an additional and separate eye sore.

- The DRC recommends the inclusion of many evergreen shrubs in the landscape plan. These species grow at a mid-height and will provide dense four-season screening. Those species are Rhododendrons, American Holly and additional Eastern Red Cedars. Shown here:



- Trees with taller canopies should be pruned to keep them from the utility lines and subsequent heavy trimming by utility company crews.
- The plant species Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) is not included in the site plan but is being proposed as a climbing wall cover. The DRC recommends a maintenance plan be established to prevent this vine from overtaking the other plantings and invading the landscape.
- The DRC recommends the installation of an irrigation system to ensure the health and survival of plantings.
- The graphic renderings of the wall suggested that several of the existing fully grown trees that border the site to the south and west would be maintained. The DRC recommends that these trees be called out on an inventory and ear marked for preservation. These trees currently serve to create a visual buffer for the top of the wall. Without them, the top edge of the wall would be silhouetted against the bare sky. When these trees have surpassed their lifespan, new trees should be encouraged to replace them.

The DRC recognizes that this project, being one of the first of its kind in the Commonwealth, will have a substantial impact on the public perception of future BESS and large-scale renewable energy projects set to propagate statewide over the next several decades. It is the sincere hope of the committee that these recommendations are earnestly implemented with the hope that the facility remains an attractive and viable site beyond our lifespans. We appreciate your receptiveness to our input.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Buckley
Chair

cc:

Shreya Tiwari, VC Renewables
David Velasco, VC Renewables
Michael Cocchimiglio, VC Renewables
Shreya Tiwari, VC Renewables
Daniel Veilleux, McPhee Electric Ltd.
Achan Sookying, Langan Engineering and Environmental Services
Hilary Holmes, Langan Engineering and Environmental Services
Andrew O. Kaplan, Pierce Atwood LLP
Barbara Saint Andre, Director, Community and Economic Development Department
Jeremy Thompson, Planning and Economic Development Coordinator
Jonathan Ackley, Building Commissioner