

April 25, 2018

Planning Board
8 Newmarket Road
Durham, NH 03824

Dear Planning Board:

I support the suggested requirement to have solar permitted by Special Exception. Requiring a zoning board review for each site would ensure that these are not placed where they have a detrimental effect on scenic views, land values or the environment.

I also have an additional concern about the increased use and placement of solar. I work as an urban forester for a government agency, and provide assistance to communities in The New England States and New York. We are seeing more and more cases where large yard trees are being removed to provide full sun exposure for solar panels. (I recall a permit that came before the Durham Conservation Commission requesting to remove trees in a wetland setback, in order to accommodate solar panels). In some cases the Companies that work with solar, aggressively promote the removal of trees to increase their output. This can become a contentious issue, especially in cases where the tree is on a neighbors property, and existed decades before the solar panel.

Trees provide significant value in reducing energy consumption by shading buildings in summer and providing windbreaks in winter. This is a holistic and low cost approach to energy conservation and provides a reduction in burning fossil fuels. Unlike solar panels, large trees around homes also provide many other benefits, such as improved air quality, storm water management, and increased property value. Trees benefit, not just the owners home, but the neighborhood as well.

I feel a Solar ordinance should include language to balance the use of solar with the protection of trees, and hope that you will consider adding this language to the ordinance.

Sincerely,

John Parry
5 Denbow Rd.
Durham, NH 03824