

## **Dual-use solar array proposed at Boyden farm**

The town has received an application for a 20-acre solar farm on Boyden land off Roaring Brook Road, an “agri-voltaic” system that would allow for continued agricultural use of the land.

The sun-tracking solar panels would be set 10 feet off the ground and spaced far enough apart to allow sunshine onto the field, allowing crops or grass to grow.

Developer BlueWave Solar, based in Boston, seeks a special permit and site plan review from the Planning Board on behalf of landowner Ronald Boyden. The area proposed lies roughly at the corner of Route 116 and Roaring Brook Road.

Doing business as Roaring Brook Solar, LLC, the applicant proposes to build a 4.99-megawatt DC system that uses single axis tracking photovoltaic panels, and an associated battery energy storage system (BESS).

The town’s zoning requires a special permit and site plan review for large-scale solar installations like this one. State policy encourages dual-use solar arrays that allow continued farming of the land.

A months-long review of the plan starts with several town boards and officials like the fire chief having been given copies of the application and associated engineering plans. Their input goes to the Planning Board, which has tentatively scheduled to begin a public hearing process May 5. Copies of the application and associated maps and other materials are available to view at the Town Clerk’s Office and on the town’s website.

This the first use of the town’s solar farm zoning rules, which were written following installation of the town’s only other solar farm, on Main Poland Road.

The BlueWave project would have a battery storage unit on site to allow the array to contribute to the grid in the nighttime or cloudy days. The array is proposed to have a lifetime of 20 to 30 years. BlueWave would be responsible for decommissioning and removing the equipment when the array’s useful lifetime ended.