



September 12, 2022

Emily Berendt, Village President  
Village of Bull Valley  
1904 Cherry Valley Road  
Bull Valley, Illinois 60098

**Re: Special Use Permit – Project Narrative**

Proposed 4.95-MWac Ground-Mounted Solar Garden

Applicant: Nexamp Solar, LLC  
Project Name: Bull Valley Solar  
Location: 9407 IL Route 120, Bull Valley, IL

Dear Ms. Berendt, Members of the Village Planning & Zoning Commission and of the Village Board:

On behalf of Nexamp Solar, LLC's – Bull Valley Solar project, please find enclosed and below is our:

- Project narrative and with project details
- Special Use Permit Application Packet:
  - Special Use Permit Application
  - Special Use Permit Site Plan Set
  - Decommissioning Plan
  - Photographs of comparable solar systems
  - Consultation results from the State Historic Preservation Office
  - EcoCAT Termination Letter from Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources
  - Wetland Delineation Report
  - Vegetation Management Plan
- Application fee (send under separate cover)

**Project Narrative:**

Nexamp Solar, LLC is requesting an approval for a Special Use Permit to allow for development of a, 4.95MW (AC) ground-mounted distributed generation solar garden facility on an existing farmland parcel of approximately 37.93-acres located at 9407 IL Route 120, Bull Valley, Illinois. The project intends develop 25.63 acres of the overall parcel.

Nexamp Solar is also seeking two variances:

1. Section 6.3-4 of the Village Zoning Code to allow the Special Use Permit to be valid for 40 years from the date the solar project achieves Commercial Operations.
2. Section 6.3-6(a) of the Village Zoning Code to allow the applicant 36 months to establish the Special Use (i.e. achieve Commercial Operations)



### **Nexamp Background:**

In 2007, U.S. Army veterans Will Thompson and Dan Leary realized a vision for making a range of renewable energy options more affordable and accessible to homeowners and businesses throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The pair launched NexGen Energy Solutions, a turnkey provider of renewable energy and carbon solutions, in their hometown of North Andover, Massachusetts. NexGen became Nexamp later in 2007.

During the early years, Nexamp delivered a variety of energy systems for residential, commercial, municipal and agricultural customers. Energy solutions offered included solar PV, solar thermal, micro-wind, geothermal heating and cooling, and a wide array of energy efficiency services. In 2011, the company began shifting its focus fully toward commercial and industrial solar facilities, working with businesses and municipalities that wanted to offset their traditional utility energy power using on-site renewable solar generation.

2015 marked Nexamp's first Community Solar project and the beginning of a new chapter for the company. Leveraging its integrated approach of developing, building, owning and operating solar plants, Nexamp turned its focus to community solar, and alongside that the mission of making the benefits of solar power available to everyone—homeowners, renters, non-profits, small businesses, farms and more. Nexamp was named NECEC Clean Energy Company of the Year in 2015 and a Solar Power World Top 3 Commercial Solar Developer in 2017.

In 2016, Mitsubishi's Diamond Generating Corporation made a significant investment in Nexamp, and in 2018 the group made an additional investment that gave it a controlling interest. Serving a rapidly expanding network of individuals, property owners, businesses and communities that benefit from its nationally distributed portfolio of solar assets, Nexamp is a Massachusetts-based, nationally headquartered solar company that is laying the groundwork for a cleaner, more secure and resilient energy future.

### **Project Details:**

In your review of this Special Use Permit request, we ask that staff, the Zoning Board of Appeals, Environmental, Education, Health, and Welfare Committee and the County Board consider the following:

#### **I. Project components:**

- Solar modules (i.e. panels) are mounted on racking that slowly rotate and track the sun; there are approximately 12,000 modules proposed to be installed;
- At full tilt, the height of the solar array will be up to 20 feet in height;
- The solar modules are treated with anti-reflective coating to minimize glare;
- The racking is mounted to metal piles. Concrete foundations are not anticipated;
- The system will be remotely monitored, meaning there will be little traffic generated;
- Electrical cables will be installed underground for the entire project with exception of a series of poles necessary to interconnect with the ComEd grid near IL Route 120;
- Perimeter security fencing up to 8 ft. height;
- Location of proposed structures is in compliance with County setback requirements;
- Existing drainage patterns will be maintained throughout the site to the maximum extent possible;
- Limited area of gravel driveway for site access and maintenance;

- The inverter and transformer will be located on a concrete equipment pad;
- Disturbed areas will be re-vegetated with a pollinator friendly seed mix;
- We have included with our submission a decommissioning plan;

## **II. Construction:**

- Estimated approximately 30 to 40 jobs will be created during construction;
- Most jobs will be local but some may be brought in if the skill set required is not available;
- Typical jobs created include construction jobs - i.e. equipment operators, electricians, fence installers, laborers and construction managers;

## **III. Development Schedule:**

- Anticipated construction start is Fall 2023, depending on a number of factors;
- Duration of construction is typically +/- 5 months;

## **IV. Noise & Glare:**

- Noise generated by the solar system will not exceed 50 decibels measure at the property boundaries;
- The facility will use Tier 1 solar modules which are manufactured to the highest quality, performance and lifespan, produced by companies that have at least a five-year history in manufacturing them. These solar modules are designed to absorb light and have an antireflective coating that minimizes reflected light, which is less than many natural features, including water, snow, crops and grass. There will be no material impacts from glare generated by the solar modules;

## **V. Stormwater/Draintile/Wetlands:**

- Prior to construction, an on-site subsurface drain tile investigation and mapping will be completed by a drain tile company. With this information the project will be able to design around existing drain tiles or preemptively relocated drain tiles as needed to ensure the subsurface drainage is maintained;
- Prior to the issuance of a building permit, an Erosion Control Plan and Stormwater Management Plan that is design to be in compliance with the Village's stormwater ordinance will be submitted for review and approval by the Village and/or McHenry County;
- A copy of the NPDES permit will be provided before the building permit is issued;
- Prior to issuance of the building permit, the applicant will provide the Army Corp of Engineer's a copy of the wetland delineation. A copy of the Jurisdiction Determination and/or approval of the proposed construction by the Army Corp of Engineers will be provided to the Village;

## **VI. Monitoring & Maintenance:**

- Before the issuance of a building permit, the applicant will provide a detailed landscape plan that will include a site-specific low-profile pollinator vegetation that will be installed within the solar array area;
- The facility will comply with Illinois Noxious Weed Law;
- The facility will be monitored remotely 24/7 through the data acquisition system. This real-time monitoring aids in detecting and diagnosing any production anomalies, identifying and addressing underperformance issues and manage service teams and technicians;
- The project owner shall submit solar output report, upon request by the Village;

#### VII. Interconnection:

- Nexamp Solar, LLC has filed an interconnection application with ComEd and will provide a redacted copy of the Interconnection Agreement prior to the start of construction.
- The project will interconnect with ComEd's electric distribution system along IL Route 120.

#### VIII. Compliance with Findings of Fact for Special Use Permits (6.3-3):

We believe the proposed project wholly meets the Special Use Permit review finding of fact criteria outlined in the Village Zoning Ordinance Section 6.3-3.

- (a) That the establishment, maintenance or operation of the special use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort or general welfare.

*The proposed solar farm will not be detrimental to or endanger the public's health, safety, morals, comfort, or general welfare of Macon County. The entire solar array will be secured with an 8-foot fence to provide safety and prevent unintended access to the project area. There will be no lighting, odors, fumes, dust, or vibration generated from the operation of the solar facility. As such, it is not anticipated to affect the public's comfort or welfare.*

- (b) That the special use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of adjacent property for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood.

*The proposed project will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted by the zoning standards, nor substantially diminish or impair property values. Although solar gardens are relatively new to Illinois, there has been significant research showing solar farms do not impact property value of nearby properties. Care has been taken to locate the proposed solar system nearly 320 feet from the nearest non-participating residential structure (from nearest existing residential structure to the nearest proposed module).*

- (c) That the establishment of the special use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.

*The site is situated so that the proposed solar farm setback is in excess of ordinance requirements, particularly from the adjacent residences. The project will protect open space and the underlying farmland as after the project is decommissioned the land can be returned to traditional farming. This project will not impede normal and orderly development in the County.*

- (d) That adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or other necessary facilities have been or are being provided.

*Adequate utilities, access drive, drainage, and/or other necessary facilities are available or will not be necessary to serve the proposed use. Generally, the proposed solar development does not require access to utilities such as natural gas, water or sanitary sewer. The routing of the electrical infrastructure required to connect to the ComEd electric distribution system is shown on the enclosed plans. A driveway has been proposed to access the development. In addition, the introduction of native vegetation in the development areas (versus agricultural row crops) will*



*reduce run-off rates in the project area. Through the Driveway Permit process the applicant will comply with the requirements of the County and/or State Roadway Authority.*

- (e) That adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets and roads.

*The project will install an access drive to provide ingress and egress to/from the site as required by Roadway Permitting Authority to minimize traffic impacts on public streets.*

*During construction, impacts to roads will be minimal as oversize truck loads will be not necessary.*

*During operation, the facility will generate very little traffic as there will only be several scheduled on-site maintenance related visits per year.*

- (f) That the special use shall in all other respects conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may in each instance be modified by the Board of Trustees.

*The proposed use will comply with the criteria and requirements of County Planning & Zoning Ordinances.*

- (g) That the proposed use is consistent with the character and philosophy of the Village and conforms to the Village Comprehensive Land Use and Preservation Plan and any pertinent sub plans.

*The proposed use is consistent with the character and philosophy of the Village. In particular, the proposed use will help maintain low-density residential development and provide buffer between surrounding municipalities and protect the environment. Also, the proposed use will provide economic development and grow the local tax base while providing significant environmental benefits without adding demand to public resources such as local road, schools, libraries, parks or sewer & water resources.*

On behalf of Nexamp Solar, LLC's – Bull Valley Solar project we thank you in advance for your consideration of our request for approval. We look forward to review of our submittal at the Planning and Zoning Commission's next meeting. In the interim, please contact us with any questions regarding our submittal or if any additional information is required.

Sincerely,

Matt Walsh  
Business Development Director  
P: 847.212.1585  
E: mwalsh@nexamp.com