Introduction

Weston and Sampson Engineers, Inc., on behalf of Alfred Barbalunga (the Applicant), proposes a Preliminary Subdivision south of Williams Street in the City of Pittsfield, as depicted on the attached Preliminary Subdivision Plan. The proposed subdivision is located in the Grouped Business (B-C) Zoning District. The proposed site is bounded to the north by Williams Street, to the west and south by residential areas, and to the east by a commercial plaza.

The proposed subdivision has been prepared to support a proposed battery energy storage system (BESS). The proposed BESS will help to regulate local, renewable energy sources and discharge energy on an efficient basis for consumer use. As shown on the attached Preliminary Subdivision Plan, the proposed work contains a paved right-of-way, a gravel driveway, and utility pads to accommodate the BESS infrastructure. The project will connect to the 23kV distribution infrastructure on Williams Street, supporting Transformer #2 at Doreen substation. The project will draw energy from the from the distribution system in off-peak hours, and discharge energy back into the system in periods when demand is high in the local community, thus relieving strain on the local electrical system.

This Preliminary Subdivision application was accepted by the City Clerk on December 13, 2023. As of December 13, 2023, the Pittsfield Zoning Ordinance allowed *Public or Quasi-Public Utility* uses in the underlying Grouped Business (B-C) Zoning District under the requirement that a special use permit is granted by the Board of Appeals.

Per Title VII, Chapter 40A, Section 6 of the Massachusetts General Laws, *"If a definitive plan, or a preliminary plan followed within seven months by a definitive plan, is submitted to a planning board for approval under the subdivision control law, and written notice of such submission has been given to the city or town clerk before the effective date of ordinance or by-law, the land shown on such plan shall be governed by the applicable provisions of the zoning ordinance or by-law, if any, in effect at the time of the first such submission while such plan or plans are being processed under the subdivision control law, and, if such definitive plan or an amendment thereof is finally approved, for eight years from the date of the endorsement of such approval."*

The Applicant intends to submit a Definitive Subdivision Application within seven months of the date that the Preliminary Subdivision application was accepted by the City Clerk; in doing so, the land would then continue to be subject to the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance that was in effect as of the date of the accepted Preliminary Subdivision application, per the above excerpt from the Massachusetts General Laws.

The following Impact Statement is hereby submitted to the Planning Board in accordance with Section 4.205 of the City's current Subdivision Regulations.

Increase in Vehicular Traffic on Adjacent Public Ways

The Applicant does not anticipate any significant changes to vehicular traffic on adjacent public ways as a result of the project. The subdivision's two proposed lots, when developed with BESS infrastructure, would not generate any appreciable increase in vehicular traffic along Williams Street or the other adjacent neighborhood streets. Vehicle trips to access the site are expected to occur as needed to perform maintenance, plow the access road of snow in the winter, and manage vegetation in the project areas during the spring.

Changes in Aesthetics

The Applicant intends to develop the subdivided lots in a manner that harmonizes with the local neighborhood to the maximum extent practicable. Any above-ground utility infrastructure proposed on the subdivided lots is intended to be screened in accordance with the relevant City codes and regulations. The site will be screened by a vegetative barrier consisting of arborvitae trees (emerald green giant) and other plantings in accordance with local regulations around the perimeter. Screening of the project from residential neighbors will also be achieved by the existing vegetation to the south and west, in addition to the existing Bank on the lot to the north.

Changes in Surface Drainage in Surrounding Area

The proposed utility infrastructure will increase the site's impervious area under post-development conditions. Therefore, the design intent of the project is to prepare a stormwater design that complies with the applicable city and state regulations. Drainage features in this design may include grassed water quality swales, sediment forebays, vegetated filter strips, and surface infiltration basins. The stormwater design will aim to maximize use of non-structural stormwater features, in accordance with the City's Zoning Ordinance. These features capture, convey, retain, and treat the increased runoff volumes generated by impervious surfaces, and are designed to reduce peak flows during storm events to nearby wetland resource areas. The extent of proposed work on-site is expected to generally be limited to a gravel access road to support vehicle maneuverability, concrete pads to support the BESS components, electric conduit to connect the BESS to the grid, and any stormwater infrastructure as discussed above. Therefore, any changes to drainage patterns are expected to be relatively minor.

Impacts to Water Bodies, Streams, Wetlands, Ponds, and Lakes

As described above, the design intent of the proposed subdivision is to install drainage infrastructure to capture, convey, retain, and treat runoff and minimize impacts to nearby wetland resource areas. Should the proposed work alter a wetland buffer zone or other area within the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission, the Applicant will proceed to design and permit the site in accordance with the applicable Conservation Commission and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) regulations. Therefore, we do not anticipate any detrimental impacts to water bodies, streams, wetlands, ponds, and lakes as a result of the subdivision.

Land erosion to loss of tree cover

Minor vegetation trimming and/or clearing is anticipated to be required to construct the preliminary subdivision depicted on the attached Preliminary Subdivision Plan. To limit erosion and control sediment generated during construction, the Applicant intends to install perimeter erosion controls including siltation fencing, straw wattles (or an approved alternative), diversion swales, and temporary sedimentation basins, as required. The site, as shown on the attached Preliminary Subdivision Plan, consists predominantly of grass cover in existing conditions.

The project design and eventual construction will comply with the requirements of Chapter 26 of the City Code pertaining to Land Disturbance and Stormwater Management. Long-term prevention of land erosion will be accomplished by the aforementioned stormwater features, vegetative stabilization, and installation of riprap or erosion control blankets, as deemed necessary.

Disturbance to Wildlife Habitat and other Natural Resources

The site is not mapped by Mass Wildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) as containing priority habitat of rare species. Due to the site's location near already developed residential and commercial uses, the Applicant does not expect the project to cause disturbance to wildlife habitat or species.

At this time, the Applicant is not aware of any wetland resource areas on the project site. The proposed work will comply with any applicable Conservation Commission regulations and the regulations of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act to maintain the natural resources that may exist adjacent to the site.

Demands on Public Services and Utilities

The Applicant does not anticipate any significant demand increases to public services and utilities as a result of the project. As a principal use, the proposed BESS does not generate any sewage, demand for potable

water, or natural gas. The BESS infrastructure will be connected to the public electric utility and is intended to improve the overall function of the electric grid, rather than adding a demand to the grid.