

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PLAN

TEAM: The lead team, all of whom have reviewed the pilot overview, will include the following members of the Energy Committee and the Community Solar Coach:

Robert Ring – Conservation Commission Chair
Michael Marciniac – Planning Board Chair
Phil Herbert – Town Council Vice-Chair
Steve Muniec – Facility Director of Schools
Linda Leduc – Town Planner
Robert Young – Community Solar Coach

Support of this core group is far reaching. However, at this time the Letters of Support included in this proposal are from the following organizations, Boards and Commissions:

- Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce
- Community Development
- Citizens for Jobs & Growth in Palmer
- Palmer Planning Board
- Palmer Conservation Commission
- Palmer Events Planning
- Palmer Energy Committee
- The Yellow House, Inc.

MARKETING & OUTREACH: The Town has many venues to tap into for both marketing and outreach purposes. This RFP includes numerous Letters of Support from both public Boards and private organizations all of whom have access to either meeting room locations or innovative ways of promoting marketing materials and/or notifying the public. In speaking with the individual groups the following are some specific ideas geared toward program promotion:

Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce – The Chamber has a bi-monthly newsletter, which will advertise the program and upcoming meetings. Relevant upcoming issues will be distributed as follows: May/June 2012, July/August 2012 and September/October 2012. Additionally the Chamber Office is an excellent location for showcasing and distributing marketing materials.

Community Development – The Community Development Office has direct contact with homeowners who may be considering home improvements. Alice Davey, director, has offered to assist in any way possible to reach out to individuals who may be in the position of including solar PV in their construction project. This may be accomplished through office contact, mailings, and assistance in the organization of public meetings.

Palmer Events Planning (PEP) - Palmer Events Planning is a major community events organizer within the Town. Throughout 2012 the PEP group has numerous opportunities to assist in promoting the Program. As stated in their Letter of Support, the group will provide free space for the Community Solar Coach at the following events: Town Wide Tag Sale, scheduled for May; National Night Out scheduled for early August; and Nostalgia Day,

scheduled for late August. These events typically attract from 50 (Town Wide Tag Sale) to 1,000+ (Nostalgia Day) residents. In addition to the free space for the distribution of materials and education of residents, Palmer Events Planning will host links to program information on its Facebook page, will include all community meetings on our events calendar, and will advertise the attendance of the Community Solar Coach at these events.

The Yellow House, Inc.: The Yellow House, Inc., an adult learning facility has offered to advertise community informational sessions, distribute marketing materials and provide a venue for small meetings of up to 25 attendees.

Local Boards and Commissions: In addition to the above group's efforts, the Town Boards and Commissions have agreed to post the Solarize Mass Program as a topic of discussion within their regularly scheduled meetings, typically occurring on a bi-weekly basis. These meetings are posted and have consistent media coverage. Further, The Town Council's meetings are broadcast live on public access television, videoed and transmitted by M-PACT TV.

Media/Technical Coverage: The Town of Palmer is regularly covered in the regional, daily newspaper, The Springfield Republican, and the weekly, local newspaper, The Journal Register. The Solar Coach will contact Palmer's public access television, M-PACT, to advertise general program information and all meetings dates, and will be scheduled to provide video coverage of Solar 101 and other special meeting events. These videos will be available for anytime viewing on the M-PACT.TV website and will be linked to the Town of Palmer website for continuous access. The program and meetings will be posted on the Town website, and informational sessions will be noticed to all residents of town through the Connect-CTY phone/email notification system.

Public Schools: The Town of Palmer has three public schools and one regional school. The public schools are a worthy environment for public outreach. The Palmer High School has an auditorium (capacity 700) and library (capacity 100) in which to hold large to medium-sized public meetings. These accommodations would be utilized for large public meetings including the Solarize 101 meeting. Both locations have all necessary media/IT capabilities and will be videoed and publicized on M-PACT TV. The PTO and School Committee are additional groups that would be contacted for support and specific marketing ideas. Suggestions for marketing strategies include literature/flyers distribution via students and/or coordination with student curriculum.

Other Community Partners: Smaller meeting space locations, also equipped with the necessary media coverage, include the Palmer Public Library (capacity 75), the Palmer Town Hall (capacity 50) and the Yellow House Inc., Adult Learning Center (capacity 25). Further, upon confirmation of Palmer's selection, the Solar Coach will schedule informational meetings with other organizations who have expressed interest in supporting the program including: the Lions Club, the Rotary Club, the Knight's of Columbus, the Boy Scout's Club of America and Blue Star Equiculture, a working horse farm and sanctuary.

The Town of Palmer has many opportunities and venues in which to reach out to and inform residents of the benefits of PV. Any and all promotional events will be offered to and coordinated with the selected installer. The Solar Coach is aware that this is a time-restricted program. To that end, the Solar Coach will organize with the chosen installer and prepare

each venue with the appropriate advertising, marketing materials and signage to maximize every opportunity.

PERMITTING:

Permitting Component	Requirements	Review Timeline	Cost
Building Permit	Yes	Max. 1 week	\$100.00
Electrical Permit	Yes	Max. 1 week	\$40.00
Historical Commission	No		
Conservation Commission	Roof Mounted: No		
Conservation Commission	Ground Mounted: Yes RDA Application	Min. 3 wks	\$25.00
Stormwater Permit (DPW)	Roof Mounted: No		
Stormwater Permit (DPW)	Ground Mounted: Yes	Max. 1 week	\$25.00

The current local permitting process is general and does not seem to be prohibitive of residential photovoltaic installations. As shown in the above table, all roof-mounted solar projects are typically permitted within one week at a base cost of \$140.00. Presently, the building permit is general in that an applicant fills out the “Minimum Renovation Permit”. At the time of submission, an electrical permit must also be submitted, as well as verification of the roof’s structural integrity. Usually within 1 week both permits (Building and Electrical) are issued, followed by two final project completion inspections (one by each of the Building and Electrical Inspectors, contact must instigated by the applicant). The Historical Commission is not involved at any time because Palmer has not declared a Historical District. However, currently the Conservation Commission must sign-off on all building permits. Additionally, the Building Inspector requires a stormwater permit to either be applied for or waived by the Department of Public Works.

Streamlining the Process: After consulting with the Building Inspector, Richard Rollet, regarding the existing permitting process and how the town may incorporate a more streamlined process in efforts to efficiently address an increase in PV applications, the following suggestions have been agreed upon:

Create a specific Roof-Mounted Residential PV application. This would simplify the application process and allow the Building and Electrical Inspectors to more quickly identify the solar projects and address their needs specifically. Due to the confined area of roof-mounted installations, which therefore have no possible impacts on natural resources or stormwater patterns, the modified permit would not require Conservation or DPW (stormwater) sign-offs. The elimination of these extraneous approvals will significantly reduce the time it takes for an applicant to submit a complete building permit application.

As previously stated, the existing permit process does not appear to be prohibitive but there are areas for improvement. The Town is willing to make the above noted modifications as well as consider other viable options in efforts to expedite the process.