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PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE
October 12, 2021

MEETING DATE
OCTOBER 13, 2021

Case #: 21-35 Site Plan Review
376 Nash Road
Map: 102
Lots: 85, 95, 163, 185
Owner/ NextGrid Inc.
Applicant: PO Box 73069 #7775
San Francisco, CA 94120
Zoning District: Industrial-B (IB)
Site Area: 3.8 acres
Overview: Request by applicant for **Site Plan Review** for the construction multiple solar panel arrays and associated site improvements.



Proposed site of carport solar arrays.
Looking north from the southern property line.

Existing Conditions

The project site is currently a series of paved and unpaved parking areas used by the businesses and church located in the buildings at 376 Nash Road and 123 Church Street. The businesses include food distribution companies that require truck access to loading bays on site.

Abutting the site are a church to the east located at 123 Church Street, residential properties on Earle Street to the south, the King Street mill building to north across Nash Road, and railroad tracks and wetlands to the west. The surrounding neighborhood is a mix of residential properties, businesses along Church Street and Nash Road, and mill buildings.

Related Permitting

The applicant is also seeking a Variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals for dimensional and green space requirements. They have also made a Request for a Determination of Applicability with the Conversation Commission.

Decision Criteria

The applicant is requesting Site Plan Review. The ordinance provides the Board the following criteria for reaching a decision.

Site Plan Review Criteria

In considering Site Plan Approval for the proposed project, the Board must find that the plan meets the objectives identified in Section 5470 of the City's Zoning Ordinance (c.9) including:

- **Adequate access to each structure for fire and service equipment**
- **Adequate provision for utilities and stormwater drainage**
- **Site alteration shall be designed after considering the qualities of the specific location, proposed land use, the design of building form, grading, egress points and other aspects of the development so as to:**
 - Minimize cut/fill volumes, removal of 6" caliper trees and larger, removal of stone walls, displacement of wetland vegetation, extent of stormwater flow increase from the site, soil erosion and the threat of air/water pollution;
 - Maximize pedestrian/vehicular safety to/from the site
 - Minimize the obstruction of scenic views from publicly accessible locations
 - Minimize visual intrusion by controlling layout/visibility of parking, storage and outdoor service areas viewed from public ways and residential areas
 - Minimize glare from vehicle headlights and lighting fixtures
 - Minimize unreasonable departure from the character, materials and scale of buildings in the vicinity
 - Minimize contamination of groundwater from on-site wastewater disposal systems or operations on the premises involving the use, storage, handling or containment of solid/liquid wastes and hazardous substances
 - Ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance
 - Minimize damage to existing adjacent public ways
 - Promote orderly and reasonable internal circulation within the site so as to protect public safety

Proposed Conditions

The applicant proposes to install five carport solar arrays over the parking areas south and west of the buildings at 376 Nash Road and 123 Church Street. Associated power transmission and storage equipment is proposed for the western edge of the site and along Church Street. Additional site improvements include landscaping and necessary repairs to the existing parking areas.

Staff Review

The table below outlines the proposed site changes and highlights items for discussion and the Board's consideration.

Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant proposed no changes to the number of parking spaces. • <u>Carports are proposed over the parking area off Nash Road and the rear of the parking area off Church Street.</u> The Board may wish to discuss how parking will be accommodated during construction.
Landscaping & Site Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscaped areas proposed are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evergreen plantings on Church Street to screen transmission equipment. The Board may wish to confirm the number and species of plants selected for this area with the applicant and condition that plans be revised to indicate both. ○ 15 Leyland Cypress trees along the property line with Nash Road for screening ○ New England wetland seed mix and shade tolerate plants in "vegetated depressions" along the western property line. The Board may wish to confirm the number and species of plants selected for this area with the applicant and condition that plans be revised to indicate both. • The applicant proposed to retain the existing vegetation along the southern property line. The Board may wish to inquire if any trimming or maintenance is planned for this area.
Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No physical changes or additions to existing circulation are proposed. The site will be accessed by existing curb cuts on Nash Road and Church Street. The applicant has proposed an access easement through the 123 Church Street property.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant notes that the dimensions of the carport arrays will accommodate emergency vehicles and has provided a truck turning plan to demonstrate the site's capacity for a WB-65 vehicle.
Traffic/Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant does not anticipate any traffic impacts from the proposed development.
Stormwater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant has provided a stormwater management plan that addresses the temporary impacts of construction. A crushed stone edge drain/infiltration trench is proposed along the western edge of the property along the pavement edges and through the unpaved areas. Two vegetated depressions are proposed adjacent to the western property line featuring a nyloplast drain basin attached to a perforated HDPE pipe for infiltration.
Snow Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans do not indicate a snow storage area. The Board may wish to discuss snow storage plans with the applicant.
Waste Receptables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant proposes no new waste storage areas.
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required by Eversource, plans show equipment pads in the landscaped area on Church Street featuring transmission equipment, meters, and load break switches. The Board may wish to confirm that this equipment can be sited adjacent to landscaping, and if not, discuss alternative screening options with the applicant. A 2,000-kWh battery storage system and 500-KVA transformer are proposed on the western edge of the property. No utility lines are shown connecting from the arrays to this area. The Board may wish to ask the applicant for more details about on-site transmission lines and how they will impact existing impervious surfaces and the AUL area. The applicant has proposed a utility easement running from the transformers on the western property line to the transmission equipment on Church Street to house an underground electric conduit. No details have been provided showing the utility trench. The Board may wish to discussion the proposed utility line with the applicant.
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is currently lit by pole-mounted and wall-mounted lights. The applicant has not proposed any additional lighting or provided a lighting plan, so it is unclear how the proposed arrays will affect lighting in the parking areas. It is with in the Board's purview to request a lighting plan from the applicant.
Demolition and Erosion Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>The southwest portion of the site has an Activity and Use Limitation due to soil contamination, and as such the applicant has provided a soil management plan prepared by Coneco.</u> The plan details the precautions to be taken to maintain a condition of "No Significant Risk" during construction, per the AUL. The Board may wish to request that the applicant provide an overview of this plan. Plans show a siltation fence along the west side of the site and a temporary construction pad of rock fill at the construction entrance on Nash Road for erosion control during construction.
Architectural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>The applicant has provided elevations for the solar array marked "Sample Racking" and a site plan keyed to identify where each type of array is proposed.</u> The Board may wish to request that the applicant discuss any finalized elevations and condition that any revisions be submitted Planning staff for review.

Master Plan

- The proposal is consistent with the Master Plan's goals to increase jobs and sources for alternative energy.

Interdepartmental Review Comments

As required under city ordinance, the case submittal documents were distributed to City Clerk, City Solicitor, Health Department, Inspectional Services, Engineering, Public Infrastructure, Conservation Commission, Fire Department and School Department.

At the time of writing this report, no departmental memos have been received.

Site Photos



Site of proposed southwest array and AUL area.
Looking south from the parking area.



Proposed site of southwest array and AUL area.
Looking north from site boundary.



Vegetation to remain on site along southern property line.
Looking east from southwest corner of the site.



Proposed site of transmission equipment on Church Street.
Looking west from Church Street.



Proposed site of northwest arrays.
Looking east from western site boundary.



Frontage on Nash Road where cypresses are proposed.
Looking east from site entrance on Nash Road.



Unpaved areas will remain.
Looking south from site entrance.



Lighting on the southern edge of the site is pole mounted.
Looking south from parking area.

Vegetation along Earle Street south of the property.
Looking north from Earle Street.



Railroad easement west of the site.
Looking south from site entrance.

Materials for Consideration

The engineered plan submission is shown as “Proposed Solar Array Nextgrid Inc.” dated 8/11/21, and prepared by Field Engineering of Mattapoisett, MA. The plans are stamped by Richard Riccio, CE. The plan set consists of the following sheets:

- Title Sheet
- N-1 Notes & Legend
- EC-1 Existing Conditions
- SLU-1 Site Layout & Utilities
- SGD-1 Site Grading & Drainage Plan
- D-1 Detail Sheet
- Truck Turning Exhibit Plan
- Array Key Plan

Recommended Conditions



Site Plan Approval. Having reviewed the submitted materials, planning staff offers the following recommendations for conditions to the Planning Board should it act favorably on the requested site plan approval for the project:

That the following **specific conditions** be applied to this decision:

1. The applicant shall submit the recorded easements as indicated on plans prior to issuance of a building permit.
2. The applicant shall submit revised plans indicating the number and type of plantings proposed for all landscaped areas to the Department of City Planning for review prior to the issuance of a building permit.
3. The applicant shall submit revised plans indicating a snow storage area to the Department of City Planning for review prior to the issuance of a building permit.
4. The applicant shall submit final solar panel elevations to the Department of City Planning for review prior to the issuance of a building permit.
5. This project shall be undertaken in a manner consistent with the Activity and Usage Limitation in effect on the site.

That the following **general conditions** also be applied to both decisions:

6. The project shall be completed according to the plans, notes, reports, and specifications submitted for consideration and final approval by the Planning Board.
7. The project shall be undertaken in a manner consistent with any departmental memos received in relation to plan and placed on file for Planning Board consideration. The conditions of such memos shall be considered to be part of these conditions.
8. The applicant shall submit final plan revisions to the Department of City Planning in the following formats: one (1) -11" x 17" Plan Set and one (1) CD or USB with Plan Set in PDF format and shall ensure that these same plans are properly submitted to the Department of Inspectional Services.
9. The applicant shall ensure that a copy of the Notice of Decision, bearing the certification of the New Bedford City Clerk signifying no appeal has been made against the project's approval, be provided for the Department of City Planning case file folder.
10. That the applicant shall ensure a copy of the Notice of Decision bearing the certification of the city of New Bedford City Clerk, signifying no appeal has been made against the project's approval, be recorded at the Registry of Deeds.
11. The applicant shall ensure that a copy recorded decision be provided for the Department of City Planning case file folder.
12. The applicant shall present any proposed modification from the approved plans for consideration to the Director of City Planning for determination as to whether the modified plan must return before this Board for further review.

13. The rights authorized by the granted approval must be exercised by issuance of a Building Permit by the Department of Inspectional Services and acted upon within one year from the date the decision was granted, or they will lapse.
14. The developer and site contractor must schedule a pre-construction meeting with the Department of Public Infrastructure prior to the start of construction.

Materials Provided by the Applicant are available at: <https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/planning/planning-board-agenda-info-2021/>

Staff Report prepared by: Michael McCarthy, Staff Planner
Reviewed by: Jennifer Carloni, City Planner

376 Nash Road

NOTE: Property line is approximate; for discussion purposes, only. Aerial image is oriented north.

