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January 27, 2022

Howell Township Planning Board  
4567 Route 9 North  
PO Box 580  
Howell, NJ 07731

**Re: Monmouth Solar 1, LLC (SP-1099)**  
**Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan – Engineering Review #1**  
**Block 42, Lots 93, 93.01, 94 & 94.01**  
**Location: 2921 Lakewood-Allenwood Road**  
**Zone: ARE-6 (Agricultural Rural Estate 6)**  
**Our File: HHWP0042.10**

Dear Board Members:

Our office has received the following information in support of the above referenced application for Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan Approval:

- Preliminary and Final Major Site Plans (14 sheets) prepared by Gladstone Design, Inc., dated September 30, 2021, last revised November 12, 2021;
- Boundary & Topographic Survey (1 sheet) prepared by Gladstone Design, Inc., dated September 22, 2021, unrevised;
- Stormwater Management Report prepared by Gladstone Design, Inc., dated September 30, 2021, unrevised;
- Natural Resources Inventory and Environmental Impact Report prepared by EcolSciences, Inc., dated November 12, 2021, unrevised;
- Feasibility Study Report dated January 2021, unrevised;
- Letter containing the waivers requested prepared by Gladstone Design, Inc., dated December 9, 2021;
- Freehold Soil Conservation District Application;
- Monmouth County Planning Board Site Plan Application;
- A development application and checklist.



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In accordance with your authorization, we have reviewed this application for Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan approval and offer the following comments:

1. Project Description

The existing 239 acre property is located within an ARE-6 Zone District and contains 1,674 feet of frontage along the north side of Lakewood-Allenwood Road. The property was formerly a solid waste landfill that was decommissioned and capped in the 1990s and is presently owned by Monmouth County. The property contains a series of environmental constraints associated with the Muddy Ford Brook, Woodcock Brook, Grouse Brook, and Sandhill Brook, as well as various wetlands throughout. Currently, the site contains a maintenance building and a pump building, a dirt drive that circulates the property, and two (2) wetpond basins with stormwater conveyance and grass swales. There are also utility poles with overhead wires within a utility easement in the northern (rear) portion of the property. Access to the site is provided by one full movement driveway at the Lakewood-Allenwood Road frontage.

The Applicant proposes to construct a solar energy facility comprised of approximately 1,161 solar panels. The existing maintenance and pump buildings are to remain, as will the circulation path around the site, although it appears the Applicant is proposing to install gravel within the same limits of the dirt path. All energy generated in the solar energy facility will be tied into the electrical grid at the interconnection point. The existing stormwater systems and the driveway to Lakewood-Allenwood Road will be utilized with no modifications proposed.

Solar Energy Generation Facilities are a conditionally permitted use within the ARE-6 Zone and the proposed development meets the conditional use criteria.

2. Zoning Compliance

The subject property is situated within an ARE-6 Zone District and the table below summarizes the bulk standards and zone requirements for Solar Energy Generation Facilities in this Zone:

Description	Required	Proposed
Minimum Lot Area	65 acres	238,989 acres
Minimum Front Yard Setback	60 feet	164.6 feet (Ex. Maintenance building) 417.8 feet (Prop. Solar Panels)
Minimum Side Yard Setback	60 feet	197.4 feet (Prop. Solar Panels)
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	60 feet	> 60 feet
Maximum Height	15 feet	9.8 feet (Prop. Solar Panels)



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(EC) – Existing Condition, (V) – Variance Required

The Applicant has not indicated that any variances are required; however, the following relief appears necessary.

- a. **Section 188-10** – Signs shall be subject to Chapter 256.
  - i. **Section 256-7I** – Signs on poles maintained by public utilities, or on trees and fences or attached to signs or buildings owned by other persons are prohibited; whereas a 15 square foot site identification sign is proposed on the entrance gate.

The Applicant has not requested any design waivers with this application; however, the following relief appear necessary:

- a. **Section 188-106F(1)(a)** – All main driveways into commercial and/or industrial areas shall be a minimum of 30 feet wide, or as controlled by outside agencies. On industrial and commercial applications, a thirty-foot-wide circulation aisle must be maintained for emergency purposes. The gravel drive does not maintain a 30 foot width throughout the site.
- b. **Section 188-106F(2)** – Areas likely to experience light traffic shall be paved; whereas the circulation aisle is gravel.
- c. **Section 188-107C** – The minimum number of parking spaces for utility uses is one (1) space; whereas it does not appear that any parking spaces are proposed.
- d. **Section 188-195A** – All required replacement trees shall be planted on the site from which trees were removed if possible. A waiver from any portion or all of the required on-site replacement may be granted by the approving board and shall be based upon documented practical and physical difficulties and undue hardship related to conditions of the site from which trees are to be removed. The comments and recommendations of the Board Engineer in consultation with the Certified Tree Expert, Shade Tree Commission, and Environmental Commission shall be solicited in determining whether a requested waiver is required. The Applicant shall provide tree removal/replacement information to determine the replacement requirements. Currently, the Applicant is proposing to remove approximately 0.3 acres of trees on the site. Based upon our review, it appears the Applicant will be able to comply with replacement requirements as much of the site is currently open and a waiver may not be required.



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- e. **Section 188-225G(1)** – All lots shall have private walkway access to a public sidewalk in the right-of-way. All site plan applications shall provide public sidewalks along the entire frontage of the subject property. The proposed development does not propose sidewalk along the frontage nor sidewalk access to the frontage. If the Board grants a waiver from providing sidewalk along the frontage of the property, the Applicant shall be responsible to pay into the Howell Township Sidewalk Trust Fund in the amount of \$46,872.00. (1,674 LF x 4 FT wide = 6,696 SF x \$7/SF = \$46,872.00)
- 3. The Applicant has requested a waiver from providing the following required checklist items:
  - a. **Checklist Item #5** – Utilities Department filing fee.
  - b. **Checklist Item #16** – Traffic Report.
  - c. **Checklist Item #17** – Metes and bounds, covenants, and deed restrictions affecting the property in question.
  - d. **Checklist Item #20** – Architectural Plans.
  - e. **Checklist Item #37** – Plans drawn to scale between 1"=50' and 1"=20'.
  - f. **Checklist Item #50** – Details and descriptions of common facilities and open space.
  - g. **Checklist Item #58** – Location of Flood Hazard Area and Riparian Zone within 500 feet of the properties edge.
  - h. **Checklist Item #60** – All overland and underground drainage conveyances within 2,000 feet.
  - i. **Checklist Item #68** – Existing and proposed centerline, gutter and top of curb elevations along roadway.
  - j. **Checklist Item #69** – Soil borings.
  - k. **Checklist Item #76** – Existing Conditions & Demolition Plan.
  - l. **Checklist Item #81** – Lighting Plan.
  - m. **Checklist Item #82** – Signing and Striping Plan.
  - n. **Checklist Item #84** – Landscaping Plan.
  - o. **Checklist Item #85** – A Woodlands Management Plan.



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- p. **Checklist Item #86** – Maintenance & Protection of Traffic Plan during construction.
- q. **Checklist Item #87** – Profiles and cross sections of all streets, common driveways or private roads.
- r. **Checklist Item #88** – Profiles of utility layouts (i.e. sanitary sewers, storm sewers, water mains, gas and electric).

The following required checklist submission items should be provided or waivers requested:

- s. **Checklist Item #4** – Previous Planning and/or Zoning Board approvals.
  - t. **Checklist Item #45** – Phone number and email of the owner of the property.
  - u. **Checklist Item #46** – Email of the Applicant.
  - v. **Checklist Item #64** – Provide table showing estimated sewerage disposal rate (GPD) using NJDEP criteria.
  - w. **Checklist Item #65** – Location of existing and proposed wells and septic systems.
  - x. **Checklist Item #70** – Building size and use by floor area in square feet.
4. Based on our review of the subject application, we estimate that the following fees are required:

a. **Nonrefundable Application Fees:**

Preliminary Major Site Plan	
(Other than Residential – \$150 per acre being developed (44.4 ac))	\$6,660.00
Final Site Plan (½ Preliminary)	\$3,330.00
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$9,990.00</b>

b. **Professional Services Escrow Fees:**

Preliminary Site Plan (Building Area Less than 10,000 sf)	\$5,000.00
Final Site Plan (1/3 Preliminary)	\$1,666.67
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$6,666.67</b>



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We recommend the Township collect \$9,990.00 in nonrefundable application fees and \$6,666.67 in professional services escrow fees from the Applicant prior to deeming the application complete. In addition, the Applicant will be required to pay all applicable revision fees as stipulated in the Township Ordinances.

5. The Applicant should be prepared to discuss the following issues with the Board:
  - a. Overall operations associated with the use and site, including but not limited to: hours of operation; number of employees and employees per shift; overall site circulation; refuse management; landscaping, buffering/screening and overall site aesthetics; etc.
  - b. Compliance with Section 188-69C – Design Standards for Solar Energy Generation Facilities, or if a variance is requested for any of the following:
    - i. If emergency vehicle access is provided to all ground-mounted systems.
    - ii. No portion of a solar energy generation facility shall occupy areas of land regulated by NJDEP wetlands, riparian zones, etc. without a permit issued by the NJDEP; whereas all NJDEP verifications and permits are not complete. It appears the proposed solar panels are located within wetlands and riparian zones.
    - iii. If the existing vegetation is sufficient to screen the proposed facilities from Lakewood-Allenwood Road or if additional landscaping will be proposed.
    - iv. If a Decommissioning Plan will be provided.
  - c. The existing and proposed stormwater management of the property, including compliance with NJDEP regulations regarding quantity, quality and recharge. The Applicant shall verify the working condition of the existing wet ponds, grass swales and stormwater conveyance systems.
  - d. The Applicant shall provide additional information regarding the pathway around the site. It appears there is an existing dirt pathway that is being converted to a gravel pathway, and all limits of the path will remain the same. The width of the path should be discussed and what type of vehicles will utilize this pathway.
  - e. How the poles and equipment in the rear of the site within the JCP&L easement will be accessed as it does not appear that a path is provided.
  - f. If the four (4) lots will be consolidated as part of this application.



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- g. Compliance with Ordinance Article IV, Standards of Performance, relative to but not limited to: noise; glare; pollutants; flammable/hazardous materials; solid/liquid waste; refuse management; etc.
  - h. The need for any improvements (curb, sidewalk, widening, right-of-way dedication; etc.) along the roadway site frontage.
6. This application may be subject to the following outside agency approvals:
- a. Monmouth County Planning Board
  - b. Monmouth County Board of Health
  - c. Freehold Soil Conservation District
  - d. New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
  - e. Howell Township Municipal Utilities Department
  - f. Howell Township Shade Tree Commission
  - g. Howell Township Environmental Commission
  - h. Howell Township Police Department
  - i. Howell Township Bureau of Fire Prevention
  - j. All other outside agency approvals as may be required. The Applicant shall address the Board regarding the status of all outside agency approvals for the project. In addition, copies of all outside agency approvals shall be forwarded to our office.

Prior to the application being deemed complete, the Board must act on the Applicant's request for the submission waivers outlined in Item #3 of our report. We recommend the Applicant comply with all applicable notification requirements as set forth in the Howell Township Land Use Ordinance and the Municipal Land Use Law.

Our office has prepared the attached Technical Engineering Review #1. The items contained therein should be addressed by the Applicant's professionals.

The right is reserved to present additional comments pending the receipt of revised plans and/or testimony of the Applicant before the Board.



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If you have any questions with regard to the above matter, please do not hesitate to call.

Very truly yours,  
**CME Associates**

Laura J. Neumann, PE, PP  
*Planning Board Engineer*

LJN/JAR/ROM

cc: Howell Township Environmental Commission  
Ronald Cucchiaro, Esq. – Board Attorney  
Jennifer Beahm – Board Planner  
Monmouth Solar 1, LLC – Applicant  
Gladstone Design, Inc. – Applicant's Engineer  
Grace Chun, Esq. – Applicant's Attorney





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## **HOWELL TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD**

### ***Monmouth Solar 1, LLC***

### ***Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan***

***January 26, 2022***

#### **TECHNICAL ENGINEERING REVIEW #1**

##### **A. General**

1. Provide construction details for the following:
  - a. Gravel pathway
  - b. Inverter/Transformer Pad
  - c. Concrete Pad
  - d. Gravel Pad
  - e. Utility Manhole
2. Revise General Note #21 to indicate the hours for construction are Monday – Friday 7am – 6pm and Saturday and Sunday 9am – 5pm.
3. Indicate the bearings and distances for all proposed easements on the plan and provide the descriptions for review prior to recording with Monmouth County.
4. Indicate conservation easements for all wetlands, riparian zones, etc. on the Site Dimension Plan in accordance with Section 188-127.

##### **B. Woodlands Management**

1. It appears tree clearing is proposed for the installation of the utility poles and gravel pad on sheet 10 of 14. Provide tree removal and replacement calculations in accordance with Section 188-194. Also, tree protection fencing should be graphically depicted and specifically labeled at the limits of clearing.

##### **C. Signs**

1. Indicate the location of the proposed site identification sign on the Site Dimension Plan.



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2. Indicate the location and quantity of "Warning" signs on the Site Dimension Plan. Revise the detail to indicate the size of the sign. In accordance with Section 256-3E, the maximum size shall be two (2) square feet or a variance will be required.

D. **Environmental**

1. The applicant has indicated the intent to acquire NJDEP land use permits for the proposed project improvements. According to the provided Environmental Impact Report a Flood Hazard Area Verification, Flood Hazard Area Individual Permit, and Freshwater Wetlands General Permits #2, #6, #7, and #21 are required for the solar farm. Copies of these documents shall be submitted upon approval by the NJDEP.