

10/21/13

City Council

From: Kelli Brooks

Re: South 40 LLC Power Purchase by BED

P/f 10/21/13

One of my main concerns regarding this solar project is that due to the nature of it being a utility project it is not subject to the many points of scrutiny that other developments proposals require. Usually there are multiple opportunities for citizens and the city to weigh in and raise important questions. However, once you approve the power purchase agreement, this project goes before the PSB who has received legislative direction to increase renewable energy opportunities in Vermont.

And, fair enough, I too, believe renewable energy should be supported. But I do not support renewable energy at the cost of clearcutting many, many acres of trees, overwhelming our stormwater system and polluting the lake. There has been no storm water impact review by our hydrology engineers or by the people at Public Works.

AND, please take a moment to realize that we are not talking about 25 panels out in a field. This would be hundreds and hundreds, if not a thousand panels in the middle of a residential neighborhood. I can find NO precedence for placing a project of this size in an urban neighborhood and therefore neither can I find research related to the public health concerns of living in such proximity to that much electromagnetic output.

What I can find is an open space protection plan for this city which prioritizes the preservation of wetlands and therefore the water quality of nearby lake Champlain, the protection of green space, the importance travel corridors for people and wildlife, tree retention and increased opportunities for dogs off leash. I've also found that the Conservation Legacy Fund has \$700,000 in it to preserve land for exactly these purposes.

I think that first of all, we need to slow down this utility permitting process so we can look at the logistics and sustainability of such a project. I think we should also be asking if it makes much sense to support one environmental project at the cost of dismissing and destroying other clear environmental priorities for this city which we have funding to protect.

Thank you,

Kelli Brooks

Board Member

Stratmore Homeowners Association

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