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Martha's Vineyard Commission

Land Use Planning Committee

Notes of the Meeting of October 6, 2008

Held in the Stone Building, New York Avenue, Oak Bluffs. 5:30 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Richard Toole (Chair); John Breckenridge; Christina Brown, and Pete Cabana.
MVC Staff Present: Paul Foley and Mark London.

1. Our Market Solar Panels (DRI 4-M4) Modification Review

Applicant: Kim Sears (Our Market); Rob Meyers (Agent/South Mountain Company)

Location: 1 East Chop Drive, Oak Bluffs, Map 8 lot 137

Proposal: The installation of a grid-tied, 10 kilowatt Photo Voltaic system on the south facing roofs of the main store front and rear warehouse.

Presentation:

- Rob Meyers of South Mountain Company, Inc. described the project.
 - Each roof is to receive an approximately 380 square foot array of photovoltaic (PV) modules.
 - Each array is to be installed in a parallel plane to the roof surface; no "tilt racking" is to be used for the mounting system.
 - This system is expected to generate, on an annual basis, 12,000 kWh of electricity or 10% of the facility's current usage.
 - This percentage is expected to rise as Our Market Corp. works with Cape Light Compact to replace older, inefficient refrigeration equipment with more efficient systems. These improvements may make it possible for the PV system to produce 20%-30% of annual electric consumption.
 - They also intend to strip and replace the roof.
 - They hope to have them installed by the end of this year to take advantage of the current tax rebate program.

Discussion:

- Commissioner Breckenridge said that, in the rendering, the panels were darker than the roof, and wondered whether they would blend in better if the roof was darker. Rob Meyers said that the panels should reflect the sky, would be lighter than shown, and might well match the proposed roofing color. However, he offered to would look into this.
- Mark London asked whether they could make the array larger so that it looks as if it is the entire roof. Rob said they prefer to keep an area around the array where they can walk on the roof.
- Commissioner Cabana thought that it is important to make the panels visible, not invisible.
- There was some discussion that perhaps they should have a display meter in Our Market so that the public can see the energy being generated. Rob Meyers said that information from the installation will be published on the Massachusetts Collaborative website.

- Mark London suggested that there might be an issue with reflectivity of the panels such as glare that might affect either drivers or homeowners on the ridge across the street.
- Rob Meyers said that the whole point of the panels is to collect the rays of the sun. The panels absorb 90% of the rays in transmission. He said that they will not be as reflective as windows.
- Commissioner Brown asked if he could guarantee that there would be no glare issues with this project.
- Rob Meyers said he could not make a guarantee.
- Commissioner Brown asked if an issue were to arise would South Mountain fix it.
- Rob Meyers said that if a glare/reflectivity issue were to arise as a result of this installation they would do what they could to ameliorate it.
- He added that the perfect angle for the panels would be 40 degrees and this roof is 30 degrees.

Motion:

- ***Christina Brown made a motion that the LUPC to recommend to the full commission that this is not a major modification and does not require a public hearing and should be approved. Pete Cabana seconded the motion.***
- Commissioner Breckenridge asked if the maker of the motion would be willing to amend the motion to add "if they select new shingling to match the panels and minimize the contrast between the roof and the panels". The amendment was not addressed.
- ***The LUPC voted unanimously to approve the motion.***
- Commissioner Cabana noted that Martha's Vineyard voted to become a sustainable energy island.