




STAFF REPORT COVER SHEET

April 28, 2025

ATTACHMENT 01

Address	800-900 Follin Ln SE	Case Number	1196724					
Regular Meeting Date	4/28/2025	Applicant	William Prodo of Walter L. Phillips, Inc., on behalf of Navy Federal Credit Union					
Board/Commission	Town Council	Owner	Navy Federal Credit Union					
Existing Zoning	CP – Corporate Park	Existing Land Use	Commercial					
Brief Summary of Request	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Request for approval of proposed modifications of requirements from Section 18-513 to allow a fence over six feet in height.2. Request for approval of a site plan change in the Corporate Park (CP) zoning district.							
Site Improvements	Installation of replacement emergency generators and supporting infrastructure, acoustic fence, and landscaping							
Size of Property	38.6 acres							
Public Notice Requirements:	<p>Each public hearing involving planning and zoning matters before the Town Council and the Planning Commission requires public notice, as set out in § 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia. The following notifications were prepared related to this application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff posted a sign on the property on March 6, 2025, notifying residents of Planning Commission and Town Council meetings.• Letters were sent to the subject property owner; applicant; and adjacent, abutting, and neighboring property owners across the street from the property on March 6, 2025.							
Brief Analysis								
PROPERTY HISTORY <p>The Navy Federal Credit Union (NFCU) Headquarters at 820 Follin Lane SE has undergone multiple expansions since its original construction in 1977. The site has evolved into a corporate campus spanning multiple parcels,</p>								

with its zoning designation of CP – Corporate Park remaining consistent (other than a name change from CMP Industrial Park with the adoption of the new code in 2023).

COMPATIBILITY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Town of Vienna Comprehensive Plan designates this property as an "Employment Center" on the Future Land Use Map. The proposed site plan modifications, including the installation of replacement emergency generators and supporting infrastructure, are consistent with this designation and will not alter the existing use or function of the site. They will, instead, allow this employment use to be more resilient.

COMPATIBILITY WITH THE ZONING ORDINANCE

The proposed site modifications comply with the Town’s Zoning Ordinance and the specific requirements outlined in Articles 2, 3, and 5B of the CP – Corporate Park zoning district. The only zoning deviation involves the proposed 14-foot acoustic fence, which exceeds the six-foot maximum height permitted under Section 18-513.2D. The applicant has requested a modification of requirements to allow the increased fence height, citing noise mitigation as a primary justification. Except for this fence height modification, the proposed site changes meet all applicable zoning and subdivision regulations.

Attachments:	01 – Staff Report 02 – Application & Authorization 03 – Site Plan 04 – Modification of Requirements Letter 05 – BAR Application Documents 06 – Relevant Code Sections	07 – Planning Commission Chair Memo 08 – Applicant Response to Planning Commission Comments 09 – Regulatory Requirements 10 – Staff Presentation
Author:	Kelly O’Brien, AICP, CZA, Deputy Director	

INTRODUCTION:

Navy Federal Credit Union (NFCU)'s headquarters, addressed at 820 Follin Lane SE, was constructed in three phases from the late 1970s through the 1990s and is currently undergoing modernization. The existing emergency generators are aging and require replacement to maintain reliable service. The proposed site modifications include the installation of replacement emergency generators and supporting infrastructure. (See Figure 2).

To mitigate operational noise, the applicant proposes that the generators be enclosed by a 14-foot-high acoustical fence, designed to absorb sound from the equipment. The Town Code permits a maximum fence height of six feet under Section 18-513.2D; therefore, the applicant is requesting a modification of requirements to allow the proposed 14-foot fence for enhanced noise control.

Per Sections 18-836.2E and 18-830 of the Town Code, the site plan—including the proposed modifications—requires review and recommendation by the Planning Commission before final approval by the Town Council.

BACKGROUND:

Navy Federal Credit Union (NFCU) established its headquarters on Follin Lane SE in 1977 and has since undergone multiple expansions. The campus spans six parcels north of Follin Lane SE and an additional parcel south of Electric Avenue SE (See Figure 1).

The eastern boundary of the NFCU properties aligns with the Town's boundary with unincorporated Fairfax County. The surrounding land uses include:

- Residential neighborhoods to the east and north (outside of Vienna) and northwest (inside Vienna)
- Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church to the north (outside of Vienna)
- Commercial and office properties to the south and west
- Wildwood Park along the northeastern boundary

All NFCU parcels are zoned Corporate Park (CP) (See Figure 3) and designated as "Employment Center" in the Future Land Use Plan of the Town of Vienna Comprehensive Plan (See Figure 4).

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS:

The current generators on the Navy Federal Credit Union (NFCU) campus include six older units located on the east side of the HQ1 building. Four of these (Generators 1–4) will be decommissioned and removed. The remaining two (Generators 5–6), installed in 2012, will continue operating for an estimated 5–10 years. NFCU has stated that these two remaining units will be scheduled for testing during workdays to be compliant with Town of Vienna noise limitations under §18-548 of the Town Code.

The current generators are housed in an appendage on the east side of the building that is inadequate for the size and quantity of new generators and switchgear required. In the summer and fall of 2022, Navy Federal engaged with consultants who completed a programming and discovery phase effort for the Generator Project. The proposed replacement includes three new 1500kW Caterpillar 3512C diesel generators, to be located on the north side of the HQ1 building, replacing the existing parking area. Despite the removal of parking spaces to accommodate the new generator area, Navy Federal will continue to meet all applicable parking requirements. Each new generator will be housed in a sound-attenuated enclosure with a design noise level of approximately 65 dBA at 23 feet. These generators will only operate simultaneously during loss of utility power and will undergo weekly testing for 20–30 minutes. They are expected to perform more quietly, overall, than the current units and their associated

load banks. The proposed location of the generators on the NFCU campus is indicated by a yellow star and the location of the existing generators is indicated by a blue star on the aerial image in Figure 1.

NFCU's submitted analysis shows that combined operational noise from the new generators, after attenuation by fencing and enclosure, will fall within the CP District limit of 55 dBA during the day and 45 dBA at night, measured at the property line. Additional acoustic fencing will be installed around the remaining Generators 5–6 to reduce load bank testing noise, which is the dominant source of sound.

The relocation of generator activity away from nearby homes on Little Walton Court represents a substantial improvement in noise conditions for those neighbors. NFCU also voluntarily recorded ambient noise levels during recess at Our Lady of Good Counsel and plans to schedule generator testing during those times to further mask operational sound from reaching sensitive areas.



Figure 1 – 2024 aerial image of the properties. The yellow star indicates the proposed location of the generators, and the blue star indicates the location of the existing generators.

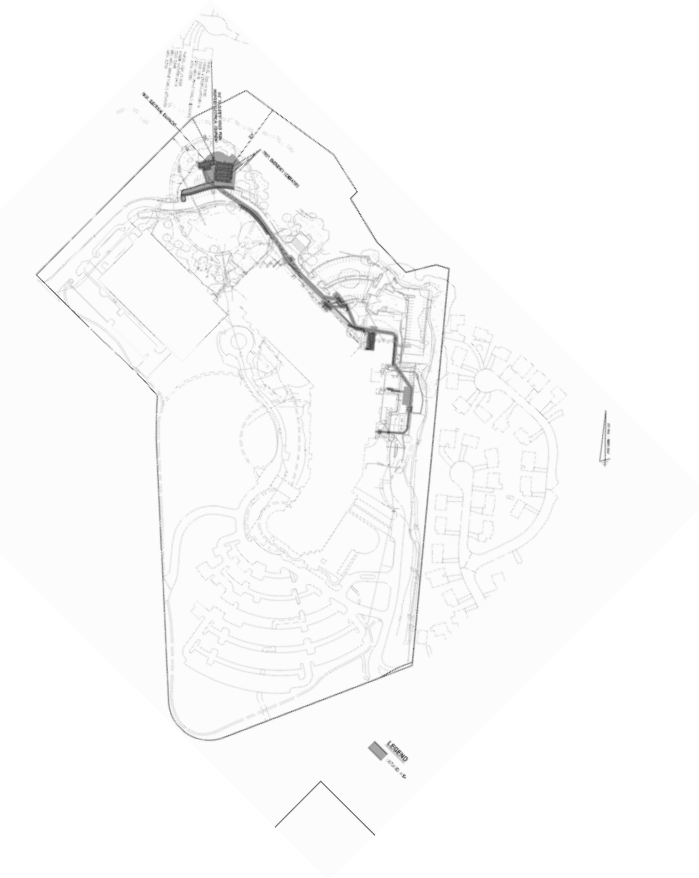


Figure 2 – Excerpt from the proposed site plan (Attachment 3) showing the location of the generators and support infrastructure needed.

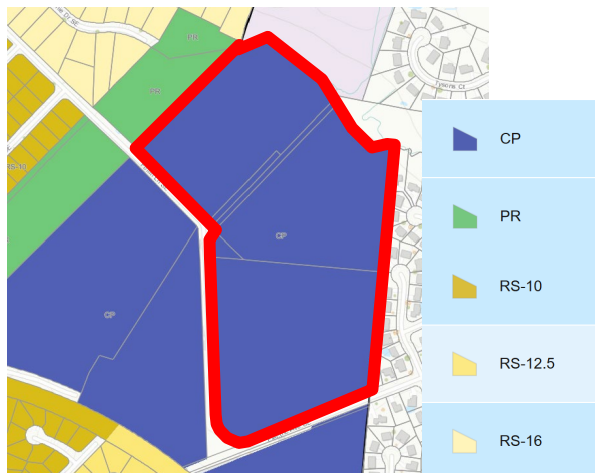


Figure 3 – 2024 Town of Vienna Zoning Map

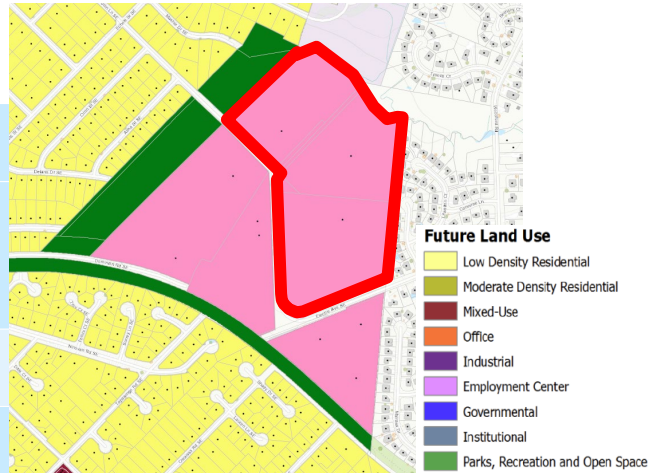


Figure 4 – 2015 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Plan

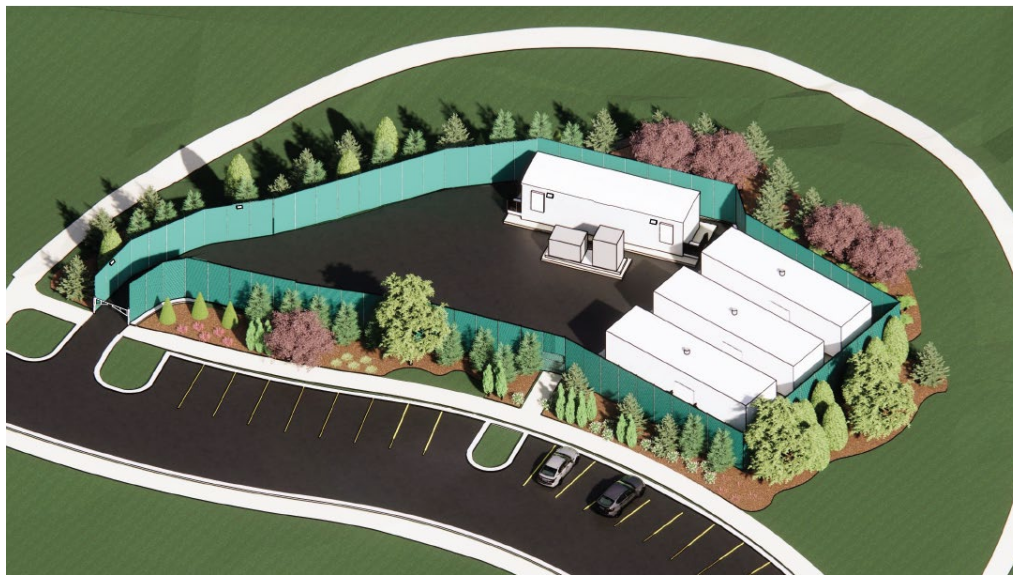


Figure 5 –3D view of the proposed generators, acoustical fencing, and landscape buffers from BAR Application Materials included as Attachment 05.

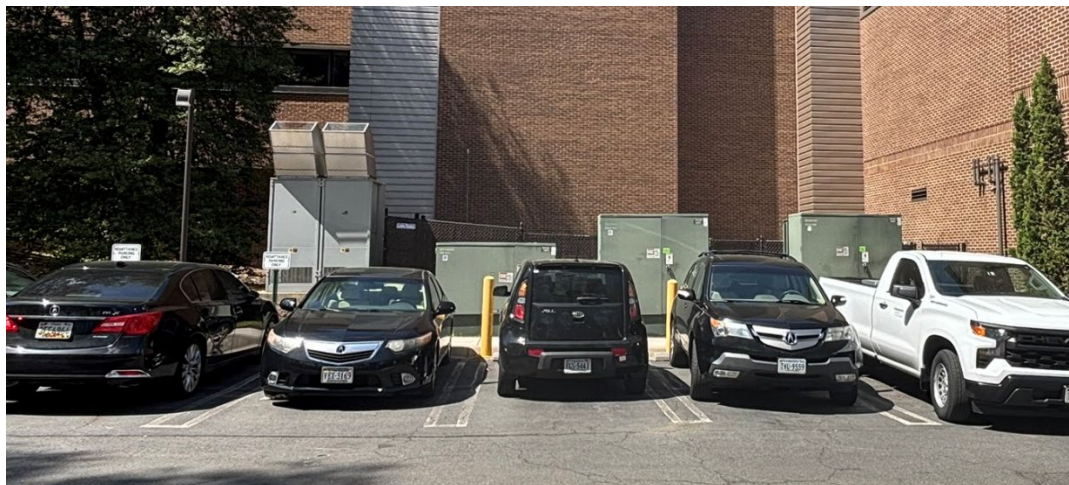


Figure 6 – Photo of existing generators (on the right) and load bank equipment (on the left).

STAFF ANALYSIS:

Per the Town Code, proposals for new or amended site plans on properties zoned CP (Corporate Park) require site plan review and recommendation by the Planning Commission, followed by approval from the Town Council. The CP zoning district includes performance standards for vibration, noise, smoke, combustion contaminants, particulate matter, odors, electromagnetic radiation, fire and explosion, radioactive materials, glare, heat, and non-radioactive liquid or solid waste, as outlined in Division 8 of Article 5A.

The applicant has stated that the proposed generator improvements have been strategically located to minimize disruption to surrounding properties. The applicant has submitted noise control measures and photometric data, demonstrating compliance with the performance standards outlined in the Corporate Park (CP) zoning district. (See Figures 7 and 8.)

Section 18-548 of the Town Code establishes maximum permissible sound pressure levels at the lot line, including specific thresholds between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., where the highest allowable decibel level is 69 dBA. These thresholds are based on octave-band frequency levels (Hz). While the applicant's submitted documentation does not include a frequency-specific breakdown by Hz, it demonstrates compliance with the intent and outcome-based performance standards of §18-548 through site design, acoustic modeling, and proposed mitigation strategies.

The applicant's acoustical analysis determined that a 14-foot-high acoustic barrier is necessary to ensure generator noise levels remain below 55 dBA at the property line—well within the required limit and based on conservative assumptions and a margin of error.

For context, measurements of the existing generators indicate a maximum sound level of 51 dBA (without load bank fans operating) and 63 dBA (with load bank fans operating). NFCU has indicated that their internal policy prohibits the use of load banks with fans between 7:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m., further supporting compliance during the most noise-sensitive hours.

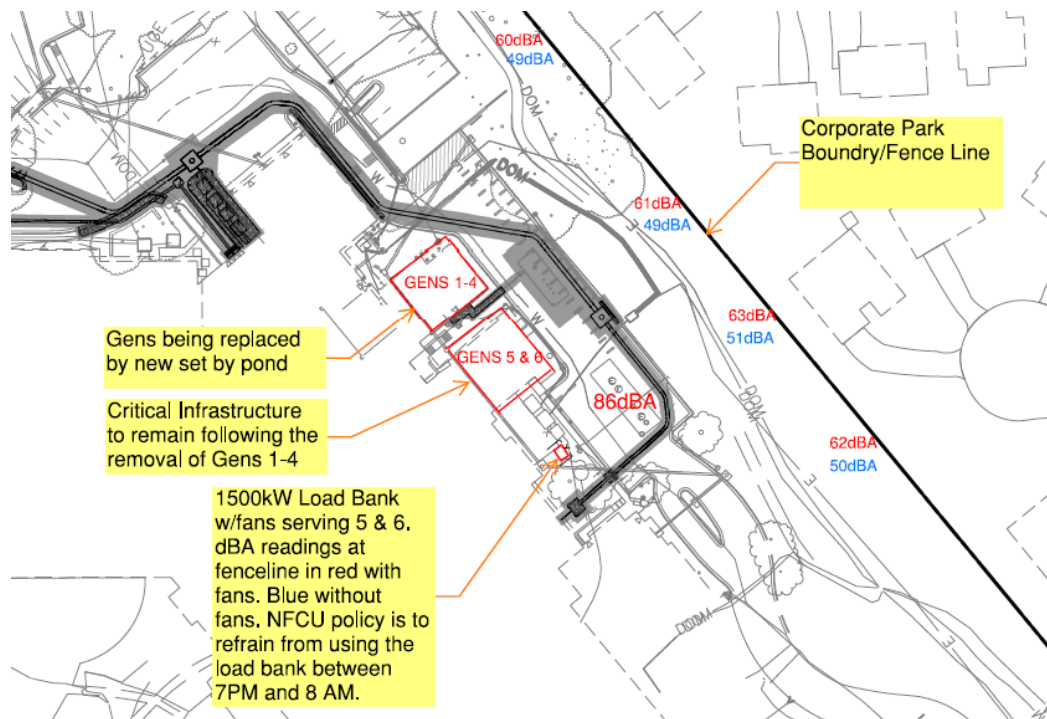


Figure 7 – Sound levels of existing generators and load bank as provided in Attachment 08.

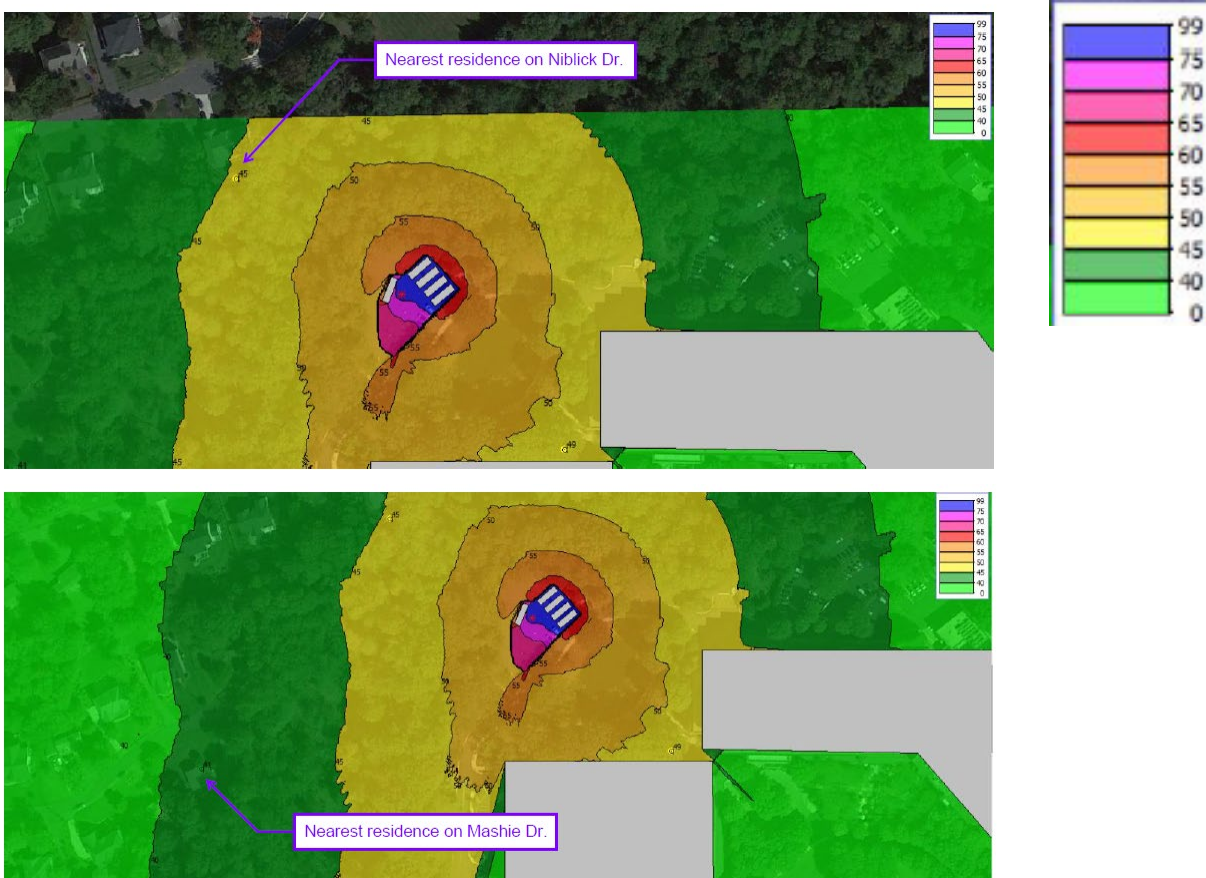


Figure 8 – Sound levels from proposed generators in relation to nearest residences as shown in BAR Application Materials included as Attachment 05.

In addition to requesting approval of the amended site plan, the applicant is requesting a modification of requirements to allow a 14-foot acoustic fence, which would exceed the six-foot maximum height permitted under Section 18-513.2D of the Town Code. This modification is necessary to effectively mitigate noise from the new generators. The applicant evaluated the potential benefits of a taller fence but found that sound modeling showed minimal additional attenuation above 14 feet, confirming the proposed height is sufficient and appropriate. In addition, the applicant is proposing significant landscaping to visually buffer and screen the fence, further reducing potential impacts on adjacent properties.

To minimize impacts on adjacent residential and institutional properties, the following measures are being implemented:

- Relocation of generators farther from residential areas;
- Use of sound-attenuated enclosures for all new generators;
- Construction of a 14-foot-high chain-link fence with AcoustiBlok sheathing (green, to blend into the wooded environment);
- Landscaping with 8–12 foot evergreen species for additional visual screening;
- Reorientation and shielding of the existing load bank for Generators 5–6;
- Coordination of testing times to coincide with recess periods at nearby school grounds.

These measures ensure compliance with all noise-related performance standards of the CP District per §18-548 and provide visual screening.

Staff has confirmed that the amended site plan, which reduces the total number of parking spaces, will still provide sufficient parking to meet requirements. At the time of development, the parking standards for the property required one space per two employees, one visitor space per ten employees, and one space per company vehicle. Based on a total of 3,374 employees and 30 company vehicles, 2,054 parking spaces are required. The site currently provides 2,417 parking spaces. The amended plan proposes to remove 43 spaces, resulting in a total of 2,374 spaces, which still exceeds the required minimum. The proposed site plan aligns with the 2015 Comprehensive Plan and is fully consistent with the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance (Chapter 18 of the Town Code), aside from the requested fence height modification.

As required for non-single-unit residential properties, the proposed exterior modifications must undergo review by the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) for design elements, including materials, colors, lighting, and landscaping. The BAR held a work session on January 10, 2025, to review the proposed generators and approved the proposed design and landscaping at its March 20, 2025, regular meeting. (Renderings for this meeting are included as Attachment 05.)

Staff recommends approval of the site plan and the requested modification for the 14-foot fence, subject to compliance with all relevant zoning and site plan requirements.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

On March 12, 2025, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the site plan and the requested modification for the 14-foot fence, with the following considerations:

1. NFCU should conduct an updated noise analysis for the two remaining generators on the east side of the property to ensure compliance with current zoning requirements.
2. NFCU is encouraged to explore additional sound attenuation measures for the two remaining generators if feasible.
3. The Town Council should be provided with further information regarding the relative benefits of increasing the fence height to fully enclose the generator enclosures.

The memorandum from the Planning Commission Chair summarizing the discussion at the meeting and Commission recommendation is included in Attachment 07.