

## **Brandon Select Board – Solar Installation**

My name is Matthew Orchard, I am a member of the Brandon Energy committee and a resident of our town.

I would like to present a small amendment to the proposal for the Brandon Solar Installation presented to you by Jim Emerson on July 26<sup>th</sup> that would take advantage of the full amount of funding potentially available to Brandon through the ARPA Local Relief funding.

### **New information:**

As you may remember, Jim's original proposal for a solar installation would cost the town approximately \$360,000, providing 150KW's of energy, generating a savings of \$34,000 in electric bills per year, which translates to a 1.5% annual tax saving for every Brandon resident.

After further discussions with the owners of Same Sun Vermont we learned that a \$1,000,000 project could build us a 500KW's solar installation, generating a savings of \$122,000 in electric bills per year which translates to about a 4.4% tax savings for every Brandon resident.

Those are the numbers but why should the town consider such a large and costly installation?

**Expanded Energy Needs** – A 1-million-dollar solar installation would actually produce more energy than currently needed by our town. However, given the energy goals given to us by our state government, there will be a gradual and significant increase in the need for sustainably sourced energy by our town residents in the future with the adoption of more electric technologies to replace fossil fuel usage.

Just days ago an executive order was signed aimed at making half of all new vehicles sold in 2030 electric, a move made with backing from some of the biggest U.S. automakers. We are very likely to see a large increase in EV cars, bikes and service vehicles driving our streets and recharging themselves within our town.

The population's transition to electric technologies will not end on the roadways however. We should expect an increased demand on our electrical grid and energy needs through other emerging technologies such as heat pumps, air conditioners, smart home technologies and the electrification of all household tools and machines such as lawnmowers, brush cutters and chainsaws.

With those increased energy demands, we should certainly expect an increase in price for nonrenewable energy sources making a shift to local and renewable power production an even greater incentive.

**Financial incentive:** The Brandon Solar Installation project would benefit all members of Brandon. The savings created could help our town avoid an increase of taxes on community members for years to come or it could represent an economic opportunity to reinvest those savings on other projects that will benefit our town and long-term community prosperity.

**Environmental Responsibility:** It would be remiss of me to complete this proposal without observing that our global temperatures are rising. How one interprets the impacts of a changing climate will vary from person to person, however I would suggest that it would be shortsighted for anyone to not consider that a changing climate will result in a changing societal landscape.

It has been predicted that climate change will lead to a large migration of populations from coastal cities and areas to further inland. Our agricultural systems will need to adjust, our technology sectors will have to innovate and all of this change will not come cheaply or without the need of sustainably sourced energy to provide the solutions to our challenging future. I believe it is possible for humanity to continue to thrive in the uncertain world of tomorrow but to do so we must act now and we must act creatively, quickly and in a way that leaves no member of our community behind.

I believe that this proposal would signify a great step forward for local energy resilience, it would show a preparedness to take on the challenges of climate change while also being financially responsible and a boost to our town savings.

Furthermore, I would like to point out to the select board that should this project be undertaken by the town that the Brandon Energy Committee and its members would happily provide their support, time and resources to help the town manager and others in moving the project forward efficiently and effectively.

Thank you for your time today and for your consideration of this project.