



PLANNING BOARD

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Town of Brookline

Massachusetts

ARTICLE 9

PLANNING BOARD REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

This article is being submitted by the Planning and Community Development Department and will create a new overlay zoning district to allow large-scale ground-based solar panels on the town-owned Singletree Hill Reservoir, located off of Boylston Street behind the Chestnut Hill Benevolent Association.

The site is currently used for both an above-ground water tower and an underground water tank. Under this overlay, should the town wish to pursue establishing a solar facility on this site, plans and details for the facility would be submitted to the Planning Board for site plan review to ensure adequate information has been provided and that the facility will comply with safety and design standards.

This site is appropriate for solar panels due to its heightened elevation above other properties and open exposure. The elevation allows for excellent solar exposure while naturally screening any solar facilities from neighboring properties. In addition, the water storage facilities on site need to be routinely cleared of vegetation. The installation of solar panels would assist in keeping that area clear of obstructions. Finally, the proposed zoning also requires a buffer of 25 feet from all lot lines which will further alleviate any impacts on abutting properties.

The Planning Board is supportive of the town's effort to encourage the establishment of renewable energy generating facilities. This property is extremely appropriate for a solar facility because of its elevation and limited visibility, and the proposed zoning would allow for the town to consider establishing such a facility on the site. This zoning amendment may move the town closer towards establishing Green Community status under the state Green Communities Act, but more importantly, it supports the town's efforts to encourage energy alternatives.

Therefore, the Planning Board unanimously recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on Article 9.