

**TOWN OF COLUMBIA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT
Monday, March 11, 2024 7:00 pm

Regular Meeting – HYBRID

Join Zoom Meeting:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82387017078>

Meeting ID: **823 8701 7078**

or join by phone 1-646-558-8656 same ID.

THIS IS A HYBRID PUBLIC MEETING. THE PUBLIC CAN ATTEND IN-PERSON OR ELECTRONICALLY. THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THIS AGENDA CONTAINS THE LINK TO ACCESS THE MEETING ELECTRONICALLY.

AGENDA

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES**
- 3. ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA**
- 4. APPROVAL OF PZC REGULAR MEETING MINUTES of February 12, 2024**
- 5. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**
- 6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Discussion/Possible Action)**
 - 6.1 PZC 2324-02:** Dava Siedman of Fairview Farm, LLC., for a Major Impact Home Occupation at 301 Rte. 66, Map 028, Lot 021, Zone RA, Lot Area 6.4, Section 8.5.4.
(Received 2/12/24) (Applicant has requested to delay the opening of the Public Hearing to April 8, 2024)
- 7. NEW BUSINESS (Discussion/Possible Action)**
 - 7.1 PZC 2324-03:** USS Vineyard Solar LLC., for a Ground Mounted Solar Array as an Accessory Use at 468 Route 87, Map 030, Lot 038, Zone RA, Lot Area 56.32, Section 8.15.
(Receive and Schedule Public Hearing for April 8, 2024)
- 8. REGULATION REVISIONS (Discussion)**
 - 8.1** Section 52.7.19 Planned Neighborhood Housing
- 9. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS:**
 - 9.1** CRCOG Regional Planning Commission Appointment
 - 9.2** Land Use Training – Letter of Completion to BOS

10. COMMISSION OPEN DISCUSSION:

11. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Pending Legal Action per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(B)

13. ADJOURNMENT

**TOWN OF COLUMBIA
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT

Monday, February 12, 2024 7:00 pm

**Regular Meeting – HYBRID
MINUTES**

Members Present: Chairman Rick Nassiff, Vice-Chair Justin Riendeau, Vera Englert, Thomas Carrier, Robert Powell (via zoom), Walter Tabor, L. Preston (Alternate)

Members Excused: Ed Madrak (Alternate), Dave Holcroft

Staff Present: Town Planner John Guskowski (via Zoom), Board Clerk Mary Kay Hyman

Others Present: Rhonda Kincaid and one other member of the Council on Diversity and Equity present. 1 other present via phone

1. CALL TO ORDER: R. Nassiff called the meeting to order at **7:01 PM**.

2. ROLL CALL AND SEATING OF ALTERNATES:

L. Preston was seated for D. Holcroft

3. ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA: None

4. APPROVAL OF PZC REGULAR MEETING MINUTES of January 08, 2024

R. Nassiff asked that Page 7, Paragraph 6 of the the January 08, 2024 Minutes be Amended, and the word “not” be removed from the second sentence.

R. Nassiff **MOVED** to **APPROVE** the Amended Minutes of January 08, 2024; R. Powell **SECONDED**. V. Englert **ABSTAINED, MOTION PASSED 6:0:1**

V. Englert Abstained as she was not present at the January 08, 2024 Meeting.

5. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS: None

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Discussion/Possible Action): None

7. NEW BUSINESS (Discussion/Possible Action)

7.1 PZC 2324-02: Dava Siedman of Fairview Farm, LLC., for a Major Impact Home Occupation at 301 Rte. 66, Map 028, Lot 021, Zone RA, Lot Area 6.4, Section 8.5.4.

R. Nassiff **MOVED** to **RECEIVE** and **SCHEDULE** the Public Hearing of **PZC 2324-02:** Dava Siedman of Fairview Farm, LLC., for a Major Impact Home Occupation at 301 Rte. 66, Map 028, Lot 021, Zone RA, Lot Area 6.4, Section 8.5.4. for March 11, 2024. W. Tabor **SECONDED. MOTION PASSED 7:0:0**

8. REGULATION REVISIONS (Discussion)

8.1 Section 3 revisions

J. Riendeau stated there is nothing new regarding the Section 3 revision at this time.

8.2 Section 52.7.19 Planned Neighborhood Housing

J. Riendeau stated the Subcommittee is closer to completing the Planned Neighborhood Housing language. The Subcommittee will schedule a Special Meeting with Town Planner J. Guskowski to discuss language regarding minimum acreage, exemption of lake overlay, accessory units, and the overlay of other areas of language in the regulations. He stated they would then bring the changes to the full Commission for discussion and then schedule a public hearing.

V. Englert questioned the 30% vs 20% of Affordable Housing. She explained that the on-line Land Use training reference 30% Section 8-30g.

J. Guskowski clarified that there are several sections of the State Statutes that reference Affordable Housing. The 20% referenced in the draft regulations is for Incentive Housing which pertains to Section 8.13 of State Statutes and the 30% is in reference to Section 8-30g. The Section being referenced in these changes is Section 8.13, which sets a threshold of 20% of units being restricted as affordable and which also provides some control for the Town.

R. Powell asked if the Commission would be discussing and voting on Section 3, as it is listed on the Agenda. R. Nassiff stated the Subcommittee is not ready at this time to discuss Section 3 in detail but invited R. Powell to ask questions if he had any. R. Powell read and asked J. Guskowski to confirm the verbiage of the last line of Section 3. J. Guskowski confirmed what R. Powell read was correct on the draft of Section 3. J. Riendeau stated the Section 3 draft in the packet is not a new draft and no changes have been made. R. Nassiff stated a final draft would be brought to the Commission for discussion and to a Public Hearing before voting took place.

9. COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS:

9.1 ZEO Report

R. Nassiff stated he requested the updated report from the Zoning Officer, C. Kisluk, for the Commission to discuss and decide if they would like to either gather questions to present to C. Kisluk or if they would like to ask C. Kisluk to be present at a future PZC meeting. He then stated he believes the owner names are not on the report, as the violations are not owner based as much as they are regulation based.

R. Powell asked if items #10 and #11 are to be reviewed by the PZC and stated that there were no dates to indicate how old these items are. R. Nassiff replied he will inquire with C. Kisluk.

V. Englert stated it would be a good idea to have C. Kisluk present to see if the Commission can provide her with help. She stated there was previous discussion with C. Kisluk pertaining to tasks that were time-consuming and how the Commission could assist with the management of such items.

R. Nassiff stated the previous discussion mainly pertained to the responsibility of calculating the Nutrient Allocation Plans, which currently the regulations state is the responsibility of the homeowner. He stated he recently spoke with C. Kisluk regarding the process of calculating the Nutrient Allocation Plans and he stated C. Kisluk stated over the course of a year it is not a time-consuming process. R. Nassiff agreed that if it is not time-consuming and is manageable for C. Kisluk then it is permitted for her to continue based on her preferred approach to assist applicants. He said that C. Kisluk had stated in the past that a lot of her time is spent on the special permitting process, and he was looking for the Commission to help streamline the enforcement process to enable her to have more time for permitting.

R. Powell stated he is not sure he understands C. Kisluk's process and agrees her presence is needed.

R. Nassiff stated the goal of the Commission will be to hear C. Kisluk's process and to help streamline her enforcement responsibilities and processes. R. Nassiff stated he would email C. Kisluk to request and schedule her presence at a future meeting and would copy J. Guskowski.

10. COMMISSION OPEN DISCUSSION:

R. Nassiff thanked J. Riendeau for his commitment and the level of work he has done with Section 3 and Section 52.7.19 of the Regulations.

J. Guskowski referenced the 2024 Regional Planning Commission Appointment email of correspondence and informed the Commission that CRCOG is requesting the appointment of a volunteer member to represent the Columbia PZC. He stated the responsibilities of the volunteer would basically be to attend in person or virtually the quarterly meetings, intercept emails and report back to the Commission.

T. Currier stated he had volunteered in the past and found it to be focused on the larger towns and their commercial development. He felt it was informative but did not really relate to the Town of Columbia.

J. Guskowski stated he will readdress the request at the PZC Regular Meeting next month. He stated CRCOG would be accepting appointments at their next meeting, which is scheduled for 3/21/24, so a decision would need to be made before that date.

J. Guskowski also reminded the Commission that the Land Use Mandatory training is now due. He reminded the Commission that the letter of completion is due to the BOS by 3/1/24. He asked M. Hyman to send the link out again to Commission Members who still need to complete the training. R. Nassiff stated he needs to complete the training and would be doing so.

11. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:

R. Kincaid of the Coalition on Diversity and Equity thanked the Committee and J. Riendeau for their transparency in the process and for welcoming their input regarding Affordable Housing.

R. Nassiff thanked R. Kincaid and the Coalition for their attendance at the meetings and their valuable input.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Commission did not go into Executive Session

Pending Legal Action per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(B)

13. ADJOURNMENT:

R. Nassiff **MOVED** to **ADJOURN**; V. Englert **SECONDED**. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting was adjourned at **7:33 PM**.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Kay Hyman, Board Clerk
Please see the minutes of subsequent meetings for approval of these minutes and any corrections hereto.
This meeting can be viewed in its entirety on the Town of Columbia You Tube Channel.



TOWN OF COLUMBIA

323 Jonathan Trumbull Highway, Columbia, CT 06237
(860) 228-0440 FAX: (860) 228-2847

Date Submitted: 3/5/24

Fee Paid: _____

SPECIAL PERMIT APPLICATION

See Sections 51 and 52 of the Columbia Zoning Regulations for Special Permit requirements.

New Special Permit Application

Fee: \$610 (\$100 PZC fee + \$ 450 LN cost + \$60 state fee)

Modification to Approved Special Permit

Fee (if no PH): \$310 (\$100 PZC fee + \$150 LN cost + \$60 state fee)

Location of Property

Address: 468 Route 87 Columbia, CT

Assessor's Map 30 Lot 38 Zone RA Lot Area 56.32

Proposed Activity

Proposed Use: Ground Mounted Solar Array as and Accessory Use

Applicable Zoning Regulation Section(s): 8.15

Proposed construction: New Bldg Addition Interior Signs Site Work None
(check all that apply)

Applicant/Agent Information

Primary Contact

Name: USS Vineyard Solar LLC

Business Name: United States Solar Corp

Business Mailing Address: 100 N 6th Street, Suite 410B, Minneapolis, MN 55403

Phone: 612-225-4682 Cell: _____ Email: dan.csaplar@us-solar.com

Interest in property: Owner Option Lessee Legal Engr Survey Other

Property Owner Information (if different from above)

Primary Contact

Name: Walter and Nancy Tabor

Address: 15 Robert Drive Columbia, CT. 06237

Phone: 860-933-1605 Cell: _____ Email: waltertabor@yahoo.com

SPECIAL PERMIT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Applications are considered complete only when all of the information as required by the Columbia Zoning Regulations per Sections 51 and 52 is received. Failure to submit, or formally request a waiver, all the required items is grounds for denial by the Commission. In addition to the items below, the Commission may require additional information in order to determine if the proposal conforms to the Regulations.

Office	Applicant*	
	x	Completed Application with original signatures (plus 10 copies)
	x	Detailed Statement of Use that includes the nature and intensity of the proposed operation, number of employees and hours of operation (10 copies)
	x	Names and addresses of property owners within 200' of subject property
	N/A	Four (4) copies of a full scale site plan on an A2 survey, plus ten (10) reduced copies at 11" x 17", that include the following information:
	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date, written and graphic scales, north arrow, seals & signatures of engineer, surveyor and other professionals
	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot dimensions with accurate linear and angular dimensions with any easements and deed restrictions noted; adjacent roads and abutter information
	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing and proposed topography, locations of wetlands and waterbodies, drainage swales and other site features (stone walls, trees, ledges)
	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing and proposed structures including dimensions and elevations
	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table of proposed frontage, setbacks, and coverage with Zoning requirements
	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location and results of test pits; location of proposed well and septic system
	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location and description of proposed stormwater system including pre and post development calculations; location and description of utilities and tanks
	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of parking, driveways, sidewalks and access and egress points
	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking plan with calculations per category of use in zoning regulations
	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erosion and Sedimentation plan and narrative
	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor lighting plan including details and specifications
	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscaping and screening plan including material specifications and details
	N/A	Four (4) copies of architectural plans, plus ten (10) reduced copies at 11" x 17"
	x	Completed Sign Application if requesting approval under Section 62.9
	x	Copy of approval letters from other Commissions or agencies
	x	Copies of all drainage reports, traffic or environmental studies

* For each item listed, indicate the following:

✓ = provided NA = not applicable W = written waiver request attached

Other Information

Is the property located within 500' of Columbia's town boundary? Yes No

Is the property within a FIRM Flood Zone A, A1-30? Yes No

Does the proposal require Inland Wetland's Approval? Yes No

If yes, date of approval tbd (submit copy of approval letter)

Does the proposal require ZBA approval? Yes No

If yes, date of approval _____ (submit copy of approval letter)

Does the proposal require CONN-DOT approval? Yes No

If yes, date of approval _____ (submit copy of approval letter)

Required Information

1. Copy of assessor's card
2. Completed and signed Special Permit Application including a completed checklist and written waivers (if any)
3. Application fee – Check payable to the Town of Columbia

Prior to submitting an application,

applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss the potential land use or pending application with the Town Planner 860-228-0440 or TPlanner@ColumbiaCT.org

By signing this application, I am certifying that all information submitted is true and accurate and that I have submitted all required documentation. I hereby permit Columbia staff and Commission members to enter onto and inspect this site during reasonable hours for the purpose of reviewing the site before and after a permit is granted.

Signature of Owner _____ Date _____

Signature of Applicant Dan Csaplar Date 3/5/24

Signature of Authorized Agent _____ Date _____

COVER LETTER

3/5/2024

Zoning Commission
Town of Columbia Planning
323 Route 87
Columbia, CT 06237

RE: Special Permit Application by USS Vineyard Solar LLC

Dear Commissioners,

Attached, please find an application for a Special Permit to construct and operate a 1 megawatt solar photovoltaic energy generation facility (the "Project") located at 468 Route 87. USS Vineyard Solar LLC is wholly owned by United States Solar Corporation ("US Solar"), the turnkey developer of the Project. The Project has been designed in compliance with standards established in your Zoning Regulations.

The Project site is ideal for a community solar facility due to proximity to three-phase electrical infrastructure, substantial wooded buffers, and significant setbacks from public views. Eversource has approved the Project's interconnection at the existing entrance to the Heartstone Farm & Winery. The northern, southern and western boundaries of the Project are obscured by a substantial wooded buffer that will remain intact. The Project is set back over 2,500ft from Route 87 and over 350ft from Beaudet Terrace. Residences on Beaudet Terrace along the Project's eastern border are shielded from views of the project by an existing wooded buffer composed of canopy and mid-story trees, as well as ground level shrubs and vegetation.

The Project will generate enough electricity to power approximately 750-1,000 homes annually and interconnect directly to Eversource's existing distribution system. Residents and businesses who are Eversource customers may subscribe to a portion of the electricity generated and receive bill credits on their utility bills. In this way, residents and businesses will have the opportunity to receive a direct economic benefit from the project.

Construction is expected to last 3-6 months, with most equipment deliveries in the first month and most electrical testing in the later stages of construction. Construction employees will park within the Project premises. There will be no permanent storage on-site. After construction, the array sits and generates electricity. The array will be remotely monitored, and we will send out an operation and maintenance crew roughly once a quarter to perform routine maintenance.

Please contact us with any questions, comments, or points for clarification. We appreciate the coordination and insights already provided by Town staff and look forward to working with all parties involved.

Sincerely,

Dan Csaplár

Dan Csaplár
Senior Project Developer
United States Solar Corporation
33 Arch Street, Floor 17
Boston, MA 02110



PREPARED FOR:

USS SOLAR
 100 N 6th St #41108
 Minneapolis, MN 55403

NO.	DATE	COMMENT
A.	11/18/2023	SSS Plans
B.	12/13/2023	SSS Plans
C.	12/20/2023	SSS Plans
D.	01/17/2024	SSS Plans
E.	02/02/2024	SSS Plans



USS Vineyard Solar LLC
 Town of Columbia, Tolland County, Connecticut

Existing Conditions

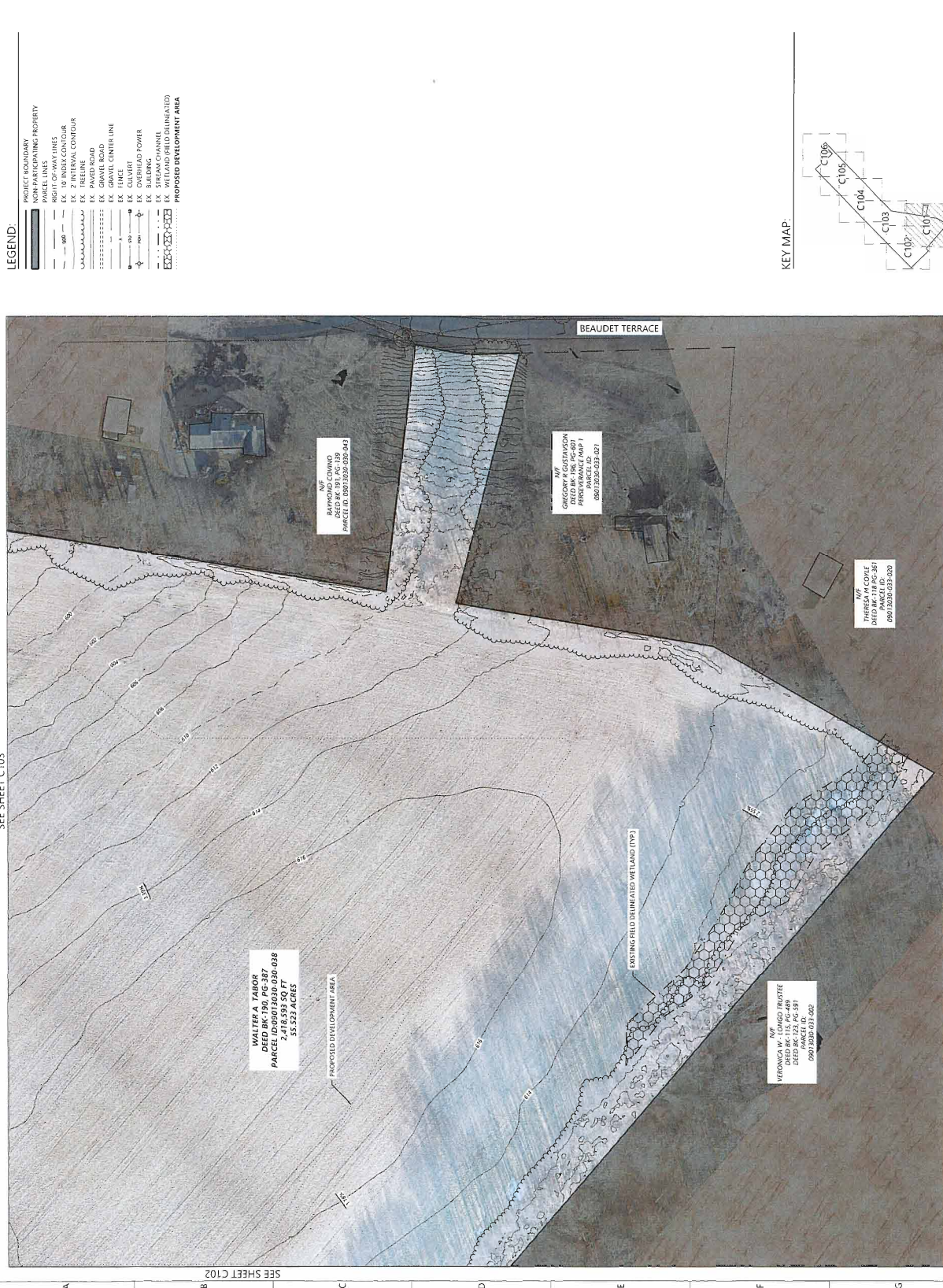
ISSUED FOR PERMIT

DATE: 03/04/2024

SHEET: C101

LEGEND:

- PROJECT BOUNDARY
- EXISTING BUILDING FOOTPRINT
- EXISTING LOT LINES
- RIGHT-OF-WAY LINES
- EXISTING 10' INDEX CONTOUR
- EXISTING 2' INDEX CONTOUR
- EXISTING 1' INDEX CONTOUR
- EXISTING PAVED ROAD
- EXISTING GRAVEL ROAD
- EXISTING UTILITY CENTER LINE
- EXISTING UTILITY CENTER LINE
- EXISTING CULVERT
- EXISTING OVERHEAD POWER
- EXISTING STREAM CHANNEL
- EXISTING WETLAND (FIELD DELINEATED)
- PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA





NO.	DATE	COMMENT
A.	11/18/2023	S&E Plans
B.	12/18/2023	S&E Plans
C.	02/07/2024	S&E Plans
D.	04/17/2024	S&E Plans
E.	05/06/2024	S&E Plans



USS Vineyard Solar LLC
 Town of Columbia, Tolland County, Connecticut

Existing Conditions

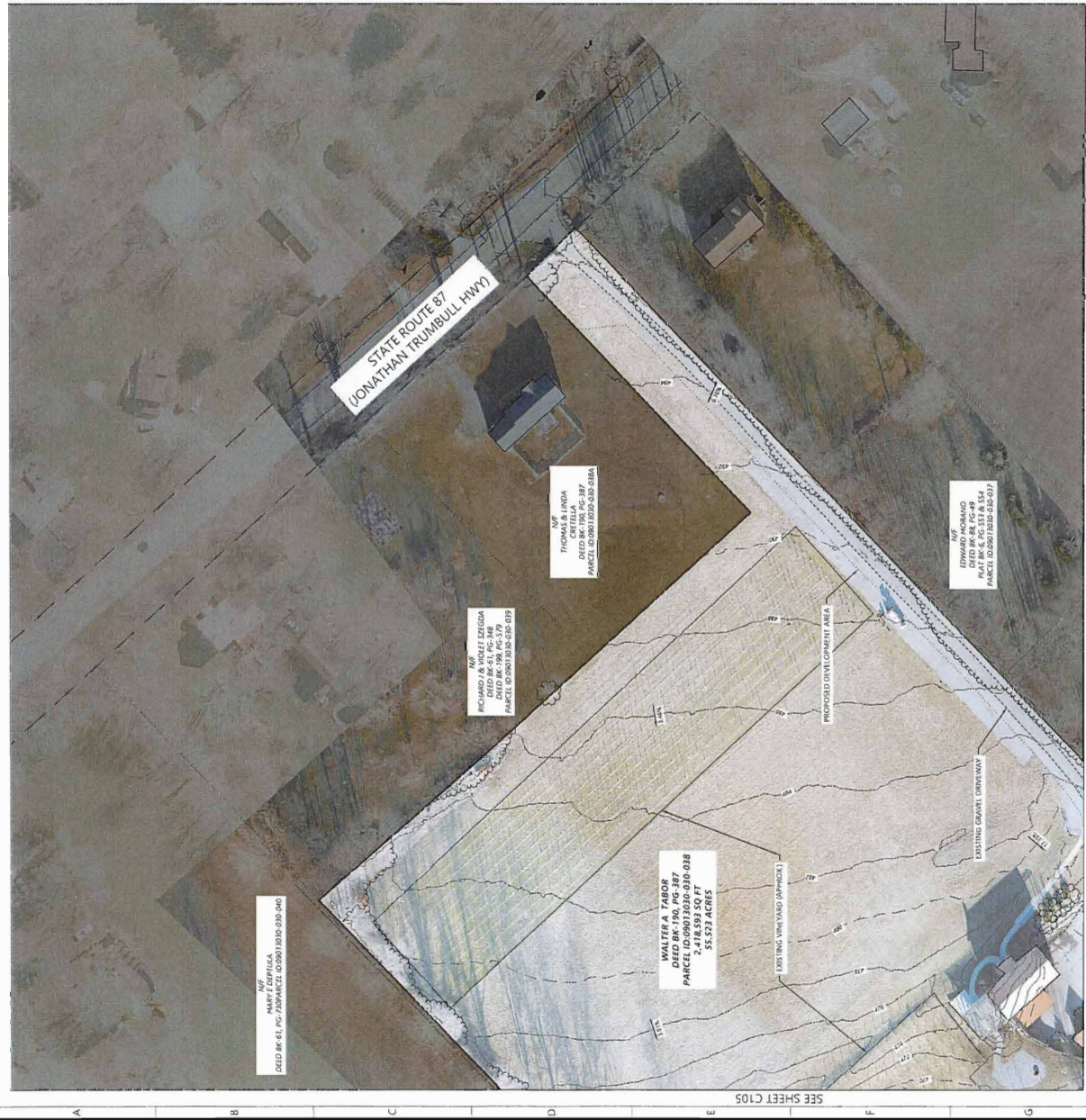
ISSUED FOR PERMIT

DATE 03/04/2024

SHEET C106

LEGEND:

- PROJECT BOUNDARY
- NON-EXISTING PLANNING PROPERTY
- EXISTING EASEMENTS
- RIGHT-OF-WAY LINES
- EXISTING INDEX CONTOUR
- EXISTING SURVEY POINT
- EXISTING UTILITY CENTER LINE
- EXISTING PAVED ROAD
- EXISTING GRAVEL ROAD
- EXISTING FENCE
- EXISTING CENTER LINE
- EXISTING OVERHEAD POWER
- EXISTING WETLAND
- EXISTING CHAMBER
- EXISTING WETLAND (FIELD DELINEATED)
- PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA



SEE SHEET C105



NO.	DATE	COMMENT
A.	10/20/2023	SEC Plans
B.	10/20/2023	SEC Plans
C.	10/20/2023	SEC Plans
D.	10/20/2023	SEC Plans
E.	10/20/2023	SEC Plans



USS Vineyard Solar LLC
 Town of Columbia, Tolland County, Connecticut

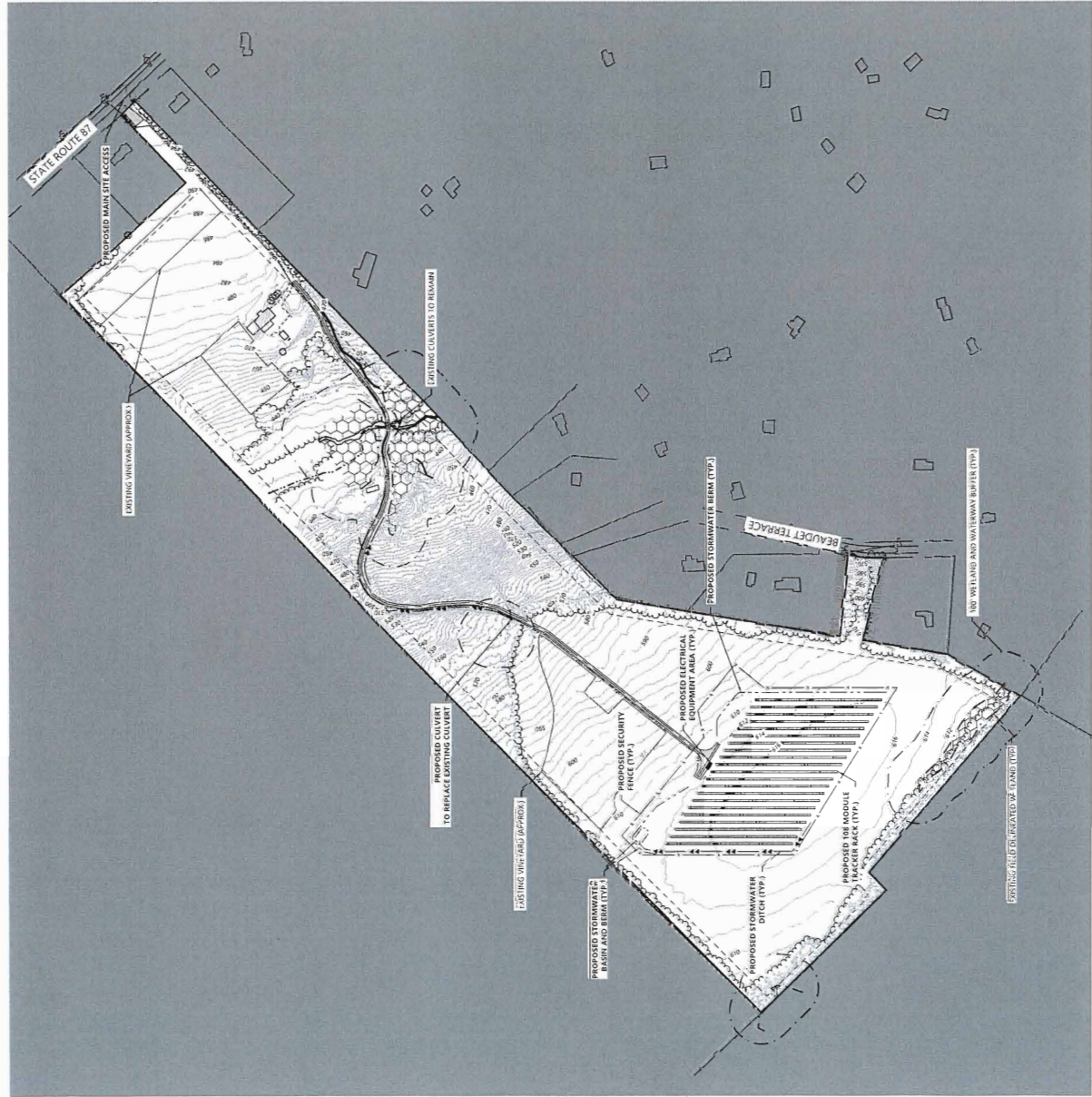
Overall Site Plan

ISSUED FOR PERMIT
 DATE: 03/04/2024
 SHEET: C107

- LEGEND:**
- PROJECT BOUNDARY
 - EXISTING PROPERTY
 - PARCELS
 - RIGHT-OF-WAY LINES
 - TO INDEX CONTOUR
 - TO INDEX CONTOUR
 - EX. TREES
 - EX. PAVED ROAD
 - EX. GRAVEL ROAD
 - EX. OVERHEAD POWER
 - EX. BUILDING
 - EX. WETLAND (FIELD DELINEATED)
 - EX. WETLAND (FIELD DELINEATED)
 - PROPOSED WETLAND AND WATERWAY BUFFER
 - PROPOSED SINGLE AXIS TRACKER
 - PROPOSED GRAVEL ACCESS ROAD
 - PROPOSED SECURITY FENCE
 - PROPOSED ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT
 - PROPOSED UNDERGROUND MEDIUM VOLTAGE CABLE
 - PROPOSED STORMWATER DITCH
 - PROPOSED STORMWATER BASIN AND BERM
 - PROPOSED CULTIVAR

SYSTEM SPECIFICATIONS

SYSTEM SITE DC	1,315.4 MW
SYSTEM SIZE AC	980.0 MW
DC/AC RATIO	1.337
MODULE RATING	500 W
TOTAL MODULE QTY	2,668
TOTAL NO. 108 MODULE TRACKER RACKS	21
TOTAL NO. INVERTERS	6
INVERTER SPACING	15.5'
DITCH	21.0'
TERCELED AREA	70 ACRES



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

A B C D E F G



USS Vineyard Solar LLC
 Town of Columbia, Tolland County, Connecticut

PV Site Plan

ISSUED FOR PERMIT
 DATE: 03/04/2024
 SHEET: C200

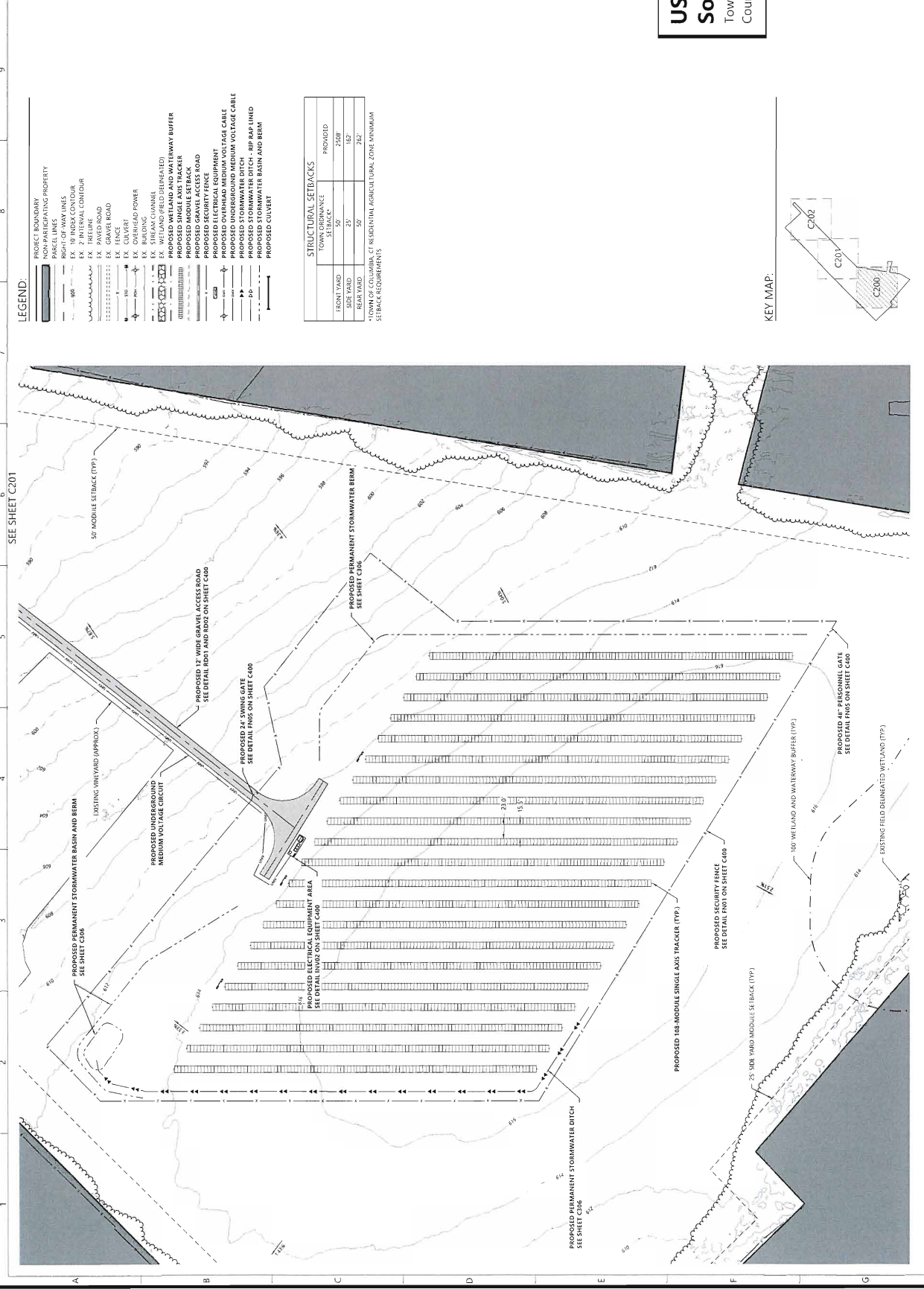
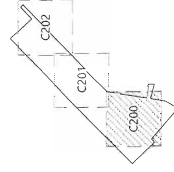
- LEGEND:**
- PROJECT BOUNDARY
 - EXISTING BUILDING PROPERTY
 - PARCEL LINES
 - EX - 10' INDEX CONTOUR
 - EX - 20' INDEX CONTOUR
 - EX - 30' INDEX CONTOUR
 - EX - 40' INDEX CONTOUR
 - EX - 50' INDEX CONTOUR
 - EX - PAVED ROAD
 - EX - GRAVEL ROAD
 - EX - OVERHEAD POWER
 - EX - CULVERT
 - EX - BUILDING
 - EX - WETLAND
 - EX - WETLAND FIELD DELINEATED
 - PROPOSED WETLAND AND WATERWAY BUFFER
 - PROPOSED SINGLE AXIS TRACKER
 - PROPOSED GRAVEL ACCESS ROAD
 - PROPOSED SECURITY FENCE
 - PROPOSED ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT
 - PROPOSED UNDERGROUND MEDIUM VOLTAGE CABLE
 - PROPOSED STORMWATER DITCH - 48" R40 UMD
 - PROPOSED STORMWATER DITCH - 60" R40 UMD
 - PROPOSED STORMWATER DITCH - 72" R40 UMD
 - PROPOSED STORMWATER DITCH - 90" R40 UMD
 - PROPOSED CULVERT

STRUCTURAL SETBACKS

TOWNSHIP SETBACK	PROVIDED
FRONT YARD	50'
SIDE YARD	25'
REAR YARD	50'

TOWN OF COLUMBIA, CT RESIDENTIAL AGRICULTURAL ZONE MINIMUM SETBACK REQUIREMENTS

KEY MAP:





REVISION	DATE	COMMENT
A	12/18/2023	ISSUE PERMIT
B	12/18/2023	ISSUE PERMIT
C	12/18/2023	ISSUE PERMIT
D	12/18/2023	ISSUE PERMIT
E	12/18/2023	ISSUE PERMIT



USS Vineyard Solar LLC
 Town of Columbia, Tolland County, Connecticut

PV Site Plan

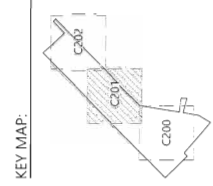
ISSUED FOR PERMIT
 DATE: 03/04/2024
 SHEET: C201

- LEGEND:**
- PROJECT BOUNDARY
 - EXISTING PROPERTY
 - PARCEL LINES
 - RIGHT-OF-WAY LINES
 - EX - 10' INDEX CONTOUR
 - EX - 20' INDEX CONTOUR
 - EX - 30' INDEX CONTOUR
 - EX - 40' INDEX CONTOUR
 - EX - 50' INDEX CONTOUR
 - EX - GRAVEL ROAD
 - EX - GRAVEL DRIVE
 - EX - OVERHEAD POWER
 - EX - BUILDING
 - EX - WETLAND (FIELD DELINEATED)
 - EX - WETLAND (FIELD DELINEATED)
 - PROPOSED WETLAND AND WATERWAY BUFFER
 - PROPOSED SINGLE AND TRUCKER
 - PROPOSED GRAVEL ACCESS ROAD
 - PROPOSED SECURITY FENCE
 - PROPOSED ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT
 - PROPOSED UNDERGROUND MEDIUM VOLTAGE CABLE
 - PROPOSED UNDERGROUND MEDIUM VOLTAGE CABLE
 - PROPOSED STORMWATER DITCH - RIP RAP LINING
 - PROPOSED STORMWATER DITCH - RIP RAP LINING
 - PROPOSED STORMWATER DITCH - RIP RAP LINING
 - PROPOSED CULVERT

STRUCTURAL SETBACKS

TYPE OF SETBACK	PROVIDED
FRONT YARD	50'
SIDE YARD	25'
REAR YARD	50'

TOWN OF COLUMBIA, CT RESIDENTIAL AGRICULTURAL ZONE MINIMUM SETBACK REQUIREMENTS



SEE SHEET C200

SEE SHEET C202



NO.	DATE	COMMENT
A.	11/18/2023	ASDC Plans
B.	12/13/2023	ASDC Plans
C.	03/02/2024	ASDC Plans
D.	03/27/2024	ASDC Plans
E.	04/04/2024	ASDC Plans



USS Vineyard Solar LLC
 Town of Columbia, Tolland County, Connecticut

PV Site Plan

ISSUED FOR PERMIT
 DATE: 03/04/2024
 SHEET: C202

LEGEND:

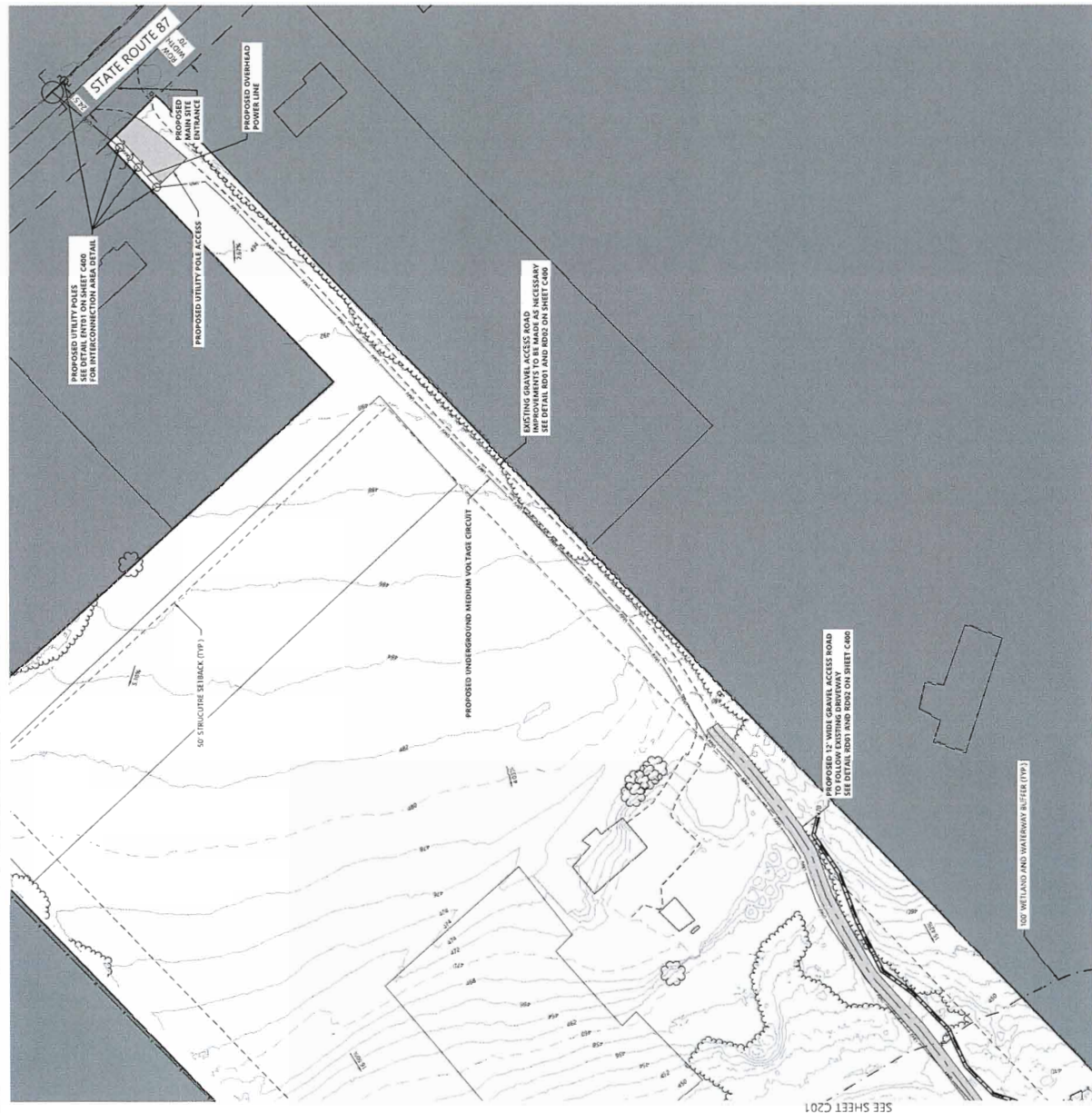
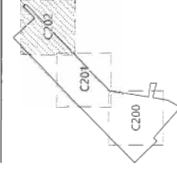
- PROJECT BOUNDARY
- ADJACENT PROPERTY
- PARCEL LINES
- RIGHT OF WAY LINES
- EX - 10' INDEX CONTOUR
- EX - 5' INDEX CONTOUR
- EX - TREELINE
- EX - PAVED ROAD
- EX - GRAVEL ROAD
- EX - DRIVEWAY
- EX - OVERHEAD POWER
- EX - BUILDING
- EX - WETLAND (FIELD DELINEATED)
- PROPOSED WETLAND AND WATERWAY BUFFER
- PROPOSED SINGLE AXIS TRACKER
- PROPOSED SECURITY FENCE
- PROPOSED GRAVEL ACCESS ROAD
- PROPOSED ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT
- PROPOSED UNDERGROUND MEDIUM VOLTAGE CABLE
- PROPOSED UNDERGROUND MEDIUM VOLTAGE CABLE
- PROPOSED STORMWATER DITCH - 48" R40 UHM
- PROPOSED STORMWATER DITCH - 48" R40 UHM
- PROPOSED STORMWATER DITCH AND BIER
- PROPOSED CONDUIT

STRUCTURAL SETBACKS

CONSTRUCTION SETBACK	PROVIDED
FRONT YARD	50
SIDE YARD	25
REAR YARD	50

TOWN OF COLUMBIA, CT RESIDENTIAL AGRICULTURAL ZONE MINIMUM SETBACK REQUIREMENTS

KEY MAP:



SEE SHEET C201



**USS Vineyard
 Solar LLC**
 Town of Columbia, Tolland
 County, Connecticut

Sedimentation and
 Erosion Control -
 Phase 1

ISSUED FOR PERMIT
 DATE 03/04/2024
 SHEET C301

LEGEND:

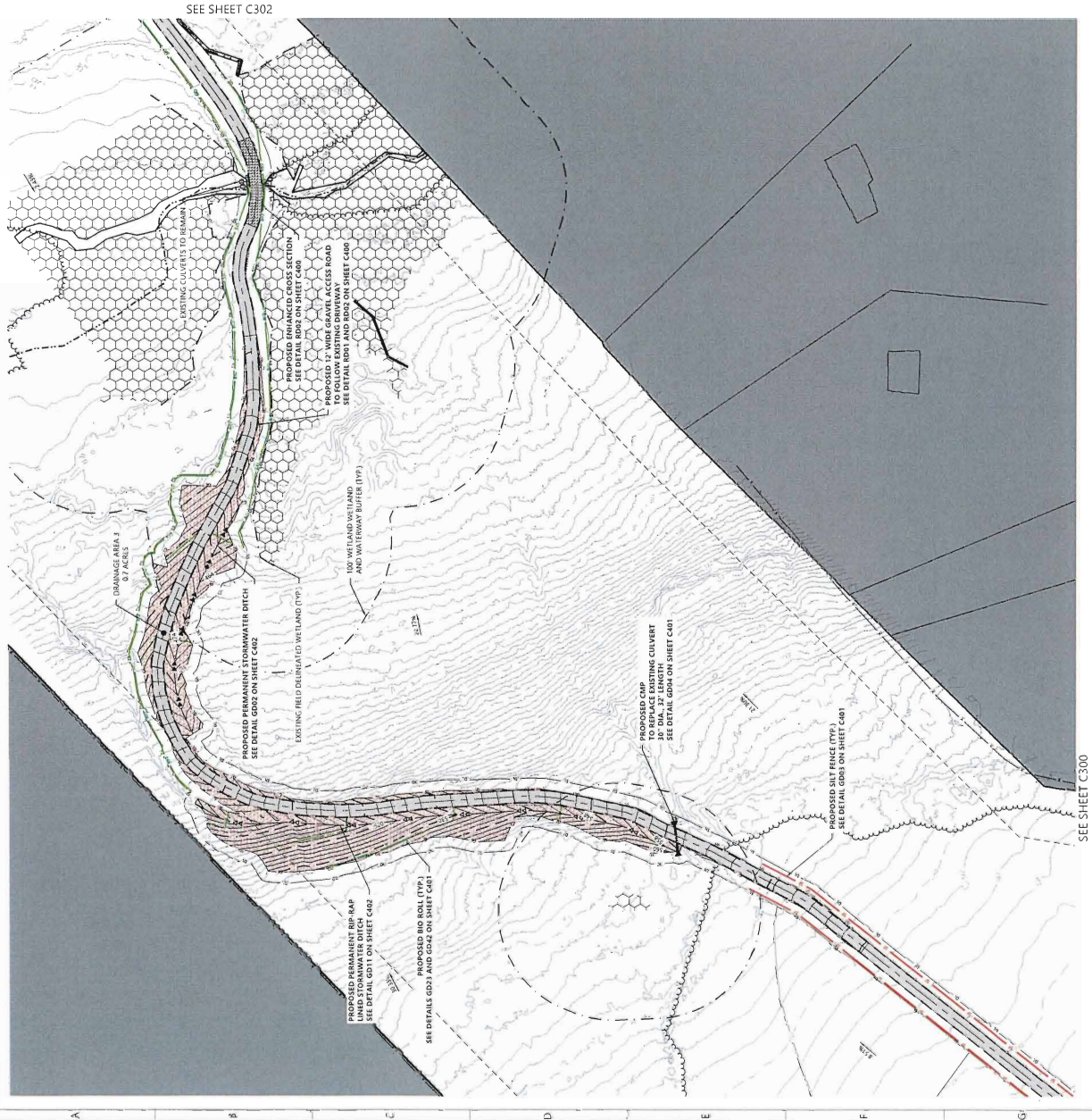
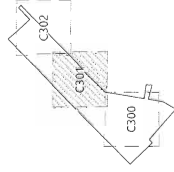
- PROJECT BOUNDARY
- EXISTING PROPERTY
- PARCEL LINES
- 10' INDEX CONTOUR
- 20' INDEX CONTOUR
- EXISTING ROAD
- EXISTING DRIVE
- EXISTING TRAIL
- EXISTING FENCE
- EXISTING UTILITY
- EXISTING POWER
- EXISTING WATER
- EXISTING STORM
- EXISTING DRAINAGE
- EXISTING WETLAND
- EXISTING WETLAND AND WATERWAY BUFFER
- PROPOSED 10' INDEX CONTOUR
- PROPOSED 20' INDEX CONTOUR
- PROPOSED DISTURBANCE LIMITS
- PROPOSED SILT FENCE
- PROPOSED FILTER SOCK
- PROPOSED STORMWATER DITCH
- PROPOSED STORMWATER DITCH - RIP RAP LINED
- PROPOSED TEMPORARY STOPIK AREA
- PROPOSED EROSION CONTROL BLANKET
- PROPOSED ENHANCED CROSS SECTION
- PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION ENTRANCE
- PROPOSED CULVERT
- PROPOSED DRAINAGE AREA
- PROPOSED WATERWAY
- PROPOSED WATERWAY DITCH
- PROPOSED STORMWATER DITCH - RIP RAP LINED

NOTES:

1. DISTURBANCE LIMITS ARE 10.7 ACRES.
2. DISTURBANCE LIMITS SHALL BE INSTALLED PRIOR TO GROUND DISTURBANCE.
3. SEE SHEET SERIES CARRY FOR DETAILS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR SECURITY FENCE LOCATION TO BE STAKED PRIOR TO INSTALLATION OF SILT FENCE TO PREVENT DAMAGE TO AND NETWORK OF BMP PROJECT AND IMPROVE PERMIT TO BE POSTED WITHIN VIEW OF PROJECT PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES.
4. INTERNAL ROADS SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED TO MATCH THE DRAINAGE PATTERNS TO PERMIT RELOCATIONS TO ALLOW FUTURE EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROLS SHALL BE INSTALLED PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION OF INTERNAL ROADS.
5. TOPSOIL SHALL BE SEGREGATED FROM ALL EARTHWORK ACTIVITIES. THE ENTIRE SURFACE SHALL BE REVEGETATED WITH PERMANENT VEGETATION PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF ANY CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES. COVERAGE ANNUAL VEGETATION COVERAGE SHALL BE USED FOR PROJECT LESS THAN ONE GROWING SEASON. PERMANENT VEGETATION SHALL BE MAINTAINED FOR PROJECT DURATION GREATER THAN ONE GROWING SEASON.
6. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL DEVELOP AN ACCESS PLAN TO ISOLATE DISTURBED AREAS FROM ADJACENT UNDISTURBED AREAS. DISTURBANCE CAN BE CALCULATED IF EQUIPMENT AND ACCESS DISTURBANCE FROM TRUCKS AND TRACKED EQUIPMENT IS HIGH AND COULD RESULT IN EXCESSIVE SOIL DISTURBANCE. FENCE STABILIZED SOIL BERMAS, FIBER LOGS ARE STILL REQUIRED.
7. WESTWOOD RECOMMENDS STABILIZING DISTURBED AREAS PRIOR TO INSTALLATION AND BEGINNING DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION.

GRADING QUANTITIES		
TEMP. BERM 01	CUT (CY)	FILL (CY)
TEMP. BERM 01	1,137	0
TEMP. BERM 02	0	222
TEMP. STABLE	85	0
TEMP. STABLE	541	1,041
PERM. ROAD	1,877	809
TOTAL	4,078	2,085

KEY MAP:



SEE SHEET C300

SEE SHEET C302



USS Vineyard Solar LLC
 Town of Columbia, Tolland County, Connecticut

Sedimentation and Erosion Control - Phase 3
 ISSUED FOR PERMIT
 DATE: 03/04/2024
 SHEET: C308

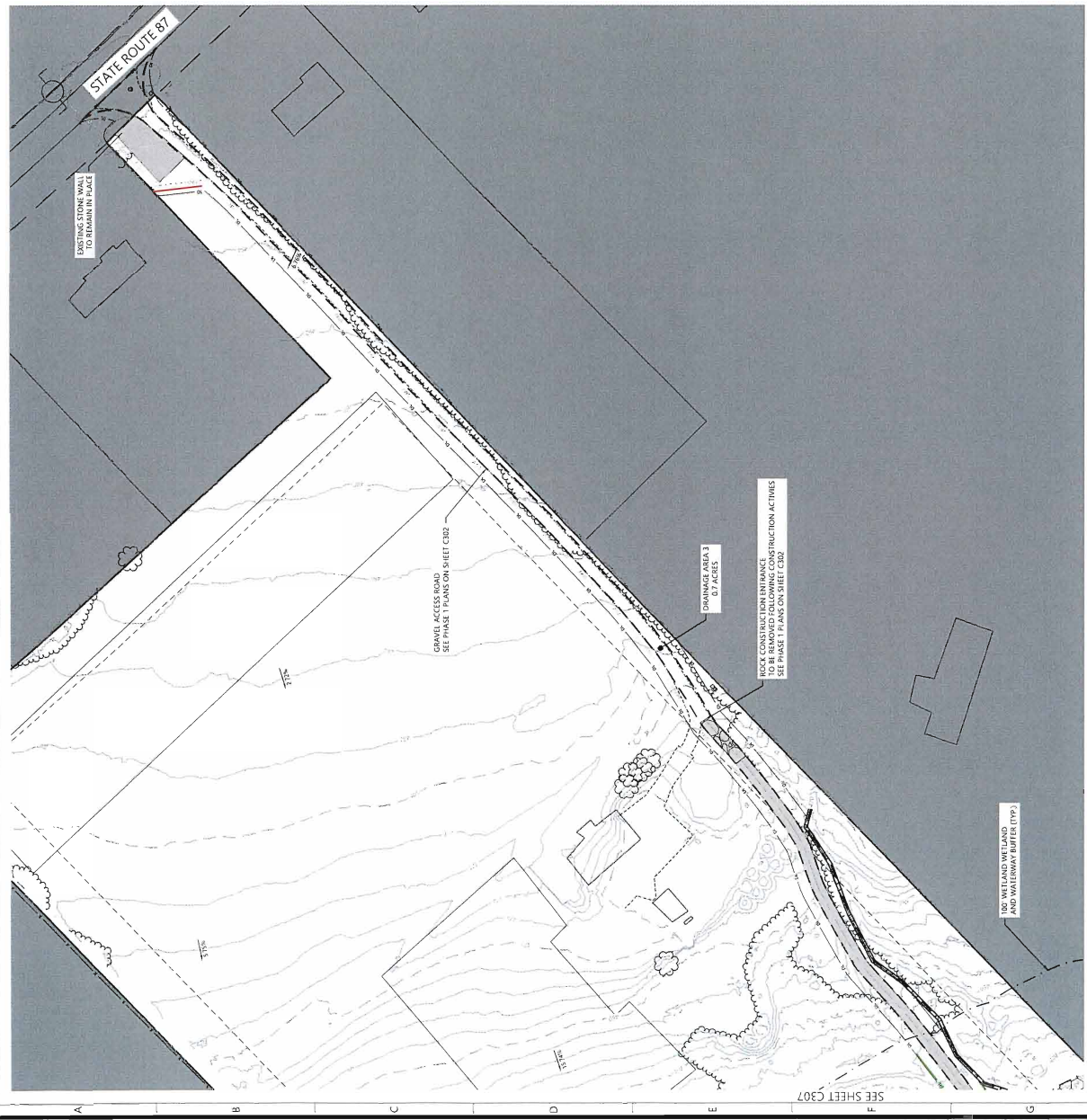
- LEGEND:**
- PROJECT BOUNDARY
 - EXISTING PROPERTY
 - PARCEL LINES
 - RIGHT-OF-WAY LINES
 - EX. 10' INDEX CONTOUR
 - EX. 20' INDEX CONTOUR
 - EX. 30' INDEX CONTOUR
 - EX. GROUND SLOPE
 - EX. FREELINE
 - EX. PAVED ROAD
 - EX. UNPAVED ROAD
 - EX. FENCE
 - EX. CULVERT
 - EX. OVERHEAD POWER
 - EX. STEAM CHANNEL
 - EX. WETLAND (FIELD DELINEATED)
 - PROPOSED WETLAND SETBACK
 - PROPOSED WETLAND BUFFER
 - PROPOSED MOBILE SETBACK
 - PROPOSED GRAVEL ACCESS ROAD
 - PROPOSED SECURITY FENCE
 - PROPOSED OVERHEAD MEDIUM VOLTAGE CABLE
 - PROPOSED UNDERGROUND MEDIUM VOLTAGE CABLE
 - PROPOSED STORMWATER SWALE
 - PROPOSED STORMWATER BASIN AND BERM
 - PROPOSED 10' INTERVAL CONTOUR
 - PROPOSED 2' INTERVAL CONTOUR
 - PROPOSED DISTURBANCE LIMITS
 - PROPOSED SILT FENCE
 - PROPOSED FILTER SOCK
 - PROPOSED SLOPE PROTECTION
 - PROPOSED EROSION CONTROL BLANKET
 - PROPOSED PIPE
 - PROPOSED STRUCTURE ENTRANCE
 - PROPOSED CULVERT
 - DRAINAGE AREA

- NOTES:**
1. ALL PERMITS MUST BE OBTAINED PRIOR TO GROUND DISTURBANCE.
 2. ALL PERMITS, PERMITS, CONDITIONS WILL NEED TO BE INSTALLED PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION.
 3. CONSTRUCTION SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPECIFICATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION.
 4. SECURITY FENCE LOGS TO BE SHARED PRIOR TO INSTALLATION OF CONSTRUCTION TO PREVENT DAMAGE TO AND NETWORK OF SHIP PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY PARKING TO COMPLY WITH THE VIEW OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES.
 5. SUBCONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROTECTING EXISTING SURROUNDING EXISTING GROUND ELEVATIONS TO ALLOW EXISTING DRAINAGE PATTERNS TO PERSIST.
 6. TO ANY UPLSLOPE GROUND DISTURBANCE COMMENCING TOPSOIL SHALL BE STORED TO PROTECT FROM ALL EARTHWORK ACTIVITIES.
 7. THE ENTIRETY OF THE SITE REQUIRES VEGETATION ESTABLISHMENT TO PROTECT FROM EROSION AND TO MAINTAIN THE NATURAL VEGETATION MUST BE ESTABLISHED WITHIN A PERIOD OF 90 DAYS.
 8. COVERAGE ANNUAL VEGETATION COULD BE USED FOR PROJECT LESS THAN ONE GROWING SEASON.
 9. DEVELOP AN ACCESS BANK TO ISOLATE VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT ACCESS TO DEFINED AREAS SO THAT THE POTENTIAL FOR BURNING AND SOIL EROSION IS MINIMIZED.
 10. PERMITS FOR CONSTRUCTION SHALL BE OBTAINED PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION.
 11. SOIL BERMING FIBER LOGS ARE STILL REQUIRED.
 12. FOLLOWING PERMITS DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION AND BACKLOG DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION.

GRADING QUANTITIES

ITEM	CU (CY)	REL (CY)
PERM BERM 01	45	0
PERM BERM 02	0	84
PERM BERM 03	0	262
PERM SWALE	19	0
TOTAL	64	346

KEY MAP:



SEE SHEET C307

DRAFT ZONING REGULATION AMENDMENT – FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES

The following proposed regulation is based on the current Section 52.7.19, “Neighborhood Retirement Housing” but is revised to remove the current age restrictions and to encourage a broader range of housing options in Columbia, including affordable housing, while retaining some design and neighborhood-context control for the Commission. *Draft 11/14/23*

52.7.19 Planned Neighborhood Housing (Entire Section revised 6/01/15) (Draft 11/14/23)

52.7.19.1 Intent: To provide for a broader variety of housing in a development pattern that preserves the neighborhood residential character of the Town of Columbia by permitting an increase in density within the development and allowing alternative housing types with a site design that is in harmony with and preserves natural, scenic and historic site design features; and to provide incentives and opportunities for the creation of affordable housing while also preserving open space lands.

52.7.19.2 Required Approvals: A Special Permit shall be required for any proposed Planned Neighborhood Housing. The Special Permit may be issued only by the Columbia Planning and Zoning Commission after a public hearing and shall be issued only in conformity to the provisions of Section 52.7.19 of these Regulations. A pre-application review with the Commission is strongly encouraged.

52.7.19.3 Definitions: For purposes of this Section, the following definitions shall apply:

Planned Neighborhood Housing: A building, or group of buildings located on a single parcel of land or multiple contiguous parcels, sharing common management and ownership, and consisting of detached, semi-detached, or multiple-dwelling units.

Dwelling Unit: A single unit providing complete, independent living facilities for qualified occupants including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.

Planned Neighborhood Housing Complex: All buildings, structures and land associated with the development site. Ownership of the Complex shall be by one entity, either a Common Interest Ownership as defined by CT General Statutes or Private Ownership.

Unbuildable area: The area, expressed in square feet, within the site that is comprised of wetlands soils, watercourses, lakes, ponds, swamps, marshes, flood zone A per FEMA maps, slopes greater than 20%, and easements prohibiting building development.

Dedicated open space: Land whose future use is legally restricted to conservation, recreation, or agriculture in perpetuity.

52.7.19.4 Application for Planned Neighborhood Housing:

- A. Approvals: A Special Permit is required under the provisions of Section 52.3.
- B. Information Required to be submitted:
 1. Application signed by the owner and agent, if any, stating the ownership of the property to be developed and summarizing the development proposal.
 2. An approval of the septic system design by the appropriate authorizing agency.
 3. An approval of the water supply system from the appropriate authorizing agency.

4. Key map of the neighborhood on a scale of 1" = 400' showing the relation of the proposed development to abutting properties and to existing and proposed streets.
5. Certified A-2 base map, on a scale of 1" = 40', showing the following:
 - a. Location of benchmarks.
 - b. Size of the Complex in total acreage.
 - c. Location of any ponds, brooks, or inland wetland areas, as certified by a soil scientist.
 - d. Two foot contours extending fifty (50) feet beyond site boundaries. Contour information shall be collected by an actual field survey or by means of photogrammetry (aerial topography).
 - e. Location of unbuildable area. Notes should reflect total area (in square feet) of buildable and unbuildable areas on the site.
 - f. Location of subsurface sewage disposal area and site testing locations for the same.
 - g. Location of water supply.
 - h. Location, dimension and basement floor elevation of all buildings; as well as foundation and footing drains.
 - i. Location of internal private roads, individual driveways, parking areas, and parking spaces.
 - j. Location of accessory buildings, structures and facilities.
 - k. Location of proposed dedicated open space.
6. Architectural plans showing accurate elevations, height, bulk, construction materials and other massing, architectural, and design features of the proposed development.
7. Stormwater Plan per Section 6.3 of Columbia Subdivision Regulations.
8. An erosion and sedimentation control plan prepared in accordance with Article VIII of the Zoning Regulations of the Town of Columbia.
9. Landscaping plan (may be incorporated as a part of the Site Plan referenced in Section 51) showing:
 - a. Planting schedules - type, number, minimum size of trees and/or shrubs and other plants.
 - b. Treatment of seeding and sodding.
 - c. Pavement types for vehicular and pedestrian movement.
 - d. Type, height and density of any proposed screening or fencing.
10. Open Space Plan.
 - a. Description of the proposed use of the areas of open space
 - b. Proposed ownership and maintenance responsibility. All conveyances of rights, title, interest and easements shall be in a form approved by the Town Attorney, shall be accompanied by a Certificate of Title and releases or subordinations of liens and encumbrances where appropriate, and shall be executed and recorded on the Columbia Land Records prior to or concurrent with the filing of the final Subdivision Plan, unless an alternative schedule is approved by the Commission.

52.7.19.5 Standards: Any application for a Special Permit under the provisions of Section 52.7.19 shall meet the following requirements:

- A. Complex Size and Location: The minimum size of Planned Neighborhood Housing Complex is four (4) acres, shall be located in a Residential District (RA) and shall have a minimum frontage of fifty (50) feet at the street line of a public street.
- B. Dwelling units per acre: The maximum number of dwelling units in the Planned Neighborhood Housing Complex shall be determined by soil capacity and State Public Health Code but shall not exceed 8 units per acre of market-rate housing units, or 12 units per acre if a minimum of 20% of units are set aside as "affordable" as defined in this subsection, excluding "Unbuildable Area" as defined in Section 52.7.19.3
 - 1. Affordability Percentage. At least twenty percent (20%) of the dwelling units will be rented or conveyed subject to an incentive housing restriction. Such restriction shall require that, for a least thirty (30) years after initial occupancy of the development, the dwelling units will be sold or rented at, or below, prices that will preserve the units as housing for which persons pay thirty percent (30%) or less of their annual income, where the income is less than or equal to eighty percent (80%) or less of the area median income. In determining compliance with this Section, the Commission will use regulations or guidelines published by the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, the Connecticut Department of Housing, or any other successor agency designated in accordance with Conn. Gen. Stats. §8-13m. to 8-13x.
 - 2. Affordability Plan. Each applicant for multiple housing units within the Planned Neighborhood Housing development will provide an affordability plan that will detail the administration, monitoring, and enforcement of the dwelling units to be sold or rented at below market rates as described above. The plan will include proposed deed restrictions or covenants, lease agreements, common interest ownership documents, bylaws, rules and regulations, sample income calculations, and any other information as the Commission may require, to establish compliance with this Section and Conn. Gen. Stats. §8-13m. to 8-13x.
 - 3. Designation of Administering Agency. The applicant will indicate the name, address, and other contact information for the agency that will administer the sale or rental of the dwelling units that are subject to the below-market sale or rental in accordance with this Section.
 - 4. Affordable dwelling units may be offered for sale or rental in individual, public, cooperative, or condominium ownership. Documentation as to management, organization, and incorporation of applicable ownership associations will be submitted to the Commission at the time of filing the application for a Planned Neighborhood Housing development.
 - 5. Affordable units shall be of a construction quality and design that is comparable to market-rate units within the development and shall be dispersed throughout the development.
- B. No dwelling unit shall contain more than three (3) bedrooms and no more than one-third of the total number of dwelling units in the Complex shall contain three (3) bedrooms.
- C. No building shall contain more than six (6) dwelling units
- D. Community buildings, recreational facilities and open spaces designed for, and used principally by, the residents are permitted as accessory uses.

- E. Building Height: Maximum height of 28 feet if one-story and 35 feet if two-story.
- F. Separating distance for buildings with dwelling units within the Complex: Minimum separating distances shall be not less than twenty (20) feet for one-story buildings, and thirty-five (35) feet for two-story buildings.
- G. Setbacks: All buildings shall be setback 50 feet from property lines of residential properties that abut the perimeter of the Complex parcel(s) and 35 feet from existing town or state right of ways.
- H. Sewage Disposal: Each dwelling unit shall be connected to an approved sewage disposal system.
- I. Water Supply: Water Supply facilities must meet the requirements of the State Health Code.
- J. Parking, driveways, and roads: The following standards shall apply to parking, driveway and roads:
 - 1. All public streets within the Planned Neighborhood Housing Development shall be constructed in accordance with these Regulations, town ordinance and the Town of Columbia Construction and Development Standards.
 - 2. All internal roadways and driveways shall be private roads and shall be maintained by the owner or Homeowners Association.
 - 3. Emergency Vehicle Access
 - a. All streets must provide adequate fire truck and emergency vehicle access.
 - b. Developers are encouraged to design roads and accesses that minimize the expanse of pavement through the employment of "natural" roadside surfaces that accommodate the turning radii and clearances necessary for the maneuvering of emergency vehicles.
 - 4. Driveways shall be constructed in conformance with Section 8.12 of the Zoning Regulations of the Town of Columbia and shall be bituminous concrete.
 - 5. There shall be at least two parking spaces provided for each single-family dwelling unit. One of these parking spaces may be provided within an attached garage.
 - 6. Guest parking shall be provided throughout the complex in small lots or pull-off areas in close proximity to dwelling units and other areas such as near a community building or passive/active recreation areas.
- K. The entire Planned Neighborhood Housing Complex shall be owned by one entity. Driveways, parking areas, utilities, water, sewage, streets, landscaped areas, accessory buildings, structures and facilities, and open spaces designated on the site plan shall be owned and maintained by the owner of the Complex. If the owner is a common interest ownership association pursuant to the Connecticut Common Interest Ownership Act of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Association By-Laws and Association Rules shall be reviewed and approved by the Town Attorney.
- L. All utility transmission and service lines shall be underground, except when waived by the Commission due to site limitations.

- M. Architectural considerations: All buildings shall share a common exterior architectural theme and be compatible with other dwellings in Columbia. Each dwelling unit shall contain a basement or attic for storage.
- N. Home office uses shall be allowed in conformance with Section 8.5.1 of the Zoning Regulations of the Town of Columbia with the exception that no additional commercial vehicle is permitted.
- O. Adequate street lighting for internal roads shall be provided.
- P. Appropriate signage shall identify the entrance to the complex, intersections, directions, and patterns of vehicular movement. The placement, size and height of the signs shall conform to the requirements of Section 62.
- Q. A minimum of 15% of the lot shall be preserved in perpetuity as dedicated open space for conservation, recreational or agricultural use where appropriate. Such open space shall be located so that it is an integral part of the residential area, readily accessible to residents of the parcel and to necessary maintenance equipment except where such accessibility would interfere with a stated conservation purpose or agricultural use.
- R. The Planned Neighborhood Housing Complex may be developed in stages. The initial site plan shall show the full development with the first stage depicted in detail; future stages may be shown in concept. Future stages shall require Special Permit approval by the Commission.

52.7.19.6 Evaluation Criteria: In considering the proposed application, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall be guided by the following:

- A. The existing and future character of the neighborhood in which the use is to be located.
- B. The location of principal and accessory buildings in relation to one another.
- C. The height, bulk, and density of buildings in relation to one another.
- D. Traffic circulation within the site; amount, location, and access to parking; traffic load or possible circulation problems on existing streets; pedestrian safety throughout the site and in the immediate neighborhood.
- E. Availability of water to the site and adequate disposal of sewage and storm water.
- F. Safeguards to prevent detrimental impact to adjacent property and the neighborhood in general.
- G. Provisions for open space, common areas and amenities, including size, configuration, purpose, connectivity to other open space, public and environmental benefit, ownership, maintenance, and control. The proposed purpose, use and management of dedicated open space shall be reviewed based on the criteria listed in the open space section of the Columbia Plan of Conservation and Development.

52.7.19.7 The Commission may provide for bonding of all required common improvements and for soil and erosion control.

52.7.19.8 The owner of the Complex is responsible for the maintenance of all common improvements and for maintaining the provisions of the approved Special Permit and Site Plan and the verification of occupancy qualifications.

11/27/23 - Preliminary input from Coalition on Diversity and Equity re: Draft Zoning Regulation Amendment based on current Section 52.7.19

I'm speaking as a member of Coalition on Diversity and Equity. Our Columbia Affordable Housing Subcommittee has met to review the Draft Zoning Regulation Amendment (based on current Section 52.7.19) and would like to submit some brief preliminary comments and questions tonight.

We want to thank the Planning and Zoning Commission for your efforts to encourage a broader range of housing options in Columbia, including affordable housing. Our larger group next meets on December 12th and may provide the Commission with additional input.

1) Was there any developer input as this draft amendment was written? If not, we'd respectfully recommend that the Planning and Zoning Commission look for developer input to help ensure the draft is as development-friendly as possible.

2) With clear criteria for Planned Neighborhood Housing, is a Special Permit necessary? A developer might be more encouraged to build in town if he/she didn't have to go through that process.

3) Is it intended that this amendment would replace Section 52.7.21 Multi-Family Housing? If not, there appear to be some inconsistencies between the two.

4) It would be helpful to understand the reasoning for a number of the proposed criteria, e.g., maximum unit density, minimum number of acres, minimum frontage, etc. We believe the more flexible the regulations, the more likely a developer can build something that is affordable and sustainable. For example, if we read this correctly, the draft amendment has a limit of six units per building, but the existing Multi-Family Housing regulations allow 12 units (if it is a two-story building).

5) Evaluation criteria includes consideration of "the existing and future character of the neighborhood" and "safeguards to prevent detrimental impact to adjacent property and the neighborhood in general." Without clear definitions, these criteria appear subjective. Are the criteria actually needed if a developer meets all the regulations listed in the amendment?

6) We'd also suggest the evaluation criteria include consideration of how a proposed project contributes to achieving the Town's Affordable Housing Plan goal of 30 additional affordable housing units.

Thank you for your time and work on this amendment, and for the opportunity for input. We will continue to review the draft and submit any additional questions or comments.

Submitted by Rhonda Kincaid

What does 'affordable' mean? Amid CT housing debates, a fight over definitions

Alex Putterman

Jan. 3, 2024

Affordable housing is one of the buzziest subjects in Connecticut politics, at the center of election campaigns, policy debates and legislative hearings. It generates fierce opinions across the political spectrum, even as nearly everyone acknowledges it as one of the state's biggest needs.

Why, then, can no one agree exactly what it means?

In some contexts — and to some people — affordable housing might refer to housing that typical residents can comfortably afford to live in. In other contexts, it might mean housing that's affordable to whoever happens to live there. And under one oft-debated law, it describes something more specific: housing required to be affordable under certain legal mechanisms.

"It is very contextual," said Michael Santoro, director of policy, research and housing support at Connecticut's housing department. "Depending on the audience or the topic, the phrase will mean different things."

Based on the latter definition, one recent report found, only 29 Connecticut towns and cities have at least 10 percent affordable housing, while 93 towns have less than 5 percent. These figures, and others like them, have driven housing advocates, as well as many state and local officials, to appeal for construction of new affordable housing, as well as measures to maintain existing units as affordable.

Some argue the affordable housing crisis is even worse than the data suggests, as some units classified as "affordable" remain inaccessible to the state's poorest residents. Others say this definition of "affordable housing" is overly narrow, omitting certain types of units.

Might reaching consensus on what affordable housing means be key to addressing it?
Easier said than done.

A general definition

Affordable housing is frequently defined, including by the federal government and some Connecticut statutes, as housing for which a household does not pay more than 30 percent of its income. Under this definition, affordable housing for a family earning \$50,000 annually would cost \$1,250 or less per month.

"It's a very generic concept," Santoro said. "If you're contributing 30 percent or less, then that housing that you are living in is considered affordable to you."

In a healthy housing market, affordable housing by this definition would be plentiful. People at all income levels would be able to find quality housing that fit both their needs and their budget.

The problem, Santoro says, is that affordable housing in this general sense is difficult to count precisely — though one recent survey from the non-profit DataHaven found that more than half of residents in some Connecticut cities report paying at least 30 percent of their income to housing.

"It's statistical in nature," Santoro said. "It cannot be tested."

This general definition can also lead to confusing, almost paradoxical places. Looked at this way, a \$2 million mansion would qualify as "affordable housing" if owned by a multi-millionaire who could easily afford the mortgage, while a small apartment with a \$1,000 monthly rent would be "unaffordable" if occupied by someone making minimum wage.

Sometimes, policymakers solve for this problem by narrowing the definition slightly, to include only housing that costs less than 30 percent of a family's income provided the family earns below a certain income threshold.

In other cases, though, they have taken a different, more complex (but also more easily measurable) approach. That is where things get tricky.

The fight over 8-30g

One of Connecticut's most consequential (and controversial) housing statutes is known as 8-30g. Under this law, passed in 1989, developers may challenge communities that reject proposals for affordable housing, as defined by the law, forcing towns to defend their decisions in court.

Crucially, towns and city are exempt from this appeals process if they have at least 10 percent affordable housing, which is defined in this context as:

- Housing subsidized by the government, whether through development subsidies or rental assistance programs
- Units specifically set aside to be rented at less than 30 percent of a family's annual income (for families earning less than 80 percent of the state or area median income)
- Housing financed by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, which offers below-market interest rates to first-time home-buyers and those purchasing homes in target areas
- Certain mobile homes and accessory apartments for which households pay less than 30 percent of their income

The definition of "affordable housing" in 8-30g refers specifically to what Anika Singh Lemar, an attorney and Yale law professor, calls "capital-a affordable housing," or units that are required by law to be affordable.

"Capital-a affordable housing is required by some legal rubric to be affordable to the people who live there," Singh Lemar said. "And typically, it's a combination of: People can only live here if they make less than a certain amount of money, and they can only be charged a rent that is equal to 30 percent of their income."

Like many other state statutes, 8-30g does not account for what Singh Lemar calls "lowercase-a affordable housing," referring to market-rate units that are affordable for most families. This might include, say, a subdivided home whose market-rate rent comes to less than 30 percent of a typical family's income.

As some 8-30g critics see it, the omission of "naturally occurring" affordable housing from the law's definition leads to under-counting of affordable units. Earlier this year, Republican lawmakers proposed a tweak that would have included some market-rate affordable housing within the 8-30g definition, but the measure did not gain momentum in the Democratic-controlled legislature.

Kathryn Braun, a Republican on Fairfield's planning and zoning commission, wants to see naturally occurring affordable housing counted for 8-30g purposes, which she says the state could accomplish by tracking rents in communities statewide.

"The only reason it wasn't [counted] was to make it easier to implement the law," Braun said. "Well, if that's the only reason, let's make it happen now. Thirty years hence, we should have computer programs that can track naturally occurring affordable housing and give towns credit for it."

Defenders of 8-30g argue that including naturally occurring affordable housing in its definition would drastically weaken the law and eliminate a key incentive for towns to promote affordable housing — unless the change also came with a drastically higher threshold for exemptions.

Santoro, who was working in state government when 8-30g passed nearly 35 years ago, says critiques of 8-30g often miss the point of the law, which seeks to measure affordable housing created by active government intervention. While the 8-30g definition may not be perfect, he said, it's a tangible metric of a town's progress in generating affordable units.

"It was a number we could calculate. It was a finite set of units we could identify," he said. "They drew a line at 10 percent because enough of the communities that were taking action were above the 10 percent [line]. It is that simple."

Unaffordably 'affordable'

While some say legal definitions such as the one in 8-30g undercount affordable housing, others argue it might actually *overcount* the true totals.

For one thing, towns are responsible for counting affordable housing units and reporting totals to the state, and advocates have sometimes found mistakes in their accounting. For another, they say, there's no guarantee that subsidized or deed-restricted units counted as "affordable" under the 8-30g definition are actually affordable to the state's poorest residents, who may struggle to pay even reduced rents.

This is a frustration for Janice Flemming Butler, an activist in Hartford who recently helped lead efforts to bring a new housing development to Hartford's North End. She sees people living in "affordable" units who nonetheless can't afford rent in addition to food and other necessities — or whose affordable units lack basic amenities or aren't regularly maintained.

Sometimes, she finds herself questioning what the word "affordable" even means.

"People use that word so loosely," Flemming Butler said. "When people are yelling 'affordable,' the next question is, affordable for who?"

To: Rick Nassiff <Rick@NASSIFF.com>; John Guskowski <jguskowski@columbiact.org>
Subject: FW: URGENT REMINDER: CRCOG Regional Planning Commission Appointments (3/15/24)

Hi Rick and John, have we submitted our commission appointments?

Thanks,

Jen

Jennifer LaVoie
Executive Administrative Assistant
Town of Columbia
Phone: 860.228.0110
Email: jlavoie@columbiact.org
Website: www.columbiact.org
Address: 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT

From: Capitol Region Council of Governments <jknowlton@crcog.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 12:00 PM
To: Mark Walter <townadministrator@columbiact.org>
Subject: URGENT REMINDER: CRCOG Regional Planning Commission Appointments (3/15/24)

You don't often get email from jknowlton@crcog.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

It's that time again...

2024 Regional Planning Commission Appointments

To: Rick Nassiff <Rick@NASSIFF.com>; John Guskowski <jguskowski@columbiact.org>
Subject: FW: URGENT REMINDER: CRCOG Regional Planning Commission Appointments (3/15/24)

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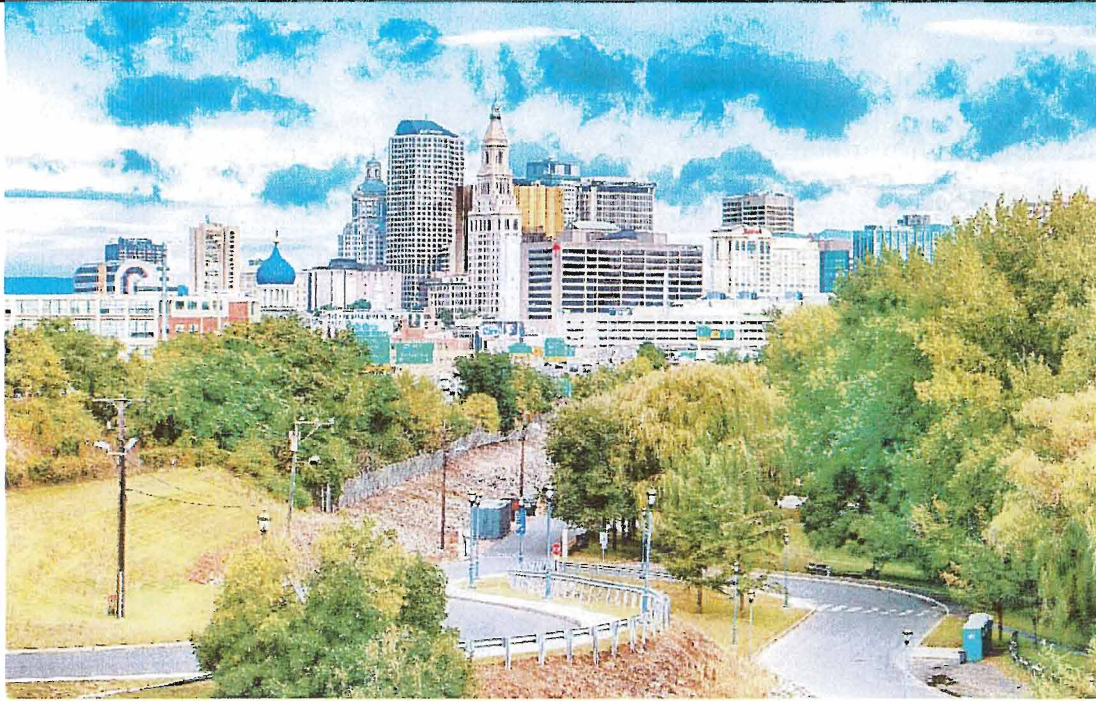
Jennifer LaVoie
Executive Administrative Assistant
Town of Columbia
Phone: 860.228.0110
Email: jlavoie@columbiact.org
Website: www.columbiact.org
Address: 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT

From: Capitol Region Council of Governments <jknowlton@crcog.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 12:00 PM
To: Mark Walter <townadministrator@columbiact.org>
Subject: URGENT REMINDER: CRCOG Regional Planning Commission Appointments (3/15/24)

You don't often get email from jknowlton@crcog.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

It's that time again...

2024 Regional Planning Commission Appointments



This serves as a reminder to submit your Municipality's Regional Planning Commission appointments. Thank you to those who have already completed the form. Staff also thanks those who have communicated the need for an extension. Others who require an extension please don't hesitate to reach out to Jacob Knowlton at jknowlton@crcog.org. Please notify Jacob of any issues, concerns, needs for extensions and/or expected date of appointment as all municipalities are required to have an RPC representative.

This year is of particular importance due to RPC's responsibility of **reviewing and approving the 2024 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.**

Per Regional Planning Commission Bylaws, RPC appointments must be made by each CRCOG member Municipality every two years. We request that your Planning Commission or Planning and Zoning Commission appoint a representative and alternate to serve on the RPC from the date of appointment through December 31, 2025. If your commission members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen or Town/City Council, the RPC appointments must also be approved by these bodies. Please return the attached google form below **by March 15, 2024.**

Your participation on the Regional Planning Commission ensures that the concerns of your municipality are reflected in regional plans and policies developed by the commission. Two of the main responsibilities of the RPC are to keep an up-to-date Plan of Conservation and Development for the Capitol Region, and to comment on zoning and subdivision proposals occurring along town lines.

Please make sure that the person appointed to the RPC is willing to attend our meetings on a regular basis, and if possible, please appoint an alternate who is willing to attend in the member's absence. The 2024 RPC Meeting Schedule is attached. Meetings will be held quarterly generally on the third Thursday of meeting months, as noted on the schedule. All RPC meeting packages will be emailed to the appointed representatives as all RPC business is done virtually, until further notice.

RPC meetings are used to keep planning and zoning officials informed of CRCOG projects and programs related to regional and local planning. In addition, workshop sessions on current planning and zoning topics are periodically held, and members are given time to share information on municipal planning issues.

Please review the buttons below to find the appropriate memo with the 2024 RPC meeting schedule, as well as the Municipal RPC Appointment Google Form.

We look forward to working with your town's RPC representative in the coming year. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 860-724-4241 or jknowlton@crcog.org.

* Hartford is unique in that it has four seats on the Regional Planning Commission in accordance with Special Act 73-79.

Official RPC Business will be Virtual

RPC Appointment Google Form

RPC Memo & Meeting Schedule

Hartford RPC Appointment Google Form

Hartford RPC Memo & Meeting Schedule

Training Requirements

Those in office on 1/1/2023 must complete four (4) hours of training by 1/1/2024, and once every four years thereafter, or once every term for which such member is elected or appointed if such term is longer than four years per **Public Act 21-29** (as amended 10/1/2023).

More Info

Email Jacob with any questions at jknowlton@crcog.org



CRCOG | 241 Main Street, Hartford, CT 06106

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TOWN OF COLUMBIA

Land Use Department

323 Jonathan Trumbull Highway, Columbia, CT 06237

To: Planning and Zoning Commission
Board of Selectmen
From: John Guskowski, Consulting Town Planner
RE: Planning and Zoning Commission's Training Per C.G.S. 8-4c
Date: March 01, 2024

The following Planning and Zoning Commissioners have completed the required statutory land use training. This training is good for 4 years under the newly revised dates per P.A. 23-173 (which took effect on October 1, 2023).

Robert Powell

F. Thomas Currier

Richard Nassiff Jr.

Justin Riendeau

Vera Englert

Walt Tabor

David Holcroft

Larry Preston

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Sincerely,

John Guskowski