



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Office of Community Planning and Development

July 12, 2017

To: Lisa Heavner, First Selectman

From: William Rice, Chairman Simsbury Planning Commission

Re: Deepwater Wind LLC, Petition 1313 Ct Siting Council

The Simsbury Planning Commission reviewed and discussed the Connecticut Siting Council Petition 1313 of Deepwater Wind LLC (Tobacco Valley Solar) at the July 11, 2017 regular meeting. It was the consensus of the Planning Commission that the Petition is not consistent with the goals and objectives of the 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development. While the consensus was reached, the Board did not take a vote and/or action on this finding because of perceived conflict with some of the goals and objectives cited in the 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development.

The Commission reached its consensus after reviewing and discussing Petition 1313 as it relates the goals and objectives outlined in the 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development. In reaching the Commission's consensus, there were several areas of the current plan which steered opinions that the petition was not consistent with the 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development. Below are some of the references found in the current plan which illustrate how the petition is in conflict with the 2007 plan:

- Page 30-31: **What We Want to Protect- Agricultural Resources: Policy 1 – Strongly support the preservation of working farms**
 - *Objective A*- Preserve the Town's agrarian legacy
- Page 85-86: **How We Want to Grow- Special Areas**
 - Residential uses and zoning along Hoskins Road reinforce the character of that neighborhood and provide a good transition from Route 10/Hopmeadow Street and should remain.
- Page 86: **How We Want to Grow-Special Areas**
 - An additional priority for any development of the north end should include a right-of-way for an arterial connection between the intersection of Wolcott Road and Route 10/Hopmeadow Street through to the intersection of Hoskins Road and County Road. This arterial will divert traffic wishing to go north on Route 10/Hopmeadow Street and/or Wolcott Road away from the Hoskins Road/Ely Lane and Route 10/Hopmeadow Street intersection. This proposal is also consistent with the recommendation to shift State Route 315 to Wolcott Road.

- Page 44: **What We Want To Protect- Community Character**

- **Sense of Place:**

A “sense of place” is what draws many new residents to Simsbury. People make a conscious choice to live here because of its small town character and sense of community.

The concept of “place” is abstract, and defining it is elusive; however, you know it when you see it. Place is found in organizational patterns of the physical landscape, natural, or built, i.e., ridgelines, signature brownstones buildings, winding secondary roads, etc., or in preserved historical land uses, such as farms, factories, mills, etc.

These patterns extend beyond the visual. It is more than just the way the town “looks”.

“Place” is also manifested in the interaction between human and habitat. The organizational pattern of a farmstead, for example, includes the familiar house, barns, and fields. But it also includes the experience of a farm- the sounds (live-stock and tractors), the smells (manure and freshly mown hay), and the history associated with the site (perhaps owned by the same family for generations or renowned for its organic produce).

- Page 46-48: **What We Want to Protect – Community Character**

- **List of Character Places – Simsbury’s Treasures:** *The area is listed as one of 36 sites listed in the Plan as “character places” with a goal of maintaining and enhancing the established character of Simsbury*

- page 46- **Buildings #9** *Various Tobacco Fields and barns*

- page 46 – **Aesthetic Places #30** *Various Tobacco fields and barns: Firetown, Hoskins Road*

- Page 113: **How We Want to Grow- Economic Development – Policy 4 Encourage economic development to harmonize with the natural surroundings, adjoining uses, and any surrounding residential areas**

- **Objective A:** Ensure adequate protection of the environment, historic resources, open space and recreation

- **Objective B:** Blend development in village areas with surrounding structures and uses

- **Objective C:** Require aesthetically pleasing buffering between different types of land uses and along roads.

- **Objective E:** The design of structure, signs, and lighting fixtures should conform to the Design Review Board’s publication “Guidelines for Community Design”, and the Zoning Regulations.

- **Objective F:** Encourage future business development to provide pedestrian access by adding and/or improving walkways, courtyards and park like settings.

- Page 19: **What We Want to Protect- Natural Resources – Policy 8 Development- Encourage development away from conservation areas or areas that are unsuitable due to the presence of steep slopes, soils with severe development limitations, wetlands, riparian corridors, public water supply aquifers and associated recharge areas, significant natural communities and habitats or other sensitive natural conditions.**

- **Objective L:** Require developments to use habitat-friendly design elements. For example, low-angle curbing eases crossing by reptiles and other small animals.

Although the Commission reached a consensus that Petition 1313 of Deepwater Wind LLC was not consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in the 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development, a portion of the discussion was devoted towards how the Petition made said goals and objectives. The Commission wanted to point out that one could argue that the Petition meets the following goals and objectives:

- Page 8: **Introduction- Plan Summary**

- **Economic Development**

- The 2007 Plan recognizes the importance of an economic balance within Simsbury and recommends policies and programs to:

1. Develop an understanding of the net economic impact of each type of development
2. Recruit businesses that will have the most positive and sustainable net economic impact for the Town.
3. Encourage business expansion by existing and new entities

4. Implement programs to assist with economic development (establish incentives, streamline the application process, and consider establishing a development agency).
- Page 30-31: **What We Want to Protect- Agricultural Resources: Policy 1 – Strongly support the preservation of working farms**
 - **Objective A-** Preserve the Town's agrarian legacy
 - Page 105: **How We Want to Grow – Economic Development Overview**
 - The tax benefit of commercial and industrial property is important. New economic development policies must be adopted to encourage commercial and industrial activity, thereby shifting some of the tax burden from homeowners. This point has been stressed by the Economic Development Commission and Board of Finance. At the same time, our community cannot have a singular focus on simple percentages. Grand list growth is only one half of the equation. It is “net economic impact” of development (the revenues generated by a development over time netted against the costs incurred as a result of that development) that ultimately affects our taxes, and that is why it is important to identify land uses that will have the most positive “net economic impact” on the Town. At the same time, however, it also important to consider the “net economic impact” to the region in terms of gross regional product, property values, personal income, sales volumes, or other metrics.

On behalf of the Planning Commission, I would like to thank the Board of Selectmen for requesting input from the Commission. As a board, we look forward to future discussion with the Board of Selectmen on this and other matters.

Sincerely,



William Rice, Chairman
Simsbury Planning Commission