TOWN OF NORTHFIELD

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
Monday, May 6, 2024

At 7:00 O'clock in the Evening
At the P'oneer Valley Regional School, 97 F. Sumner Turner Rd.

147 Registered Voters in attendance. Meeting START at 7:09 PM

ARTICLE 27: SOLAR PETITION [CITIZEN'S PETITION]

To see if the town will vote to amend the town ZONING BYLAWS by adding a new section, 9.9, A, B and C, Temporary Moratorium on the Permitting and Construction of Large-Scale Industrial Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Systems including so called 'Dual-Use/Agri-Voltaics' that would provide as follows;

A) Purpose. The Town of Northfield contains extensive open space, and rural undeveloped areas. Northfield has chosen to be a Right to Farm Community and as such has cherished its prime agricultural land. The Town of Northfield and its residents are being approached by developers to site industrial scale solar development esidential agricultural neighborhoods outside of our Solar Overlay District. There is an identifiable c mmunity need to establish thoughtful, appropriate zoning regulations to ensure that Industrial Scale Sola uses and development will be consistent with the Town's Master

   Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan and long-term planning interests therefore it is crucial that the Town establish a temporary moratorium on the granting of Permits and use of land for the construction of Large-Scale Industrial Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Systems and related structures. The average size of a solar system to provide electricity for residential use in Massachusetts is 6.5 kW or up to 40kW for a barn or sugarhouse and this moratorium relates only to systems greater than 200% (up to 80Kw) of the documented average use (i.e. power generation rather than accessory to a home or other use.)

B) Definitions. LARGE-SCA E INDUSTRIAL GROUND-MOUNTED SOLAR shall mean a solar photovoltaic system producing more than 200% of the documented average annual demand for all uses on a property that is structurally mounted on the ground and is not building mounted, including associated infrastructure as well as e ergy capturing storage systems called Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

C) Moratorium. No Special . ermits or Building Permits shall be issued for the construction of Large Scale Industrial Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Systems including 'DualUse/Agri-Voltaics' until the date of August 30, 2025. Solar v ltaic projects exempt from this moratorium shall include any project that is allowed by right in the exi ting solar overlay district; or solar projects for farms, the farming activities and the attached residential s ructures, commercial properties, businesses, municipal properties, residential properties, churches and onprofits equal to or less than 200% of the documented average annual use,

provided that no ground mounted solar project be sited in lands protected by the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, or located in BioMap 3 Critical Natural Landscape, Core Habitat, Important Habitat, or Priority Habitat, or protected open space, or Native American cultural areas as determined by Massachusetts' Indigenous people.

Summary: The purpose of this temporary moratorium is to allow sufficient time to engage in a planning process to address the new reality of the impact of Large-Scale Industrial Ground- Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Projects and associated structures on the town, and to enact bylaws in a matter consistent with sound land-use planning goals and objectives as informed by our Master Plan our Open Space and Recreation Plan.

MOTION TO AMEND ARTICLE 27 BY JOE GRAVELINE "IN SECTION A INSERT THE WORD 'IN' TO READ 'INDUSTRIAL SCALE SOLAR DEVELOPMENT IN RESIDENTIAL AGRICULTURAL NEIGHBORHOODS'. IN SECTION C STRIKE THE WORD 'DETERMINED' AND REPLACE IT WITH THE WORD 'INSTRUCTED'; STRIKE THE WORDS 'MASSACHUSETS INDIGINOUS PEOPLE' AND REPLACE WITH 'THE MARCH 21,2024 ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIRECTIVE'. UNDER SECTION SUMMARY ADD THE WORD 'AND' TO READ 'AS INFORMED BY OUR MASTER PLAN AND OUR OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN'"

MOTION TO AMEND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION AS AMENDED To see if the town will vote to amend the town ZONING BYLAWS by adding a new section, 9.9, A, B and C, Temporary Moratorium on the Permitting and Construction of Large-Scale Industrial Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Systems including so called 'Dual-Use/Agri-Voltaics' that would provide as follows;

A) *Purpose. The Town of Northfield contains extensive open space, and rural undeveloped areas. Northfield has chosen to be a Right to Farm Community and as such has cherished its prime agricultural land. The Town of Northfield and its residents are being approached by developers to site industrial scale solar development IN residential agricultural neighborhoods outside of our Solar Overlay District. There is an identifiable community need to establish thoughtful, appropriate zoning regulations to ensure that Industrial Scale Solar uses and development will be consistent with the Town's Master Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan and long-term planning interests therefore it is crucial that the Town establish a temporary moratorium on the granting of Permits and use of land for the construction of Large-Scale Industrial Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Systems and related structures. The average size of a solar system to provide electricity for residential use in Massachusetts is 6.5 kW or up to 40kW for a barn or sugarhouse and this moratorium relates only to systems greater than 200% (up to 80Kw) of the documented average use (i.e. power generation rather than accessory to a home or other use.)*

B) *Definitions. LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRIAL GROUND-MOUNTED SOLAR shall mean a solar photovoltaic system producing more than 200% of the documented average annual demand for all uses on a property that is structurally mounted on the ground and is not building mounted, including associated infrastructure as well as energy capturing storage systems called Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).*

C) *Moratorium. No Special Permits or Building Permits shall be issued for the construction of Large Scale Industrial Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Systems including 'DualUse/Agri-Voltaics' until the date of August 30, 2025. Solar voltaic projects exempt from this moratorium shall include any project that is allowed by right in the existing solar overlay district; or solar projects for farms, the farming activities and the attached residential structures, commercial properties, businesses, municipal properties, residential properties, churches and nonprofits equal to or less than 200% of the documented average annual use, provided that no ground mounted solar project be sited in lands protected by the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, or located in BioMap 3 Critical Natural Landscape, Core Habitat, Important*

Habitat, or Priority Habitat, or protected open space, or Native American cultural areas as INSTRUCTED by THE MARCH 21, 2024 ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIRECTIVE.

Summary: The purpose of this temporary moratorium is to allow sufficient time to engage in a planning process to address the new reality of the impact of Large-Scale Industrial Ground- Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Projects and associated structures on the town, and to enact bylaws in a matter consistent with sound land-use planning goals and objectives as informed by our Master Plan and our Open Space and Recreation Plan.

MOTION BY: PETITIONER JOHN BUXTON SECOND BY JOE GRAVELINE
MARGARET REARDON PLANNING BOARD REPORT: Planning Board Public Hearing held on May 2, 2024. Planning Board voted unanimously in favor to recommend this article to Town Meeting.

[VOTE REQUIRED: TWO-THIRDS] PASSED TWO THIRDS (VOTE: 81 YES, 17 NO)