



CITY OF CHELSEA, MA
Zoning Board of Appeals

City Hall, 500 Broadway, Room 101 - Chelsea, MA 02150
Phone: 617.466-4180 · Fax: 617.466-4195

Janice S. Tatarka, Chair
Arthur Arsenault, Vice-Chair
Joseph W. Mahoney, Member
Hugo Perdomo, Member
Marilyn Vega-Torres, Member
Joan Cromwell, Associate Member

Hector Velez, Secretary
John DePriest, Staff

Zoning Board of Appeals
May 18, 2024
Minutes

A Site Visit at 295 Eastern Avenue was conducted by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The site visit was convened at 9:07 a.m. with the following members present:

Arthur Arsenault
Joe Mahoney
Hugo Perdomo
Janice Tatarka

Also present:

Tuck Willis, Chair, Planning Board
Mimi Rancatore, Vice Chair, Planning Board
Eric Czernizer, Member, Planning Board
Sarah Ritch, Member, Planning Board
John DePriest, Director, Department of Permitting and Land Use Planning
Hector Velez, Secretary, Department of Permitting and Land Use Planning
William Cecio, Planner and Land Use Administrator, Department of Permitting and Land Use Planning

Absent:

Joan Cromwell
Marilyn Vega-Torres

2024-09 284 Eastern Avenue – Energizar Storage LLC

For a Major Site Plan Review and recommendation on a Special Permit and Variance seeking approval for the construction of a Battery Energy Storage Structure which does not meet the minimum requirements for front yard setback, off-street parking, and maximum requirement for maximum height, and for a Special Permit for a Major Commercial Project.

Jonathan Poor, Managing Partner, Flatiron Energy

Mimi Rancatore, Eric Czernizer, and Sarah Ritch asked about the limits of the property, what is being proposed at the site, and where construction will occur.

Jonathan Poor explained that it is a building-based Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and will be housed within a 2 story structure. Eversource owns a substation that abuts the property and the BESS will connect to that substation underground. There is an underground sewer that runs under the property and they won't be building near or over the sewer. The structure will be about 100 feet wide along Eastern Avenue and 400 feet wide along Willoughby Street. The 2 story structure will contain the batteries, there will be electrical infrastructure next to the structure, and green space at the Willoughby Street entrance (for stormwater runoff) and at the triangular point of the property. Electricity will be sold back to Eversource depending on what the market price is for electricity at the time.

Janice Tatarka asked if the proposed project will be comparable to the structure currently on the site.

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DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING AND LAND USE PLANNING

John DePriest answered yes.

Sarah Ritch asked how it works and how long energy is stored.

Jonathan Poor explained that they are part of the electrical wholesale system. They will work with the state's Clean Peak Program. This will dictate when the BESS absorbs energy and discharges energy, it is usually 4 hour periods. ISO-New England is the grid operator.

Mimi Rancatore asked about employment.

Jonathan Poor answered that the site is not usually manned and employment is not 24/7. There will be checkups on the site infrequently, everything is monitored off-site.

Eric Czernizer asked if it just serves the Chelsea grid.

Jonathan Poor answered that it will be serving the broader New England grid. ISO-New England will determine where the energy will be distributed.

Janice Tatarka and Mimi Rancatore asked about the technology and how the site will adapt to technology changes.

Jonathan Poor answered that the batteries are small and put into racks, almost like a server farm. The battery racks are modular and overtime the batteries can be replaced. However the building structure will stay.

Hugo Perdomo joined the Site Visit at 9:11am and asked what is on the roof.

Jonathan Poor answered mainly the HVAC system, venting and air handling systems. There will be some inverters as well. A parapet will be built so these elements will be hidden from street view.

Eric Czernizer asked about the property being in a floodplain and what kinds of preventive measures are being taken.

Jonathan Poor answered that they are building to the 2070 flood maps and that the infrastructure will be raised 3 feet above ground level. They will also have a stormwater drainage system.

John DePriest also mentioned that the project will need to go before the Conservation Commission.

Janice Tatarka asked about the shelf life of the batteries

Jonathan Poor answered 35 years, modular changes will be done to maintain the batteries

Hugo Perdomo asked how long will they stay

Jonathan Poor answered they have a warranty for 20 years

Janice Tatarka asked about the construction timeline.

Jonathan Poor answered it is about 18 months. The first 6-9 months will be focused on constructing the buildings. The rest of the time, about 3-5 months, is focused on getting the batteries in and wired up. A lot

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of tests will need to be conducted by their team and ISO-New England to get everything commissioned. The current buildings will be demolished. The property does include Willoughby Street and there will be easements for others to get access to the abutting property and Eversource substation. They will be adding a curb cut on Eastern Avenue for another entrance. They have spoken with the Fire Chief and Fire Department – there is new fire main infrastructure and a fire hydrant close by.

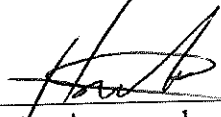
Eric Czernizer asked if the company has done similar projects in Chelsea.

Jonathan Poor answered not in Chelsea, they are currently working on one in Brighton, Massachusetts. In total, they have developed around 20 other similar projects.

Janice Tatarka asked how long will it take for construction to start after permitting approval.

Jonathan Poor answered around 9 months.

Janice Tatarka closed the meeting at 9:29am.



Minutes Approved
Hector Velez, Zoning Board of Appeals Staff

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