

Editorial: A good fit for Barrington



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Barrington residents did such a good job participating in the first round of the Solarize RI program that officials selected the town for a second turn.

In fact, three communities were picked for the Solarize RI fall 2017 program — Barrington, Bristol and South Kingstown. Combined, the three towns resulted in more than 100 new solar installations at residences and small businesses during the first round of the program. Barrington accounted for nearly half of the total.

Now, residents and business owners have a second chance to get involved in the community-based outreach campaign that seeks to increase the adoption of small-scale solar electricity through a competitive tiered pricing structure that increases the savings for everyone as more home and business owners sign contracts.

In its third year, Solarize RI has led to more than 595 residents and business owners in 15 municipalities signing contracts for small-scale solar electricity systems.

The individual installations offered through Solarize RI also safeguard communities from some of the problems posed by large-scale solar farms. The latest such facility proposed for Westport, Mass. is a bad fit for the woods off Horseneck Road.

Westport has been riding a string of solar success lately, with a half dozen farms either up and running or in the works. In each case so far, the neighbors have welcomed — or at least had little to say about — the solar arrays next door.

That's because hardly anybody knows they're there. In just about every case they are tucked out of sight on "back forty" farm fields or far from homes.

Not so the Horseneck Road proposal.

The plan unveiled to zoners recently shows the farm's long south border coming within 30 feet of a small neighborhood. Every person living on that lane is aghast at the proposal, as are others on nearby roads.

Done right, solar farms are a fine way to produce clean energy without pollution or noise. But for towns like Barrington, where there is little open space remaining, a solar farm may not be warmly received by its neighbors.

However, the individual approach offered through Solarize RI seems like a very good option.

To find out more about Solarize RI or to participate, call 215-3285 or go to www.solarizeri.com.