

south mountain

COMPANY

TO: Lucy Morrison, MVC
FROM: John Abrams, South Mountain Company, Inc.
DATE: May 9, 2019
RE: Proposed South Mountain Company Expansion Narrative

Introduction

This information, along with site plans and diagrams, is to prepare MVC staff for an informal review of SMC expansion plans. With the success in recent years of the South Mountain Company (SMCo) solar business and the expansion of the SMCo architectural practice, SMCo has out-grown its current facility.

SMCo is proposing to expand its facility by:

- Adding a 3,600 SF lumber storage and shop space
- Adding a 600 SF solar components storage building
- Convert existing shop space to meeting space and office, and existing lumber storage space to shop space
- Infrastructure improvements as shown on plan include:
 - Increase parking spots from 35 to 40
 - Clear additional 12,000 SF of wooded area
- Raise allowable number of full time employees on site to 24
- Remove temporary 1350 SF temporary hoop building
- Net building area gain = 2850 SF

History:

- 1998 MVC and WT ZBA approved original DRI proposal: +/-10,000 SF building, 12 full time employees allowable on site
- 1999 completed and occupied
- 2004 applied for expansion: MVC determined non-concurrence, remanded to ZBA. ZBA approved 2700 SF expansion and allowable number of full-time employees was raised to 18.
- 2005: completed 2300 SF of 2700 SF approved (remainder has not been built)
- 2010: added temporary hoop building 1350 SF with approval of Ernie Mendenhall (WT building inspector)

Traffic

In 2005 the MVC installed automatic traffic recorders on Stony Hill Road, on Red Arrow Road (SMC access road) and Rock Pond Road (Island Cohousing access road). The data produced the following predictions about the expansion we were proposing at the time:

- SMCo share of Stony Hill Road traffic would increase from 19% to 23% during off-peak season and 10% to 12% during peak season
- Weekday Red Arrow Road trips would increase from 110 to 140
- Mike Mauro has agreed to do some updated counts.

It would be valuable to do some Red Arrow Road measurements now. It is also important to note that SMCo existing financial incentives for employees to bike, walk, and VTA to work may mitigate increased traffic.

Waste Disposal

The SMC facility uses composting toilets and a greywater irrigating system. The system was experimental, and we have been monitoring flow for 19 years, reporting monthly to the Board of Health. The system, designed by Kent Healy, has a capacity of 162 gallons per day. It has been problem-free with average flow over many years of 20-24 gallons per day. Proposed building occupancy is a 33% increase so there appears to be plenty of additional capacity. Kent Healy has inspected the system and will prepare a report which we will submit.

Commercial Use with Comprehensive Permit

Christine Flynn has asked for a determination about whether this expansion is allowable in accordance with the Department of Housing and Community Development. The attached letter demonstrates that the DHCD has determined that this issue is entirely in the hands of the local permit granting authority (West Tisbury ZBA).

Quarry Hole Decision

The MVC approval for development of the property in 1998 added a condition that SMCo avoid any impacts within 50 feet of a cellar hole on Lot 2 until the West Tisbury Historical Commission had conducted testing in the area. That testing was never completed and WTHC recently indicated that they do not have the expertise to conduct any investigations and recommended we consult with a professional archeologist. PAL Senior Archeologist Holly Herbster reviewed the property in January this year and determined that the depression is unlikely to be a cellar hole or contain any potential Native American artifacts. Her memorandum on the matter is attached.

Affordable Housing Mitigation

We propose to comply with the Commissions most recent policies concerning the Affordable Housing Policy

Impact

SMCo has been an exceedingly good neighbor in its 20 years of occupancy at this site. SMCo pays a large percentage of road maintenance on Stoney Hill, hosts road association meetings, provides woodchips to area residents, and provides kindling to area residents. As far as we can tell, we have only a positive impact on the neighborhood.

In addition, SMCo provides regional benefits that derive from SMCo's various programs (affordable housing, charitable contributions, educational work, and community work), its mission-based business model, and the creation of good, lifelong, livable wage jobs and ownership opportunities for all employees.