

#### 0 Lafayette Street Public Comments Received to Date 2/26/25

1. Public Comment – Steve Fulton, February 21, 2025
2. Public Comment – Terry DeWan, February 25, 2025
3. Public Comment – Darren Setlow, February 26, 2025
4. Public Comment – Therese Flaherty, February 26, 2025

#### Public Comment to date 2/20/25

1. Public Comment – Ann Ball & Dennis Welsh, February 15, 2025
2. Public Comment – Adam Morin, February 17, 2025
3. Public Comment – Anne Turner, February 13, 2025
4. Public Comment – Barbara Pires, February 13, 2025
5. Public Comment – Bren Goode, February 19, 2025
6. Public Comment – Charlene Ferguson, February 15, 2025
7. Public Comment – Carol Hamalainen, February 18, 2025
8. Public Comment – Chris Stetson, February 18, 2025
9. Public Comment – Debbie & Barry Godowsky, February 18, 2025
10. Public Comment – Dayna Klein, February 14, 2025
11. Public Comment – Dan Ostrye, February 18, 2025
12. Public Comment – Denis Blanchette, February 12, 2025
13. Public Comment – Edward Ashley, February 18, 2025
14. Public Comment – Jill Fulton, February 18, 2025
15. Public Comment – Jason Prince, February 14, 2025
16. Public Comment – Kerry Stetson, February 13, 2025
17. Public Comment – Jeff & Lisa Hook, February 17, 2025
18. Public Comment – Matt Cardente, February 18, 2025
19. Public Comment – Stacey Chase, February 13, 2025
20. Public Comment – Sarah Norsworthy, February 16, 2025
21. Public Comment – Smith Street Petition, February 17, 2025
22. Public Comment – Tammy & Lucy DeRoche, February 17, 2025
23. Public Comment – William Pires – February 15, 2025

## Wendy Simmons

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**From:** Fulton, Steven  
**Sent:** Friday, February 21, 2025 8:37 AM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons  
**Subject:** Solar farm proposal

All -

I'm writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed 12-acre solar farm at Holy Cross Cemetery. This project raises serious concerns—both practical and ethical—for our community.

First, clear-cutting eight acres of forest to install solar panels seems counterproductive from an environmental standpoint. Trees provide far more long-term ecological benefits than a solar farm ever could, and this land is simply not suited for industrial development. There are plenty of open fields where solar panels could be placed without destroying woodlands.

Additionally, this site isn't even zoned for such a project, meaning a variance is required. Zoning laws exist for a reason, and granting exceptions like this sets a troubling precedent—what's to stop other unsuitable developments?

Beyond that, there's the matter of aesthetics. A solar farm is an industrial eyesore—rows of metal and glass where there was once natural beauty. Holy Cross Cemetery is meant to be a place of peace and remembrance, and turning it into a commercial energy site is not only disruptive but also deeply disrespectful. The project may benefit the cemetery's fund, but it does nothing for the town itself.

I urge the Planning Board to reject this proposal and encourage a more thoughtful approach to renewable energy—one that doesn't come at the cost of our forests, zoning integrity, or the character of our community.

Also, what is the environmental impact of tearing down 12 acres of forestland and the lost ability to sequester carbon. This proposal suggests that the farm would produce 0.999 megawatts (I'm assuming per year?). How many tons of carbon does that save (by offsetting or replacing the electricity that would have been otherwise generated by fossil fuels) in the 30 year life cycle of a solar panel? How does that compare to the amount of carbon that could have been sequestered by that forestland in that same period? That's to say nothing of the loss of habitat, biodiversity, air quality etc.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Steve Fulton  
47 Royall Meadow Road  
Yarmouth, ME 04096

February 25, 2025

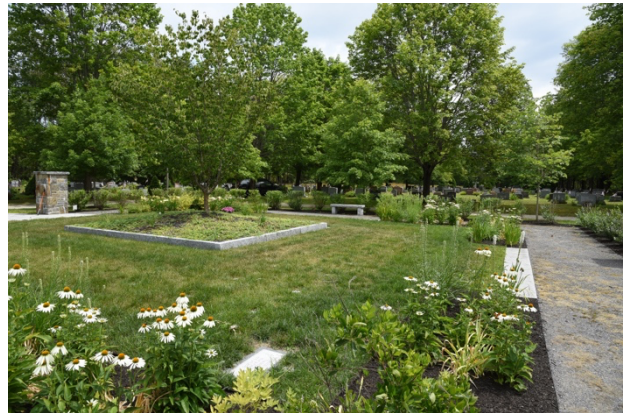
TO: Yarmouth Planning Board  
FR: Terry DeWan / 121 West Main Street, Yarmouth (office)  
RE: **SMITH STREET SOLAR PROJECT**



I'm writing to express my concern about the Smith Street Solar Project that is being proposed on a portion of the Diocese's land adjacent to the Holy Cross Cemetery.

While I am no longer a resident of Yarmouth, I have a deep appreciation for the Royal River and its watershed. One of my first professional opportunities in town as a landscape architect was the master plan for the Royal River Park in the 80's. More recently I worked with an advisory panel to develop the Royal River Corridor Master Plan. A dozen years ago we were asked to review the Diocese's property, which led to the design of the Holy Cross Cremation Garden (photo below). Then in 2018 we developed plans for the cremation garden at the adjacent Riverside Cemetery.

A major part of my professional career has been devoted to visual impact assessments, particularly for utility-scale energy developments (solar farms, on-shore and offshore wind, transmission corridors). This memo is based upon my experience with siting and assessing these types of facilities, which are often highly scrutinized by both the public and agency regulators. While the public has raised many worthwhile environmental arguments, the majority of this response is directed at the potential for adverse visual impacts.



## **SITING**

The applicant should be prepared to show an inventory and analysis of the site and surrounding area to help the Planning Board understand how they decided where to locate the panels, access road, chain link fence, and other project components. The inventory should identify existing conditions (e.g., height of the surrounding trees, locations where people are most likely to be found, existing trails, topographic conditions, vegetative character, setbacks), while the analysis should guide the decision-making process (limits of sunlight throughout the year, sensitivity to human use, slopes to be avoided, potential for visual contact, future trail connections, etc.).

A Parks and Lands Committee (PLC) member combined the proposed site plan with the clearing plan and grading plan (included in the staff report). It calls into question why panels are located on steep slopes, why trees outside of the lease area are cleared, and other concerns. Ideally, this type of clear, understandable diagram should be used to present the results of the inventory and analysis. Further, the extent of the diagram should be extended to include all lands that may be affected (cemeteries, Royal River, preserved lands, etc.).

## VISUAL IMPACT

Many of the letters to the Planning Board have expressed concern regarding the potential visual effect that the solar project would have on adjacent and nearby scenic areas (i.e., Riverview Cemetery, Holy Cross Cemetery, Royal River, Fels Grove and Spear Farm, etc.). It appears that the project may be evaluated as a Special Exception in the MDR and LDR zoning districts.

In order to grant approval, the applicant must comply with the Special Exception Standards of the Zoning Ordinance. Two of these Standards apply directly to the potential visual effect of the project:

v.) The proposed use will be compatible with existing uses in the neighborhood, with respect to *physical size, **visual impact**, intensity of use, proximity to other Structures and density of development.*

vi.) *If located in a Resource Protection District or Shoreland Zone, the proposed use (1) will not result in damage in spawning grounds, fish, aquatic life, bird and other wildlife habitat; (2) will conserve Shoreland Vegetation; (3) **will conserve visual points or access to water as viewed actual points of access to waters**; (5) **will conserve natural beauty**; (6) will avoid problems associated with flood plain development and use; and (7) will comply with the performance standards of Article II of this Ordinance. (**Emphasis added.**)*



## VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (VIA)

The town does not have an ordinance to guide the siting and review of solar projects and to evaluate their potential visual effects. I would urge the Planning Board to require the applicant to provide a visual impact assessment to objectively evaluate the project and make a determination regarding its compatibility with nearby existing uses, as required by the Special Exception Standards.

There are several models that an applicant may follow to produce a VIA. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection uses Chapter 315: *Assess and Mitigating Impacts to Existing Scenic and Aesthetic Uses*. Many communities have enacted ordinances



with specific requirements for visual assessment. The following is a portion of New Gloucester's ordinance:

*C. Visual Impact Assessment*

*When necessary, in light of the size, location, surrounding uses, or other characteristics of the proposed use or site the Planning Board may require submittal of a Visual Impact Assessment. The study shall be prepared by a Maine licensed landscape architect or other professional with experience with visual impact Assessments.*

*The Visual Impact Assessment shall at minimum include the following elements:*

- 1. A visual description of the project covering all physical elements that may be visible from public viewpoints.*
- 2. Identification and characterization of publicly accessible scenic resources near or potentially impacted by the proposed project. This should include any resources of local, state, or national significance.*
- 3. Determination of the type and extent of any impact on the identified scenic resources. If a project is deemed to be visible from a scenic resource the Planning Board may require a visualization of the project from a representative point within the resource.*
- 4. Description of any proposed mitigation measures such as berms, landscaping screens and buffers, or low visibility materials that may be used to minimize potential visual impacts from the project.<sup>1</sup>*

The VIA should recognize the uniqueness of this particular site and its inherent sensitivities:

- Proximity to Yarmouth's two largest cemeteries that provide places of comfort, quiet, and solitude.
- Proximity to two relatively new cremation gardens that rely upon the natural and designed landscape to create outdoor spaces conducive to meditation and reflection.
- The annual Memorial Day mass is celebrated at the Holy Cross Cemetery. See photos at: <https://pothe.org/photoalbums/annual-memorial-day-mass-at-holy-cross-cemetery>
- Passive recreational use of the cemeteries by residents who enjoy the stately rows of maples set against the forested background.

## BUFFERS

As part of the visual impact assessment, the applicant should determine the buffer value of the existing trees that would remain in the lease area between the edge of clearing and the cemeteries. The Site Plan indicates that approximately 50 to 100 feet of trees will remain following the initial clearing. There is no indication on the plans of the species, density, or average heights of the trees within this buffer area, so there is no way to evaluate how effective it would be to block the view of the solar panels and the surrounding chain link fence. The aerial view to the right shows how thin the existing woods are in the space between both cremation gardens and the edge of the solar project.



<sup>1</sup> Town of New Gloucester, Maine, Zoning Ordinance. Section 5.1.37 Solar Energy Systems. August 12, 2024.

Opening up a large block of forestland – as will be the case in clearing the land for the solar panels – creates a potential for windthrow along the newly created edges. Around the year 2016, the block of woods adjacent to the south side of the Holy Cross cremation garden was cleared for future cemetery expansion, leaving a few older trees along the edge.

In the fall of 2017, a significant number of mature trees were lost during a heavy windstorm, doing considerable damage to the stone wall that separates the two cemeteries, as seen in the photos to the right. In evaluating the effectiveness of the remaining trees, the Planning Board should consider the very real possibility that windthrow may cause further tree loss, which could make the solar project an even more intrusive part of the cemetery environment.

Most of the solar projects that our office has worked on include a landscape plan that responds to the need for adequate buffering from nearby parks, residential areas, and open spaces. The application before the Planning Board does not include any additional plantings, nor does it anticipate the need for supplemental plantings following the initial clearing and evaluation of buffer effectiveness.



## CONCLUSION

Pope Francis has been a champion of environmental stewardship. His encyclicals and other writings have emphasized the interconnectedness of all things and our collective responsibility to ensure a healthy and sustainable environment. In considering how this unique land should be used, the diocese should engage the people who would be affected by this project and take into consideration other uses that may be more appropriate, either now or in the future.

Clearing a large portion of the existing forest cover and converting it to a solar project may not meet our collective goals of natural resource stewardship. There is a very reasonable chance that it may actually degrade the personal experience of those who use this site and the surrounding landscape for a multitude of reasons.

I would be very willing to address the Planning Board to share my thoughts and experience in these matters.

## Wendy Simmons

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**From:** Darren Setlow  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 26, 2025 10:58 AM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons  
**Subject:** Proposed Solar Farm

Dear Wendy,

We reside at 190 Pleasant Street and were advised about the proposed solar farm by the letter sent to those within 500 of the site. Please accept this note as record of my strong opposition to the proposed solar farm at 0 Lafayette St presented by Yarmouth Solar 1, LLC.

I've made my way through most of the 273 page plan and application. For ease, please forgive the bulleted points summarizing my viewpoints against approval of this plan.

At the outset, clear cutting 8 acres anywhere in Yarmouth, let alone so close to river frontage along known high-risk or actual landslide zones, and Wetlands of Special Significance is an astonishingly bad idea.

There is likely very high potential for harmful impacts to : environment, wildlife, estuarine environment, quality of life and property values of abutters.

The proposed project site immediately abuts a salt-hay marsh recognized as a Wetland of Special Significance and Maine Dept of Agriculture recommends an undisturbed of buffer of 250 feet from such areas and 75 feet from any stream on the site. Site plan calls for 25 feet of buffer from the stream on site.

The site immediately abuts habitat for 2 endangered wading birds. As such MDIFW recommendations of no disturbance of habitat areas between May 1-July 15 and December 15 - March 15. The site management plan does not address any timing in vegetation control. Moreover, the plan also does not address mitigation of any newly introduced invasive plants.

The site is immediately adjacent to habitat of a state protected bat. While MDIFW finds no maternity nesting trees actually on the property, that can hardly be taken to indicate that no impact will affect the habitat that is .05 miles from the site or about 264 feet.

The site includes habitat for numerous species of birds, bats, and other wildlife including Monarch butterflies.

The site plan includes surrounding the facility with chain link fencing which according to MDIFW has high potential of trapping deer and other animals within the proposed facility, as well as disrupting habitat. MDIFW instead recommends specialized fencing that mitigates the potential hazards to animals.

There will be introduction of noise pollution and glare. The plan claims low or below-standard threshold decibel levels of noise emitted from the inverters, but I would venture that any detectable electric hum where before there was none is unacceptable.

The plan says the site will be unmanned, but this does not clearly indicate whether any lighting will be added.

The plan requests the practical erasure of existing zoning defined by included MDR, LDR, and Shoreland Overlay areas. Why have zones if they can just be sidestepped by a large and aggressive corporate interest?

This project involves at least 3 out of state LLC's with primary benefit to the Roman Catholic Bishop in Portland as lessor and to Yarmouth Solar 1, LLC and its parent company New Leaf Energy, Inc. In other words, there is no clear direct connection to Yarmouth. This is one of the main non-starter points for me. Yarmouth's Wyman power station is a notable local example of large companies extracting value from the town and landscape and adding to overall costs of living here.

This is also adjacent to an issue I have raised previously about Yarmouth implementing impact fees assessed against development and commercial projects that derive and extract value from Yarmouth for few people but otherwise do not give back in a commensurate meaningful way. Consequently, property taxes have risen very dramatically in the last 3 years alone. What is the benefit to Yarmouth at large of this solar farm project? Where will the produced energy go? How will the assessed property tax be affected? Is it already discounted for the religious organization ownership? Will it be reduced with green energy incentives and abatements?

Lastly, there are troubling redactions to the financial arrangements and insurance coverage information in the provided materials.

These and many other questions and issues raised by other commenters underline my opposition to the project.

Thank you for including these notes in the Public Comments.

Sincerely  
Darren Setlow

Darren Setlow  
207.232.9537  
[ds@darrensetlow.com](mailto:ds@darrensetlow.com)



## Wendy Simmons

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**From:** Terry Flaherty  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 26, 2025 1:34 PM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons  
**Subject:** Comments re: Solar Farm in Holy Cross Cemetery

Dear Planning Board Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed Solar Farm in Holy Cross cemetery.

Holy Cross cemetery is a place of remembrance for our love ones who have passed and laid to rest. It is also a sacred ground where we visit our love ones, finding peace and solace in the tranquility and beauty (trees, foliage, wildlife) surrounding us. It holds historical and cultural value to the community.

The proposal to build a Solar Farm there, clearing 12 acres of land, removing many trees, disrupting the local wildlife (that have flourished there since the beginning of time), would mar the natural beauty of the cemetery and diminish the serene atmosphere that is important to visitors.

Sincerely,

Therese "Terry" Flaherty

February 16, 2025

Dear Members of the Yarmouth Planning Board

We are residents of 119 Princes Point Road and are within 500 feet of the proposed Smith Street Solar project at 0 Lafayette Street. We have reviewed the 273-page application from Yarmouth Solar 1, LLC, Yarmouth's Climate Action Plan, Yarmouth Comprehensive Plan as well as a 2023 study put out by the Harvard Forest and Mass Audubon, *Growing Solar, Protecting Nature*. We have walked this land for many years from our house through the woods and along two trails that go from Whitcombs Way to the sewage treatment plant up to the cemetery for pleasure and for getting to town safely. From the site plan it appears both trails would be eliminated. We have seen the tidal waters come in during major storms, requiring new culverts to be built twice. We have seen owls, deer, bats, butterflies and wide variety of shore birds along the trail and in the woods. The application states that 2 endangered species are .05 and .1 miles outside of the development and one is within the development. We know this land very well and see it as a community and environmental asset to the Town of Yarmouth. We are writing to express our opposition to the project for several reasons.

The project is in opposition to the Yarmouth Climate Action Plan, March 2024 which was adopted by the Yarmouth Town Council. There are several priorities and action items that are not in alignment with the proposed solar project.

- Priority Action, page 11 "Conserving land and protecting natural systems will help Yarmouth adapts to a changing climate". On the map on page 11, the solar development is between or abutting 2 undeveloped blocks of habitat and conserved land. The plan states, conservation of land sequesters carbon, supports biodiversity and prioritizes habitat corridors."
- Priorities, page 19: "Conserving Land, Protecting Habitat, making walking and biking safe and convenient, Enhancing community connections and balancing development."
- Action Plan, page 23 strives to have a "thriving natural environment- protecting and stewarding ....to preserve essential ecosystems and absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere."
- Strategy 2.2 Increase tree canopy cover- establish zoning ordinances to protect mature trees and reduce lot clearing.
- Strategy 6.2.2, page 40, "partner with willing landowners to permanently conserve land that sustains or enhances carbon sequestration and improves climate resiliency." This is also in line with Yarmouth's Comprehensive Plan

A project of this scale which "entails clearance of approximately eight acres of a currently wooded section of the parcel" is a net loss for carbon sequestration. Both

nature conservation and solar energy are necessary strategies in response to the climate crisis.

*“Urgency on climate action, however, does not justify the haphazard approach to solar deployment witnessed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts over the past decade. The current trajectory of deployment of large- ground mount solar is coming at too high a cost to nature. The report/analysis shows that growing solar while protecting nature is a path forwards. Solar can play an essential and growing role in cleaning our power grid while nature is also left intact to continue its irreplaceable role combating climate change, supporting biodiversity and providing resilience to climate change’s worst impacts”.* Growing Solar, Protecting Nature 2023  
Harvard Forest and Mass Audubon

Yarmouth does not need to grow solar so quickly as to cause unnecessary harm to nature. Every acre of forest destroyed is a huge loss for birds and wildlife, clear air and water, natural beauty and recreation. Most importantly cutting forests and developing farmlands to build solar energy doesn’t make sense for the climate. Natural ecosystems absorb 10% of greenhouse gas emissions annually.

Yarmouth’s Climate Action Plan talks about promoting “sustainable development” – this proposal is not that. The plan states, “Be Part of the Solution” and we would urge the Yarmouth Planning Board to take these words to heart and be part of the solution.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

*Anne J. Ball*

*Dennis W. Welsh*

Anne Ball and Dennis Welsh

## Wendy Simmons

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**From:** Adam Morin  
**Sent:** Monday, February 17, 2025 7:02 PM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons  
**Subject:** Cemetery Solar Project

Good evening,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed solar farm at the Cemetery located by the wastewater treatment plant. I am a Yarmouth resident who owns a home on Princes Point Road. I have a few major points I would like to convey.

**Zoning:** There is a reason we have zoning rules. This solar farm is an oversized financial endeavor that does not benefit the community as a whole. I believe if we are going to grant an exemption there should be benefits to the community. The area around the cemetery is peaceful and tranquil and without urban blight; which seems to be rarer and rarer these days. On any given day, you can see residents walking with their family and pets, people visiting loved ones resting in the cemetery, cross country skiers, and snow shoers. You only have to walk 200 meters on a trail to see the wastewater treatment plant to end the peaceful zen of the area. Why make a beloved area completely ugly? At least the wastewater treatment plant benefits the town. If an exception is granted, what does that signal to anyone with a large piece of property that wants to turn it into something other than the approved zoning area? We have the ability to preserve what makes this town so special by keeping this area intact. There is plenty of existing land that can support solid projects that already have had a human footprint. That being parking lots, buildings, highway medians and shoulders, the uninhabitable land at the transfer station, etc.. Disturbing this land completely disrupts what little wildlife ecosystem we have in southern Maine.

With the particular piece of land, I have two points of concern regarding the ecosystems:

**Royal River:** We need to consider the unique area of the land as it is tied to the Royal River watershed. How much runoff that would usually be absorbed by the established vegetation will go into the tributaries and marshes immediately by the Royal. Will this affect the ecology of those areas that support wildlife? I'm talking from small aquatic insects to nesting Woodducks and Woodcock (both migratory birds with decreasing habitat). These are all tied to the Royal as a whole.

**The land itself:** That land supports a large variety of wildlife from small rodents, squirrels, hawks, woodcock, owls, turkeys, coyotes, and a healthy population of deer. This land directly abuts a residential area and is very close to the Fels-Grove Preserve. These animals will be displaced and pushed into those areas. Ultimately this will result in the animals dying off because the carrying capacity of the smaller area cannot support the animals who are displaced. This will also lead to increased human conflict, from more motor vehicle accidents from animal strikes to deer destroying gardens, to coyotes hunting pets and livestock.

**The panels:** Are they truly good for the environment? My brief understanding is that they are created from toxic compounds and the overall carbon neutrality is disputable. My understanding is that they eventually end up in a landfill. There is literature to suggest that the panels do not live up to their claimed life expectancy so a 30 year panel may only be productive for 20. Is the town willing to grant a zoning



exemption to something that may not live up to its end of the bargain? It would be a shame to lose this area to a scheme that ends up not coming to full fruition. Also, it is worth noting that with any new and upcoming industry comes exploitation. Specifically in the solar industry, the workers are exploited within the United States to predatory companies that are only willing to make a quick buck. If you look further down the supply chain, the panels are directly tied to slavery. See this link US DOL that is a quick guide to the slavery and exploitation that occurs from the solar industry-this includes child slavery.

["https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/reports/child-labor/list-of-goods/supply-chains/solar"](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/reports/child-labor/list-of-goods/supply-chains/solar) We are a progressive town that stands for the liberty and humane treatment of all people in the world. Can the town in good faith support this industry? I know the town has all the right intentions to support clean energy but we must do our diligence to see at what cost. Please research the exploitation online or better yet give Preble Street in Portland a call and ask to speak to the case workers who handle labor trafficking.

Personally: That land supports wildlife that I hunt. Venison is a family staple. This is also true for the other hunters in the area. I also routinely have chickens for food and have a garden. I fear the impact from the solar field will only burden my efforts to obtain food outside of the grocery store due to the conflict with wildlife like coyotes aggressively hunting my chickens due to loss of habitat or less deer in the area to hunt. This may seem trivial to some but I do try to feed my family the cleanest and most ethically sourced protein I can.

I hope my comments resonate with the town. There is a lot at stake for both humans, animals and plants. Thank you for listening.

Respectfully,  
Adam Morin

**From:** Anne Turner  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 13, 2025 11:11 AM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons <WSimmons@yarmouth.me.us>  
**Subject:** proposed Solar Farm

I have been surprised to learn that there is a proposal for a solar farm at Holy Cross Cemetery to be discussed at an upcoming planning board meeting. First, it seems to me that this is something that should be widely publicized, not buried in comments on a Facebook page. Why isn't the town doing more dissemination of this important information?

Secondly, while I am a very strong supporter of solar power, and want to see every possible effort made to wean us off our dependence on fossil fuels, I also care passionately about wildlife and the health of our environment. I have not pored through all the technical details of this proposal, but can emphatically say that ANY proposal to cut eight acres of forested land is a harmful choice, and especially so in such proximity to the river. Most Yarmouth residents have become aware of the bald eagles who are seen regularly along that stretch of river, and that is an essential wildlife corridor that impacts every level of the ecosystem. I cannot imagine that our current zoning or comprehensive plan goals are in alignment with this proposal.

I urge you and the planning board to deny this ill-conceived proposal. Thank you for your consideration,

Anne Turner

727 East Main

Yarmouth

## Wendy Simmons

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**From:** B G  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 19, 2025 2:37 PM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons  
**Subject:** Solar farm

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed 12-acre solar farm at Holy Cross Cemetery. This project raises serious concerns—both practical and ethical—for our community. First, clear-cutting eight acres of forest to install solar panels seems counterproductive from an environmental standpoint. Trees provide far more long-term ecological benefits than a solar farm ever could, and this land is simply not suited for industrial development. There are plenty of open fields where solar panels could be placed without destroying woodlands. Additionally, this site is not even zoned for such a project, meaning a variance is required. Zoning laws exist for a reason, and granting exceptions like this sets a troubling precedent—what is to stop other unsuitable developments?

Beyond that, there is the matter of aesthetics. A solar farm is an industrial eyesore—rows of metal and glass where there was once natural beauty. Holy Cross Cemetery is meant to be a place of peace and remembrance, and turning it into a commercial energy site is not only disruptive but also deeply disrespectful. The project may benefit the cemetery's fund, but it does nothing for the town itself.

I urge the Planning Board to reject this proposal and encourage a more thoughtful approach to renewable energy—one that does not come at the cost of our forests, zoning integrity, or the character of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Bren Goode  
Yarmouth, Maine

From: Barbara Pires  
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2025 10:24 AM  
To: Wendy Simmons <WSimmons@yarmouth.me.us>  
Subject: Yarmouth Solar 1, LLC

I am firmly against a 12 acre solar farm within Holy Cross Cemetery. This area is zoned Medium-Density Residential, Low-Density Residential, and Shoreland Overlay. This is not the appropriate place for a solar farm. Riverside and Holy Cross are beautiful, quiet places for people to walk and reflect. Again, not the appropriate place for a solar farm. Also, clear cutting trees near the river does not seem like a good plan.

Barbara Pires  
Yarmouth Resident  
Sent from my iPad



## Wendy Simmons

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**From:** Charlene Ferguson  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 15, 2025 1:39 PM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons  
**Subject:** Holy Cross Cemetery - Solar Farm  
**Attachments:** Screenshot\_20250215-063809~2.png; Screenshot\_20250215-075141~4.png

Charlene Ferguson  
72 Cleaves Street  
Yarmouth, Maine 04096

February 14, 2025

Erin Zwirko, Director of Planning & Development and Members of the Planning Board  
C/O Wendy Simmons, Administrative Assistant  
Town of Yarmouth  
200 Main Street  
Yarmouth, Maine 04096

Dear Ms. Zwirko,

I'm writing because I am very concerned about the proposed solar farm at 0 Lafayette Street and for multiple reasons. First and foremost, the cemetery is sacred ground along the shore of the Royal River. This property should remain what it was intended to be, a cemetery. Cutting 8 acres of wooded property and erecting solar panels is an atrocity and would affect the peacefulness and serenity of both Riverside Cemetery and Holy Cross Cemetery. The project would be detrimental to the wildlife along the river which to name a few include many deer, fox, birds and bald eagles that nest along the riverbanks. Removing 8 acres of wooded land would cause major runoff to an already fragile piece of property which is prone to erosion and I urge much consideration be taken in this matter.

Please note I have attached two photos including a Royal River Corridor Study dated July 2008 which states there have been several landslides along the estuine. Estuaries are among the most productive ecosystems in the world. Many animals rely on estuaries for food, places to breed, and migration stopovers. Estuaries are delicate ecosystems and great consideration should be taken so we don't interfere with this delicate system. Removing 8 Acres of trees could potentially cause detrimental irreversible damage to this very delicate area of Yarmouth along the Royal River. The second photo included is an actual map showing the cemetery along the bank of the Royal River, I marked the landslide area along with the potential landslide area with a yellow line. As you can see, this very fragile area runs parallel with the cemeteries along the banks of the river.

I am asking the Planning Board members to listen to people's comments and take them seriously.

On a different note, I don't feel the Planning Board took the public's comments seriously in regard to the proposed 36 Cleaves Street project, there are too many unanswered questions and potential risks involved and I believe more time and consideration should have been taken before this project and Railroad Square were approved.

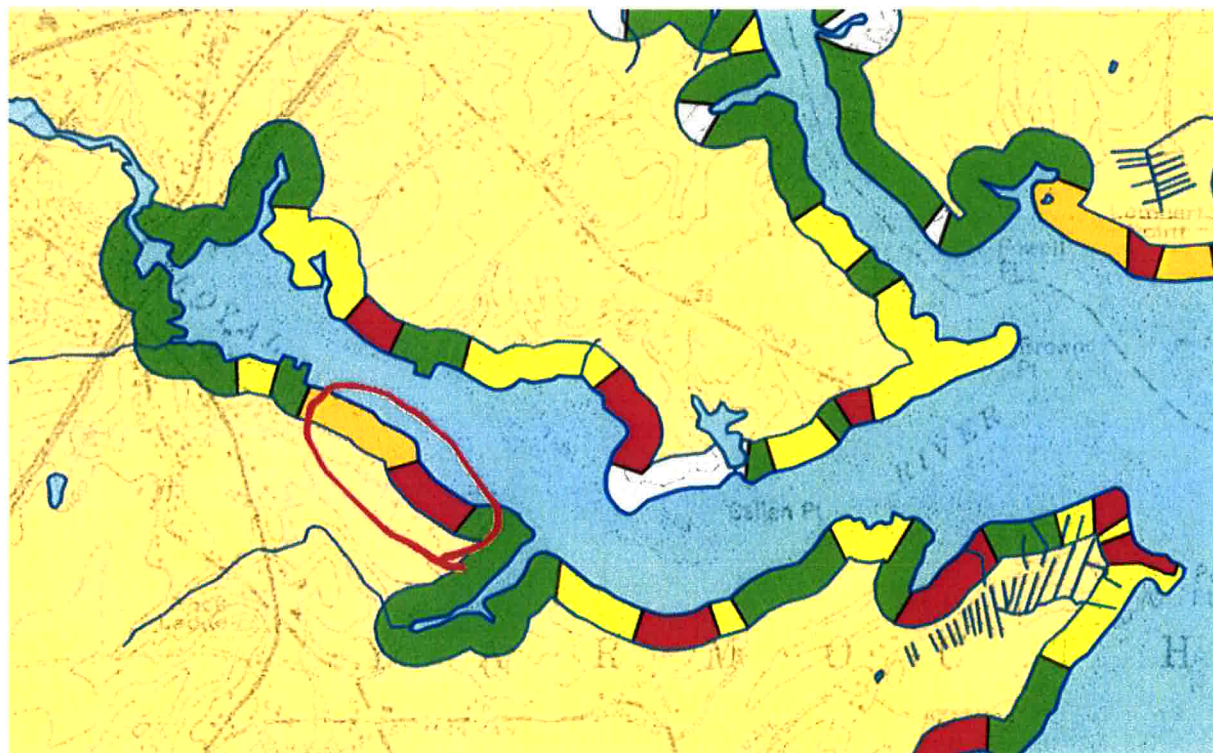
Sincerely,





Charlene Ferguson

As mentioned above, slumps and landslides are common within the Presumpscot Formation, particularly along coastal and estuarine settings around Casco Bay. Several steep and unstable slopes of Presumpscot Formation have been mapped by the Maine Geological Survey along the Royal River within the study area, most noticeably within the estuarine section of the river.

Particularly steep slopes are also found along the north side of the river below Yankee Drive upstream from East Main Street to the Sparhawk Mill.

Several landslides have occurred within the past five years along the estuarine sections of the river, particularly near the confluence with the Cousins River. These areas include slumps below the Holy Cross Cemetery, the Blueberry Cove condominiums, at the Bayview Preserve, Larrabee's Landing, Royall Point, and Brown's Point.



-  **Landslide Site** - Location of known or interpreted coastal landslide. Includes historically recorded landslides and slides interpreted from air photos.
-  **Landslide Risk Area** - Earth features indicate conditions that may be suitable for a landslide to occur. Features often include a steep or arcuate scarp, slump blocks, sediment lobes, or uneven land surfaces. Bluff sediments are usually muddy and twenty feet or more in thickness.
-  **Potential Landslide Area** - Shoreline with a sedimentary coastal bluff twenty or more feet high. These bluff areas have not had field investigations that are necessary to evaluate the risk of a landslide. However, some similar high coastal bluffs have experienced landslides.
-  **Low Coastal Bluff** - Shoreline with a sedimentary coastal bluff that has less than twenty feet of relief immediately adjacent to the shoreline. Some bluffs over twenty feet in height are included in this map unit if the bluff face is not steep. In general, low coastal bluffs are not at risk of failing in the form of a landslide.

## Coastal Landslide Hazards Map Yarmouth Quadrangle, Maine

Maine Geological Survey  
Open File Report No. 01-552  
2001

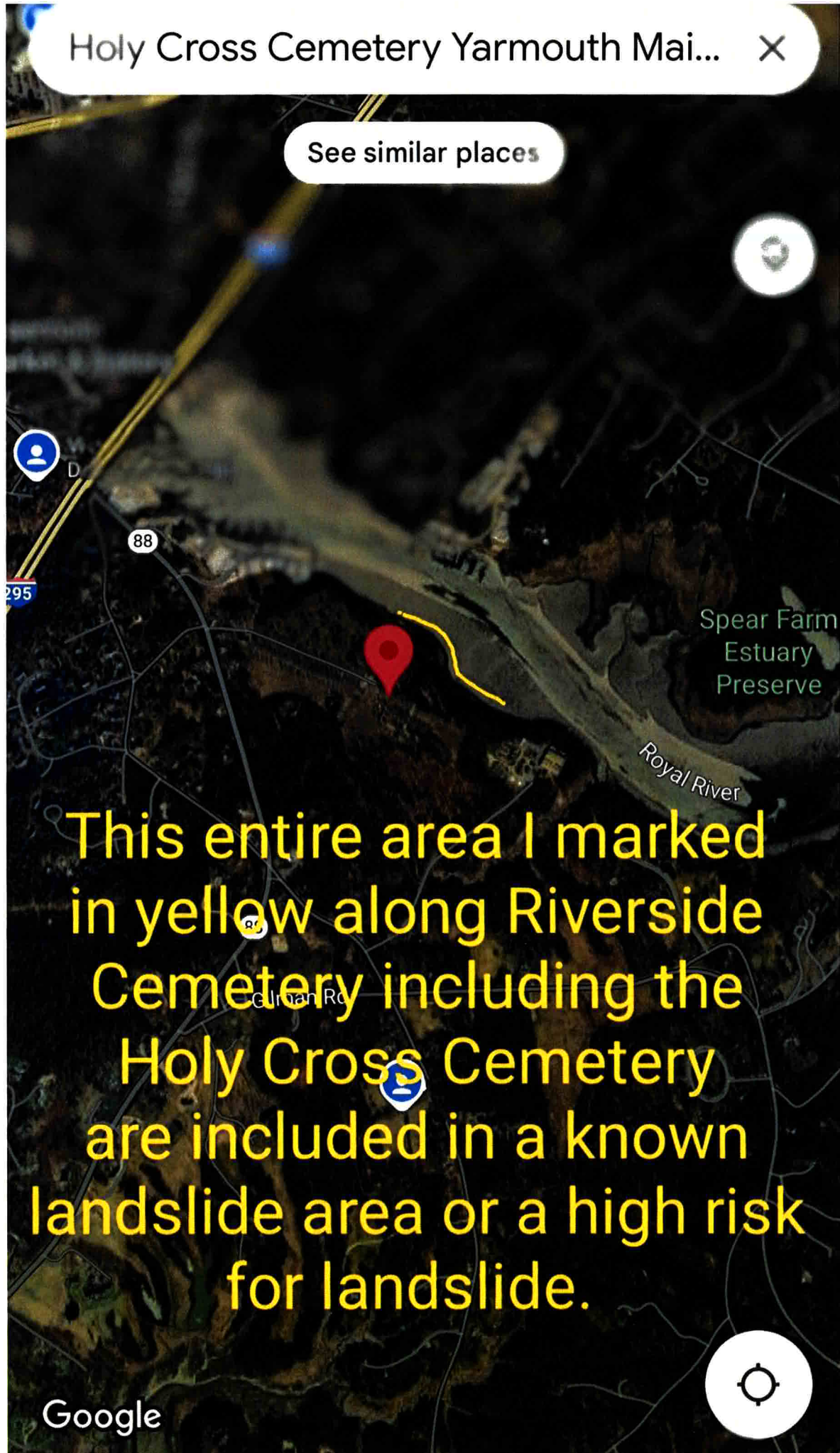
<http://www.state.me.us/doc/nr/mgs/pubs/online/landslides/landslide-yarmouth.pdf>



Stantec

Holy Cross Cemetery Yarmouth Mai... X

See similar places



This entire area I marked  
in yellow along Riverside  
Cemetery including the  
Holy Cross Cemetery  
are included in a known  
landslide area or a high risk  
for landslide.



## Wendy Simmons

---

**From:** Carol Hamalainen  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 18, 2025 4:57 PM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons  
**Subject:** Holy Cross /solar panels

Why is this even being considered? Wetlands, clear-cutting, a haven for wildlife, zoning issues, etc. I have not read the report as just heard of this proposal last evening.

However, the town has zoning practices in place, let's adhere to them. This idea is just a way to make \$\$ at the cost of interfering with the environment and encroaching on a private and spiritual space. The diocese should be ashamed.

Carol Hamalainen

Town of Yarmouth Planning Board  
RE: Smith Street Commercial Solar Energy System  
2\_18\_25

Hello,

I am writing to provide my input on the application for a Commercial Solar Energy System on Smith Street. I reside at 213 Princes Point Road, about a half mile from the site and I fish and clam in Yarmouth waters. On balance, I do not support the conditional use requested in the plan. However, I recognize the position of the landowner and some merits of the proposal.

- The installation is materially non-conforming with Medium Density Residential (MDR) and is adjacent to Shoreland Overlay Resources (SOR).
- The plan presents significant impacts to the MDR abutters and SOR.

### Summary

In my view, the published zoning (MDR in this case) is a promise to Yarmouth landowners. They made one of the most significant commitments of their lives based, in part, on the zone in which they reside. There are several considerations to those commitments made and the social contract that the zoning implies:

- The financial outlay at purchase was affected by zoning
- The ongoing valuation may be affected by conditional approval
- The current quality of life for abutters may be affected by conditional approval

Additionally, Yarmouth has a finite inventory of natural areas and this one is adjacent to a critical estuary resource including the Royal River, a salt marsh, wetland and one of the longer streams in town, extending a half mile to nearly Tyler Technologies.

### Recognitions

I have some empathy for the landowner as the proposed acreage is a dead asset that they will have limited use for in the foreseeable future (hopefully, demand for space remains low). They also have a broader mission of work requiring funds and they have found a creative way to monetize the asset. Reflecting on the possible ways they could have done this, the proposed solar farm is not the worst, most disruptive elective they could have made. I'm not sure anyone would know it was there if it was well executed. The rack pilings are driven and removable, although once we went down this road there is likely no going back.

I also recognize that the Town of Yarmouth has a Climate Action Plan that signals a strong commitment for support of ventures like solar energy. I will note that I disagree with the Climate Action Plan, finding it flawed and likely resulting in financial distress and ecological damage (this plan is a case in point). Nonetheless, I recognize it is important to many in the community.

## Cost/Benefit

Based on the plan and some research, the positives and negatives I can see are in the table below. If the solar array were game-changing (for Yarmouth) it might be compelling, but ~400 homes for a few hours a day is not that. I tried to imagine other ideas to make it more attractive at the end of this letter.

Pro	Con
Creative monetization of underutilized land that presents some hardship for the owner	Negatively impacts abutters, but worse selections can be imagined.
.999mW powers some 400 Maine homes part of the time	Requires subsidies, increases electricity rates for Mainers. We would still be relying on gas generation most of the time (low sun angle, darkness, weather).
Roughly 1/5 <sup>th</sup> to 1/10th the CO <sub>2</sub> emissions of Gas (30% of Maine generation). Recovers tons of construction waste in ~2 years.	Deforestation of 8 acres adjacent to an estuary. Generation of 170 tons of construction waste and 960 tons of deforestation waste (converted from 2400 yards).
Aligned with Climate Action Plan	
Some tax revenue for Yarmouth (?)	
Is not a permanent installation as the pilings are driven and can be pulled. It could be reverted to a field, cemetery or conservation in the future.	There are two Delaware LLCs involved. One with an office in MA and the lessee is a <i>different</i> LLC with an office in CA. If we eventually realized financial and/or ecological unfavourability, we may have a hard time identifying who would remediate it.

## The Plan

In the event that we do this anyway, recognizing the position of the landowner, here is some input on the plan. Noting that subsidies being the norm for projects like these, we should be sure that all the money required for the project is in escrow, perhaps in one of our many, wonderful local banks, before the project starts. It would be a disappointment to get partway through this and not complete it. Many projects just like this are currently on hold.

### *Vegetation Management Plan (P255)*

Year 2, 3 and 4 maintenance all call out the use of herbicides which is concerning given the proximity to the estuary and clam flats. I request that the use of herbicides be prohibited and that vegetation management be conducted by other methods (mechanical, goats, sheep (sheep are suggested in the plan). Mechanical management should happen on a set schedule, minimizing impact on abutters (weekdays, well within working hours).

### *Fertilizer and Pesticide Restrictions (P256)*

The plan approach to fertilizers and pesticides is as though they are prohibited, but allows for a conditional approval through the county. In this case, Yarmouth would have no control over this(?). I suggest this be stricken from the plan:

Fertilizer and pesticides use is prohibited within the solar array. ~~They are prohibited outside the fence, however, in the event that these items are deemed necessary, a professional landscape architect will be consulted, and recommendations presented to the county.~~

### *Environmental Impact*

P240. 5 foot and 20-foot vegetation buffers sound insufficient. Five feet may as well be zero. It is not clear what would be buffered against and where. The plan later says “we do not expect the solar farm to produce any significant glare that will impact the surrounding area.” Are vegetation buffers also for environmentally sensitive areas? Which and where? The maps on pages 197 and 225 reflect much larger vegetation buffers are possible than five and twenty feet. A map of proposed buffer locations with notes on buffer purpose would be very helpful.

P240. “No rare or natural features were identified in the project area.” While this statement may meet some standard definition, the clearing of significant acres of forest adjacent to valuable natural resources (to us) bears some consideration; “No rare ~~or natural~~ features were identified in the project area” may be more appropriate even though that assessment was based on a narrow agency database review.

I’ve read through the plan and it isn’t clear to me how many acres will be cleared. I have seen ~8 acres (p70), 7.5 acres (p218) or 5.74 acres (p267) or as many trees as we need to prevent shading of the array. Can this be clarified? I’m not sure if it is material as someone can cut a tree on their land in Yarmouth, but it is part of the assessment.

The guidance from IF&W, MNAP, Department of Agriculture starting on page 202 essentially declares “no known” wildlife impacts limited to bats, shoreland birds and vernal pools in their inventories. That does not imply a site assessment by these agencies. The map on page 197 indicates a delineated wetland area within the project site. MNAP recommends undisturbed vegetative buffers of 250 feet around the salt hay marsh and royal river and 75 feet from streams. A stream (Whitcomb Creek) runs approximately from behind Cunningham Security to the Royal River adjacent to the site. Since that stream lies in a deep ravine composed of silty loam, the best interpretation might be (?) feet from the ravine edge rather than the thread of the stream. The project plan map on page 197 shows the project encroaching to the thread of that stream with essentially no buffer. That stream is actually a pretty one with some potential and runs a half mile, to nearly Tyler Technologies. We might want this stream protected, which should not be a significant barrier to a solar array. Has the creek been inventoried? Maybe there’s nothing in it, maybe there is.

P191 The adjacent salt marsh is described as being 0.05 miles from the site. Please convert to feet actuals (~250) for clarity so people will know what is meant.

Soil surveys indicate high content of silt. There should be no sediments released to the stream, marsh or royal river as a result of this construction. Not surprisingly, the water table is 1.5-2 feet below the surface so storm run-off carrying silt to the adjacent stream, marsh is a risk. I am confident that Yarmouth staff are sensitive to this portion of the plan and am not too concerned that it will be well managed. The plan is also appears comprehensive in its evaluation of this risk.

### *Notes on Environmental Cost/Benefits*

- 8 acres of clearing producing 170 tons of construction debris, 2,400 yards of clearing waste. Using the midpoint weight for a yard of mulch of 800 lbs, that is approximately 960 tons.
- According to the EPA and USDA an acre of forest typically sequesters 1-2 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per acre per year. So ~12 tons of carbon per year.

### *CO<sub>2</sub>*

- .54 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per MWh for gas. (calculated from U.S. Energy Information Administration)
- .04 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per MWh for solar. (calculated from U.S. Energy Information Administration)
- Google AI reports 0.4 and 0.025 respectively

If I did the math correctly, solar would save 816 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year over gas so it would cover the site waste in less than two years (based on .04/.54 tons/mWh and 1650 peak solar hours per year (4.51/day)).

### *Notes From Lease*

Yarmouth Solar 1 (Lowell, MA) is an LLC in Delaware signed for by 1115 Solar Development, LLC (1115 Solar is a Delaware limited liability company with its principal place of business in California?). Who do we contact if this thing goes south?

Is this the only solar installation planned for the site? The lease says “one or more” are we going to open the door to 40 acres of solar farm and energy storage?

Yarmouth Solar 1 has an exclusive option to lease more of the land.

### Summary on Plan

I’m trying to figure out how to make this more attractive to the town and abutters. Below are some ideas.

- Increase vegetation buffers.
- Establish clear and sufficient distance buffers from sensitive areas (wetlands, Whitcomb Creek, salt marsh.
- Pesticides and herbicides are prohibited.
- Instead of sheep for array vegetation control, dwarf goats that people can visit. Everyone would love it. I’m only half kidding.
- A way to lower electric rates for abutters (tie in?)
- In the event of TEOTWAWKI, would it be possible to (partially) run the treatment plant off this array in an emergency mode?

Thank You,  
Chris Stetson  
Princes Point Road

## **Wendy Simmons**

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**From:** Debbie Godowsky  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 18, 2025 10:05 AM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons  
**Subject:** Proposed Solar farm

To the members of the Planning Board:

We are not opposed to a solar farm in Yarmouth, if the location is well thought out and is in the proper place.

However, this does not belong next to a cemetery, adjacent to the waterfront, along a very pretty road, in a historic part of town with many homes in the area.

No one drives by the solar farm on Route 1 in Cumberland and says, "Doesn't that look nice?"

For these reasons, we are opposed to this proposal.

Debbie and Barry Godowsky  
330 Main Street, Yarmouth

## Wendy Simmons

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**From:** Dayna Klein  
**Sent:** Friday, February 14, 2025 4:34 PM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons  
**Subject:** Proposed solar farm

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

I am writing in response to the proposed solar farm in the current Holy Cross Cemetery.

After all of the years we've worked together to eliminate the dam on the Royal River and preserve the adjacent land, why would we undermine all that work by putting in a solar farm at the end of the river and then cutting down old growth trees?

While other communities are using surplus land to erect solar farms- much like the farm on route one on the Falmouth and Cumberland border, we- if we- as a community- have truly researched this issue, I would think that after all of our efforts, a less ecologically disruptive location needs to be found.

It's disappointing that such little time was given as a response period and there has been so little transparency- my hope is that the town council will open this process up, allow for public consultation, and a greater effort made to find a suitable location for a Yarmouth solar farm.

Thank you for your time and consideration, Dayna Klein  
222 East Elm Street  
Yarmouth, ME 04096

\*Dayna Klein\*  
(She, her, hers)

This email message is confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, you should delete this copy and keep no copies.

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## 0 Lafayette St Site Plan Application

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From Dan Ostrye

Date Tue 2/18/2025 1:52 PM

To Erin Zwirko <EZwirko@yarmouth.me.us>

Cc Juliana Dubovsky <jdubovsky@yarmouth.me.us>; Colin Durrant; Mike Tremblay

 1 attachment (878 KB)

PARP Plan ref to trails.pdf;

Hi Erin,

I have one request for a condition of approval for the Planning Board to consider in reviewing the application to construct a solar farm at the above referenced location. Specifically, I would ask that the Town be granted a 15 to 20 foot wide pathway easement and for the applicant to construct a pathway along the property line of the Yarmouth Wastewater Plant. The purpose of the easement would be the installation of a multi use pathway that would connect Smith Street to Burbank Lane on the opposite side of Whitcombs Creek tidal marsh.

As past chairperson of the Yarmouth Conservation Commission and Bicycle Pedestrian Committee, I have had a role in establishing many new pathway connections throughout town and have led the design and construction of the recently completed West Side Trail a fifteen year endeavor. Both the West Side Trail and many of the pathway connections were envisioned in the 1988 town council adopted Public Access and Recreation Plan (PARP plan) and the connectivity and recreational benefits have been well received through the community. I've attached a file containing the relevant sections of the PARP plan and the associated map depicting the trails and pathways envisioned in the plan.

The pathway through the cemetery, past the treatment plant, across the marsh and over Burbank Lane will create an off-road connection between Lafayette Street and Gilman Road that will provide a safe and pleasant alternative for bicyclists and pedestrians who otherwise must travel up to Princes Point Road and backtrack down the upper section of Gilman Road. It will provide direct access to Larrabee's Landing, Fels Groves and Cousins Island (as well as to the West Side Trail).

I understand that within the past ten years, Nat Tupper our former town manager, had made an agreement in principle with the diocese to build such a trail but timing was not right and the project did not move forward. Construction of the pathway would initially create a connection from Lafayette Street to Whitcombs Way providing a walking loop via Princes Point Rd, Pleasant St and Smith Street that many residents would take advantage of even in the absence of the marsh crossing and connection to Gilman Road. Clearly these types of pathway projects take a long time to develop so it is important to secure the public access during site development projects to preserve the public access. Creation of the full trail may take many years and this is a unique opportunity to ensure that it can happen down the road.

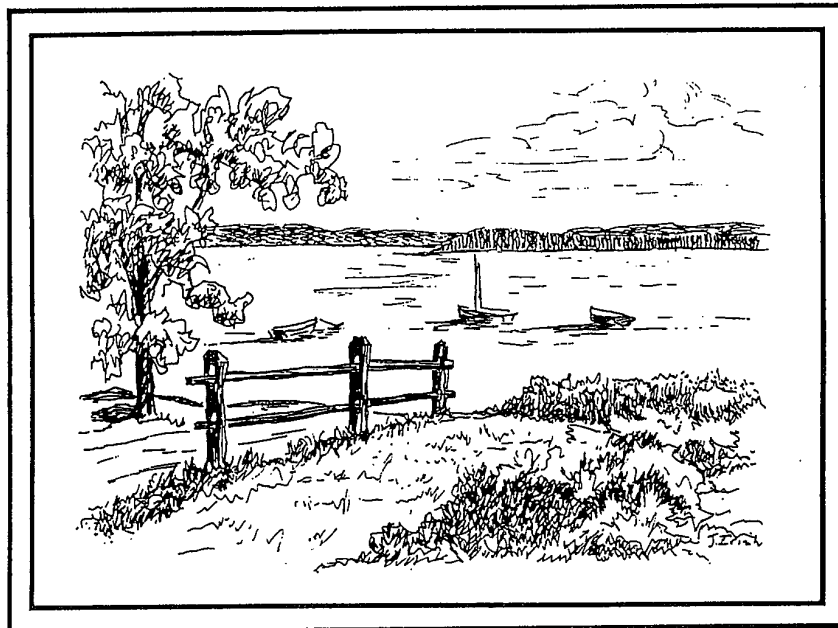


We have undertaken many similar pathway projects in town and there are inevitably concerns and objections raised by abutters and property owners alike. I would even expect the Town would have concerns about access to the wastewater treatment plant. What I can tell you based on over 15 years of developing pathways and trails in town is that the people who use them are across the board respectful and stick to the routes. We have rarely had any kind of trouble and never had a case of vandalism or hooliganism on any of our trails. Having spent summers working at a Catholic Cemetery in my youth, I am sensitive to the solemnness the grounds and believe that users will be respectful as they pass through the grounds.

I would be happy to meet with you and the project team to discuss my request and would be more happy to provide advice on design and layout of a pathway to meet our collective needs. While a 15 to 20 foot-wide easement might seem awfully wide, it is solely to provide adequate space to route the pathway around trees and down slopes in a responsible manner and, once built, it is always possible to shrink the width of the easement to a reasonable width to allow for ongoing maintenance and emergency access.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this request on an otherwise reasonable and timely project to move us closer to energy independency.

Best Regards,  
Dan Ostrye  
22 Spartina Point Road  
Yarmouth, Maine 04096

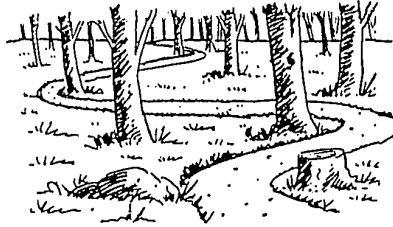


# **Public Access and Recreation Plan**

**Town of Yarmouth, Maine  
September 1988**

*As revised 9/20/88*

## 2. Pedestrian Trail System



### Royal River Corridor Trail

This trail is the backbone of the entire trail system. The existing trail runs from North Elm Street to Bridge Street. This plan calls for expansion both north and south.

#### A. North extension

How far the north extension should go has been discussed. This plan calls for an extension on the west side of the river as far north as the limit of the Middle Density Residential (MDR) district with an access point onto Sligo Road. One possible route for the trail would be the Water District easement for the water main. This possibility should be further explored with the Trustees of the Water District.

#### B. Secure existing trail

The existing trail from North Elm to Bridge has a significant section which is held in private hands. Elizabeth Hunt owns approximately 320 feet of the trail in the proximity of York Street. There is an agreement which permits the trail to be on the property in exchange for the payment of real estate taxes. The agreement provides for the removal of the trail at anytime if requested by Mrs. Hunt. The Town should secure the perpetual use of this trail through outright purchase of the land or purchase of an easement.

#### C. Extension South

The trail is planned to extend south along the full length of the Royal River terminating at a deep water access park. This extension is comprised of several individual identifiable segments with specific characteristics as follows:

##### 1. Extension through Mill Point to Route 88

The Town will need to acquire an easement through the Mill Pond apartment property on Bridge Street. This easement would most probably be located away from the water behind the parking lot. This would then connect onto Town-owned land off Grist Mill Lane. The trail will continue across the Royal River on a pedestrian bridge to the Town-owned overlook and parking area at Route 88. (Grist Mill Park).

##### 2. Extension to the Town Landing

The feasibility of extending the trail under the I-95 Bridge to the Town Landing should be closely examined. This would connect the Bayview neighborhood into the trail network, thus providing a safer pedestrian route off Bayview.

3. **Along Route 88 at the harbor**

Of necessity, the trail will utilize a new sidewalk along the next stretch of trail. This sidewalk will run along the south side of Route 88, past entrances to the boat yards, to the entrance to the cemeteries.

4. **Cemeteries to Gilman Road**

The trail will utilize the existing road down the center of the Catholic cemetery. An easement will be necessary to assure this access. The trail will continue on the existing trail past the Yarmouth Wastewater Treatment facility. Some improvement will be needed to this segment. A small pedestrian bridge will cross Atwood's folly, continuing the trail on an existing pedestrian easement to Burbank Farm Lane.

A side trail off the main trail is the Larrabee's Landing right-of-way. Both the Burbank Farm and Larrabee's Landing trail portions are slated to be improved by the developer of the Burbank Farm subdivision.

The Larrabee's Landing trail is to be extended to the stone breakwater. This stone breakwater and an abutting area of approximately 150' X 75' is in the process of being given to the Town. There is a 150-foot strip between Larrabee's Landing and the stone breakwater area which will need to be acquired to complete this side trail.

5. **Gilman Road to end**

The trail continues from Gilman Road down Royal Point Road. A scenic overlook near the end of the trail is in the process of being acquired by the Town. The trail then leaves the road and follows a soon-to-be Town-owned easement to the water's edge near a beaver's dam at the Vail property boundary. The trail ends here at the projected location of a Town forest.

## **Cousins Island Trail**

This trail provides a self-contained system for the island community and provides an alternative to the use of Cousins Street sidewalk for pedestrian movement. The trail begins at Sandy Point Beach and follows the shore under the bridge to the SOCI property. The SOCI (Scouts on Cousins Island) property is owned by CMP. An easement will need to be secured from them for access. The trail continues through the Tinker property which is managed by the Yarmouth School Board. The trail will then cross Cousins Street and follow the CMP right-of-way back to Sandy Point. This will form a complete loop. The trail will also follow the CMP right-of-way to the Cousins Island dock.

## **Pratt's Brook Trail**

This trail will link together the east side of the Town. It will run from Ledge Road near its intersection with North Road along Pratt's Brook to East Main Street near Granite Street. Along its way it will bisect the Town-owned Hamill tract, slated to be a Town forest. Throughout its length the majority of the trail will be in the flood plain zone of Pratt's Brook. This trail may be extended through the landfill area with the possible use of the area as a canoe access.

## **West Side Trail**

This will be the longest trail segment in Yarmouth and will be made up almost entirely of Central Maine Power (CMP) right-of-ways. The trail will begin on West Main Street at the proposed Applewood subdivision. A public trail will cross the open space area to reach the CMP right-of-way. The trail will then follow the right-of-way its length of the Cousins Island bridge.

### Littlejohn Trail

There is an existing trail system on the east end of Littlejohn Island. This trail is entirely on the Truesdale property. No improvement of this trail is recommended. Public access to this trail will need to be acquired.

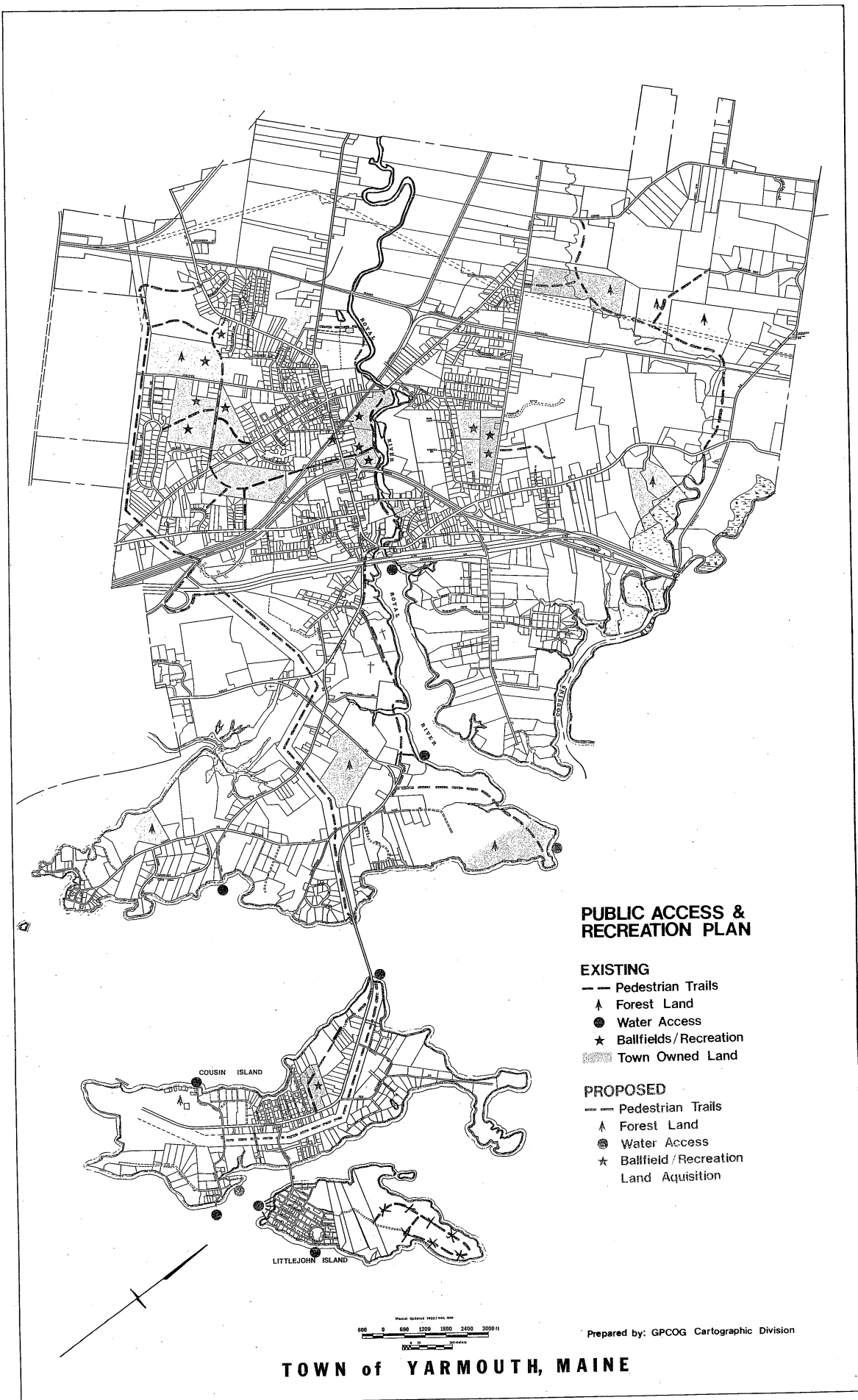
### Interconnections to schools, parks, village and harbor

The four main trails will be connected to one another by side trails to provide access and looped jogging, cross country skiing, etc. courses. Several of these are shown on the plan map.

*(See appendix B-map)*

### Pedestrian Trails Action Recommendations

1. Dedication of trail system components should be made where new development occurs. Impact fees in lieu will be required where new subdivisions will not be on trail systems. In recent years several important trail links have been secured by informal dedication by developers to the Town. This process should be continued in the context of the impact fee ordinance.
2. Secure existing Royal River Park trail system. A parcel of land owned by Elizabeth Hunt is an integral component of the existing Royal River Park. There currently is an agreement to lease this property for the trail from the owner. This trail should be secured by easement or fee simple purchase.
3. Central Maine Power's easements will make up a major portion of the West Side trail and the Cousins Island trail. Lease arrangements should be made with CMP for their use.
4. Establish a private trail organization to develop and maintain some trails. This volunteer organization will insure trails are in passable condition and that litter is not a problem.
5. Purchase easement through Millpoint property.
6. Include acquisition and development of portions of the trail system in the Capital Improvement Program.
7. Acquire an easement through the Catholic cemetery in exchange for Town maintenance of the cemetery drive.
8. The feasibility of connecting the Royal River trail to the Royal River Town Landing under I-95 should be established.



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**Smith st solar**

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**From** Denis Blanchette

**Date** Wed 2/12/2025 10:00 AM

**To** Erin Zwirko <EZwirko@yarmouth.me.us>

My name is Denis Blanchette I live at 192 Lafayette St, Yarmouth, ME 04096.

I'm writing to you about the proposed solar farm at Holy Cross Cemetery. I am opposed to this site as being used for a solar farm. This land is owned by the catholic diocese. Would they be tax exempt for have that farm on thier property? I walk through that area often and see lots of wildlife,deer,fox and eagles. As a town that cherishes it's open spaces, this would be quite a disturbance to wildlife.

Also is this the start of peppering the town with solar farms? Solar farms in my opinion are a far cry from being green energy, disturbing so much valuable land.

The cemetery is a place of rest for the families of many Yarmouth residents and I find it disrespectful.

I'm also concerned about what this could do to the values of homes in the immediate area.

What happens when the solar farms reaches its end of life?

Thank you for your time

Denis Blanchette.

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**Re: 0 Lafayette St Site Plan Application**

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**From** Edward Ashley

**Date** Tue 2/18/2025 3:18 PM

**To** Dan Ostrye

**Cc** Joshua Royte; Erin Zwirko <EZwirko@yarmouth.me.us>; Juliana Dubovsky <jdubovsky@yarmouth.me.us>; Michael Brandimarte; Karyn MacNeill <kmacneill@yarmouth.me.us>

Erin, please regard this as a communication to Planning Board.

Dan, Good job. As to Nat, he showed me an executed license agreement running from the Diocese to the Town (which had expired by its own terms by the time I saw it), granting a pedestrian use license for 3 years running from Smith Street down to the treatment plant property (with an existing trail of use), but not continuing onto the Whitcomb creek Diocese frontage which would enable a crossing to Fels' Groves. Scott LaFlamme should have that document.

I believe you know that there is a natural bench cut on the Fels-Groves side which takes you down the bluff to marsh edge, at about midpoint on the finger marsh, a natural spot for a boardwalk crossing over to the strip of diocese land easterly of Whitcombs Way..

I had written to Erin pleading an easement (not license) from Smith St down to a couple of natural clearings/view spots and on down to the hammerhead turnaround at the gate. I have tried in the past to get PLC attention to an ADA trail running from the hammerhead (as a parking area) to a spot on the shore at the mouth of Whitcombs Creek, with views down to Lanes Island and Winslow Park and beyond, with a little bottom third pruning of some branches, with two to three spots atop bank for some benches, all level going from the hammerhead, easy ADA trail ground. A quiet contemplation spot with ready wheelchair access, cool in the shade on a hot summer day. The Fels-Groves crossing would be a short distance further. Otherwise the Diocese could squeeze a couple of high value house lots out of the high ground between the Whitcombs Creek finger marsh and Whitcomb's Way. The cleared spots I mentioned earlier have some elevation gain as you work your way around the treatment plant fenced perimeter from the hammerhead, and turning left towards the cemetery as you reach the bluff at Royal River edge. Minimum investment required for a very nice amenity, assuming the Diocese granted rights. The Town already owns a good chunk of what I have described.

Now is the time to address it. I would note that there are also loss of tree canopy consequences at stake here, and some compensation for loss of canopy, as well as loss of habitat, is an entirely appropriate topic of discussion.

Ed



## Wendy Simmons

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**From:** Jill Fulton  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 18, 2025 8:06 PM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons  
**Subject:** Solar Farm

All -

I'm writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed 12-acre solar farm at Holy Cross Cemetery. This project raises serious concerns—both practical and ethical—for our community.

First, clear-cutting eight acres of forest to install solar panels seems counterproductive from an environmental standpoint. Trees provide far more long-term ecological benefits than a solar farm ever could, and this land is simply not suited for industrial development. There are plenty of open fields where solar panels could be placed without destroying woodlands.

Additionally, this site isn't even zoned for such a project, meaning a variance is required. Zoning laws exist for a reason, and granting exceptions like this sets a troubling precedent—what's to stop other unsuitable developments?

Beyond that, there's the matter of aesthetics. A solar farm is an industrial eyesore—rows of metal and glass where there was once natural beauty. Holy Cross Cemetery is meant to be a place of peace and remembrance, and turning it into a commercial energy site is not only disruptive but also deeply disrespectful. The project may benefit the cemetery's fund, but it does nothing for the town itself.

I urge the Planning Board to reject this proposal and encourage a more thoughtful approach to renewable energy—one that doesn't come at the cost of our forests, zoning integrity, or the character of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jill Fulton  
47 Royall Meadow Road  
Yarmouth, ME 04096

Sent from my iPhone

## Wendy Simmons

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**From:** Jason Prince  
**Sent:** Friday, February 14, 2025 4:24 PM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons  
**Subject:** Holy Cross Solar Farm

Dear Ms. Simmons,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed solar farm adjacent to Holy Cross Cemetery in Yarmouth. While I support solar power, I believe this project's potential environmental impact is unacceptable.

Clear-cutting forest to build the solar farm would destroy valuable habitat for numerous species, including eagles, osprey, and deer. Once developed, this land would likely be lost as animal habitat forever.

As a Yarmouth resident, I urge you to uphold the current land use rules and prevent this project from moving forward.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,  
Jason Prince  
27 Sea Spray Reach, Yarmouth, ME 04096

## Wendy Simmons

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**From:** Kerry Stetson  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 13, 2025 3:43 PM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons; Erin Zwirko; icromarty@yarmouth.me.us; mlengel@yarmouth.me.us; hginsberg@yarmouth.me.us; jhansen@yarmouth.me.us; jking@yarmouth.me.us; mschumacher@yarmouth.me.us; kwilliams@yarmouth.me.us  
**Subject:** 12 acre solar farm in Holy Cross Cemetery  
  
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hello,

I am writing with my concerns about the 12 acre solar farm in Holy Cross Cemetery to be considered in the project report to the Planning Board.

I am not an abutter to this property, but as someone who purchased our home having considered the zoning laws and making a decision that fit our lifestyle, it's unconscionable to think that our planning board would ignore those zoning laws to the benefit of one property owner, with no benefit to the town and detrimental to abutters and wildlife.

When considering a zoning variance, it is expected that our appointed planning board would consider heavily what benefit does this add to the town and abutters, and what harm would this bring to the town and abutters. This project doesn't seem to have any benefit to the town, we wouldn't receive any power or financial gain from it. But the harm looms large; loss of bald eagle, osprey, deer, and other wildlife habitat, reduced property values for abutters, and continued loss of faith in our zoning laws.

The 273 page proposal notes that the state of Maine doesn't have anything in it's records about wildlife or fauna of note, when was the last time anyone from the state assessed the land? Is that information current and relevant at all?

There is much debate on how impactful these types of solar farms are and what negative impact they have on the environment versus their benefit, I don't really see a need to even get to that conversation. The concerns and debate around this proposal come down to our zoning laws and upholding them to the benefit of all residents, not one.

Thank you,  
Kerry Stetson

TO: Members of the Yarmouth Planning Board  
Erin Zwirko, Director of Planning and Development  
Scott LaFlamme, Yarmouth Town Manager

FROM: Jeff and Lisa Hook

DATE: February 17, 2025

RE: Smith Street Solar Project

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We are residents and property owners at 232 Lafayette Street and are writing to you with our strong opposition of the proposed Smith Street Solar Project for many reasons which we will summarize in this letter.

When we purchased and built upon this property over 25 years ago, we did so knowing that we would abut a cemetery. We never imagined that we would be in the line of sight of a 12-acre commercial-scale solar farm with over 8 acres of solar panels and chain link fencing. Yes, we are abutters and would be able to see this from our backyard.

In the short time since we received notice, we have reviewed the 237-page Application for Major Site Plan Review by Yarmouth Solar 1, LLC (“Applicant”). We have also reviewed Yarmouth’s Comprehensive Plan, Climate Action Plan, Zoning Ordinance and various other Town documents.

By its own admission, Applicant acknowledges that a solar farm is NOT a Permitted Use within the MDR District. Furthermore, the proposed use is NOT a Special Exception per our Zoning Ordinance. That is where consideration by the Planning Board should end. Application denied. If the Applicant intends to ask for a Conditional Zoning Change, that must be taken to the Town Council and we strongly oppose such change.

Notwithstanding this departure from Town approval protocols, a commercial-scale solar farm on this parcel is incompatible with Yarmouth’s Comprehensive Plan in the following areas:

- Preservation of Natural Resources and Mature Trees (NO)
- Preservation of Habitat (NO)
- Protection of Recreation (NO)

This project will be an eyesore to those of us who frequent Holy Cross Cemetery to visit loved ones or to enjoy some outdoor exercise on the way to the town walking and biking trails.

It is ironic that clearcutting of over 12-acres of wildlife habitat is necessary for a developer’s quest of a renewable energy source and less important than natural carbon sequestration. We frequently see deer, turkeys, bald eagles, bats, owls and fox roaming in this forested area. It would be a shame to destroy this undeveloped land and natural habitat. Inconsistencies in the site plan maps made it challenging to determine the specific areas of clearcutting – that matters to us as a direct abutter.

Then there are health and quality of life concerns as we will be in both eye and ear shot of the solar farm. The Applicant mentions that there will be glare and noise emission, yet at so-called acceptable levels. Nevertheless, they will be noticed by us as direct abutters. There may be other health impacts from being in close proximity to an energy generator, yet that’s too early to tell.

If this project were to move forward, our property value would be negatively impacted. This project would irreparably damage the character of the neighborhood and Yarmouth more broadly. Clearly, we are not benefiting from this project. Then, who is?

- Diocese of Portland – The Diocese will collect income for 20 and up to 40 years from a land lease with Applicant. Precise amount redacted. Revenue generation from this type of activity, when it will negatively impact many, seems ill-advised.
- New Leaf Energy – The Applicant, a Lowell, Massachusetts firm, will benefit from development of this self-described “large scale commercial solar energy system.” Regardless of the legal entity formed for this project, Yarmouth Solar 1, LLC or other, they are all offshoots of this out-of-state company. New Leaf has purportedly also developed numerous solar projects in Maine, but those are in much more rural areas of the State.

If this is not yet enough, we find it in poor form that as a direct abutter we were not made aware of this proposal by the Applicant nor the Diocese prior to the written notice by the Town.

In closing, we urge you to swiftly reject the application known as Smith Street Solar. This Yarmouth neighborhood is the wrong place for a commercial-scale solar farm.

Sincerely,

*Lisa & Jeff Hook*

February 17, 2025

re: Ridiculous Solar Panel Proposal

Dear Town of Yarmouth,

My name is Matthew Cardente and I reside at 210 Lafayette Street, Yarmouth, Maine. While I was not notified by the Town of Yarmouth, luckily my neighbor relayed to me the proposal for clear cutting a substantial amount of land near my property to install solar panels. Frankly, I am shocked that a variance for such a project is even of any consideration. This area is a mix of residential and two cemeteries abutting the Royal River. If this project goes through, you are literally disrupting the dead and their visitors. Further, this eye sore will devalue the property values in the immediate area. If for some crazy reason the Town approves this project, I would expect a 25-30% reduction in my real estate taxes to compensate for my loss. Residents even closer to this project should get 75% reduction. I was on the Yarmouth Zoning Board of Appeals for many years and have never seen such a poor plan ever. Further, I do not appreciate the lack of communication from the Town regarding something that would substantially alter the immediate area that I live. Very very sketchy and alarming. I have a long list of negatives that I will add if needed but I am hopeful that the Town of Yarmouth will do the right thing and deny this proposal or any variation of one that involves clear cutting and installing solar panels in this area.

Beyond disturbed by this,

Matthew Cardente

(Owner of 210 Lafayette Street for almost a quarter century)

## Wendy Simmons

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**From:** Stacey Chase  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 13, 2025 10:44 PM  
**To:** Erin Zwirko  
**Cc:** Wendy Simmons  
**Subject:** Opposition to Smith Street Solar!

Dear Yarmouth Planning Board:

My name is Stacey Chase and I reside at 216 Lafayette Street in town. My property abuts Riverside and Holy Cross cemeteries, with the latter containing an undeveloped 12-acre parcel, owned by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Portland, that is the proposed site of a \$5.8 million project known as "Smith Street Solar," a commercial solar energy farm. I am writing to the board to voice my **vehement** opposition to this project, which would adversely affect not only me, but my neighbors, and the entire Town of Yarmouth.

What follows is a list of just some of the reasons why the planning board should immediately — and unanimously — reject the Smith Street Solar plan:

- 1.) The Smith Street Solar plan raises the frightening possibility of EMF (electromagnetic fields) exposure to those of us living close to the site, which could pose serious health risks. Furthermore, the project leaves the Town of Yarmouth vulnerable to a future class-action lawsuit arising out of any such health issues for nearby residents.
- 2.) A solar energy farm would lower the property values of all the residents on Smith Street and Lafayette Street, as well as in the nearby area. Independent research has documented a 7% decline in property value for homes within 0.1 miles (528 feet) of a solar energy farm, and adverse effects that extend out as far as one mile. (SOURCE: Community & Environmental Defense Services.)
- 3.) Solar energy farms emit noise pollution, as well as glare and light pollution. Residents living near such farms in Florida and elsewhere have reported both noise and glare from the solar panels. Some report a "constant hum" from substation transformers and transmission lines; others say the transmission lines can affect cell and other radio signals.
- 4.) Solar energy farms are notorious for disrupting wildlife habitats and can even lead to the displacement of native plant species. I walk in the area frequently and have personally seen fox, deer, geese, skunks, wild turkeys, bald eagles, and other wildlife in Holy Cross Cemetery. I shudder to think that these beautiful animals would be disturbed and displaced due to the clear cutting of the wooded parcel earmarked for the solar energy farm.
- 5.) A *commercial* solar energy project does not belong in a residential district and would irreparably damage the character of the surrounding neighborhood. The aesthetics are awful. Local residents use Holy Cross Cemetery for walking, running, skiing, snowshoeing, walking their dogs, and other leisurely pursuits, or just for times of quiet contemplation and reflection. A solar energy farm would ruin this forever.



6.) The project would be an eyesore and a blight on the pastoral setting and completely out of place alongside the graves and flat headstones marking cremains. The Smith Street Solar plan calls for "chain-link fencing around the perimeter" which would be more than ugly; it would be disrespectful to the dead.

To me and many of my neighbors, the Smith Street Solar application seems to be inexplicably fast-tracked, with a final vote on the project possibly coming as early as March 26, 2025. We were given less than two weeks from the February 5, 2025 mailing of a notice describing the project to submit public comment to the Yarmouth Planning Board. (The deadline for comments is February 18, 2025.) The construction schedule in the application lists Summer 2025 for site clearing. We want to know: *What's the big rush?*

There are a lot of unanswered questions here:

- Would the Town of Yarmouth realize any tax benefits from Smith Street Solar, or is the diocesan property tax-exempt?
- Where is the energy supply from this system intended to be sold? Is any of the energy generated staying in Yarmouth, or Maine?
- Given that the developer New Leaf Energy Inc. has completed numerous solar projects throughout Maine, is this the start of an undesirable trend in residential areas?
- Is this the best use of valuable land along the banks of the Royal River?
- What happens if a solar panel, which may contain poisonous heavy metals, breaks? How dangerous is that toxic mess?
- What happens to the land when the solar farm reaches the end of its life expectancy?

And on and on and on.

I cannot imagine why the Yarmouth Planning Board would allow such an ill-advised project like Smith Street Solar. *It should not. It should not be given even the slightest consideration.* This is not NIMBYism. Smith Street Solar is simply wrong for the Town of Yarmouth. There is no foreseeable benefit to area residents at all. It seems to me that the *only* gain from this proposed monstrosity is the huge payout the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland would receive upon leasing 12 pristine acres along the shoreline in our lovely town, but *that* should not drive public policy.

Sincerely,

Stacey Chase

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Stacey Chase

Freelance Writer/Adjunct Professor

216 Lafayette Street

Yarmouth, Maine 04096

## Wendy Simmons

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**From:** Sarah Norsworthy  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 16, 2025 3:39 PM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons  
**Cc:** Jeff Norsworthy  
**Subject:** Solar Farm - Bald Eagles Nesting

Hello Wendy,

I wanted to call attention to the fact that there are a nesting pair of Bald Eagles in Riverside Cemetery. I have been photographing these eagles regularly while not revealing their location because of the impact well-meaning people can have on the behavior of these nesting birds. I was surprised to not find mention of the Bald Eagles in the site report. If documentation of the eagles' nest would support their protection, please let me know.

Warmly,  
Sarah

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Sarah CB Norsworthy, EdD  
Pronouns: she/her/hers

## PETITION TO STOP SMITH STREET SOLAR

We, the undersigned, hereby petition Town Manager Scott LaFlamme, the Yarmouth Town Council, and the Yarmouth Planning Board to reject plans to build a \$5.8 million project known as "Smith Street Solar," a commercial solar energy farm, within Holy Cross Cemetery off of Smith Street and Lafayette Street in the Town of Yarmouth, Maine. We believe Smith Street Solar would pose health risks, lower property values, emit noise and light pollution, and disrupt wildlife habitat; it would also irreparably damage the character of the neighborhood and present an eyesore. Smith Street Solar is simply wrong for the Town of Yarmouth.

Name: Margaret Smith Signature: Margaret Smith  
Address: 202 PLEASANT ST.

Name: MARGARET LAWRENCE Signature: Margaret Lawrence  
Address: 7 GOODINGS END

Name: Chris Jones Signature: Chris Jones  
Address: 132 Pleasant St  
Yarmouth, ME 04096


Name: William Joseph Pires Signature: William Joseph Pires  
Address: 202 Lafayette St  
Yarmouth ME

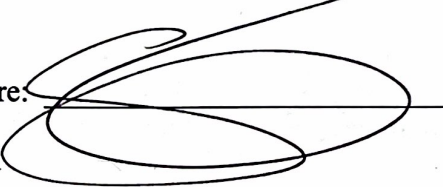
Name: Barbara Pires Signature: Barbara Pires  
Address: 202 Lafayette St. Yarmouth

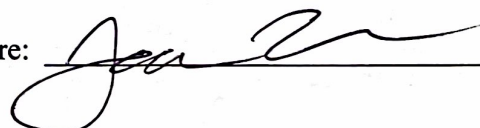
Name: STACEY CHASE  
Stacey Chase Signature: Stacey Chase  
Address: 216 Lafayette Street


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Name: MATTHEW HICKEY Signature:   
Address: mjhcyh@gmail.com

Name: Catherine Hickey Signature:   
Address: cathhick72@gmail.com

Name: Joan Torres Signature:   
Address: 70 Portland St

Name: Denis Blanchette Signature:   
Address: 192 Lafayette

Name: Matthew Cardente Signature:   
Address: 210 Lafayette St

Name: Joey Merrill Signature:   
Address: 254 Lafayette St



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Name: Robin Frazier Signature: [Signature]  
Address: 70 Smith St

Name: Henry Ditzel Signature: [Signature]  
Address: 254 Pleasant Street

Name: Gregor Snow Signature: [Signature]  
Address: 248 Pleasant St

Name: Richard D. [Signature] Signature: [Signature]  
Address: 242 Pleasant St.


Name: Barbara Hailor Signature: [Signature]  
Address: 242 Pleasant St


Name: Patricia Smith Signature: Patricia Smith  
Address: 202 Pleasant St  
Yarmouth ME

[Signature]

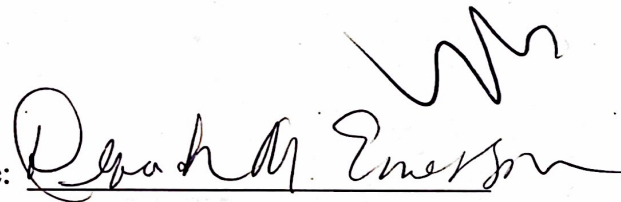
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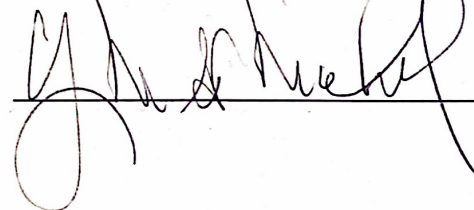
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Name: Lisa C. Hook Signature:   
Address: 232 Lafayette St.

Name: Steve Arnold Signature:   
Address: 127 Applecrest DR

Name: CHRIS EMERSON Signature:   
Address: 62 AUTUMN

Name: Deborah Emerson Signature:   
Address: 67 Autumn Lake

Name: Yvonne St. Michel Signature:   
Address: 48 Autumn Lake

Name: Aidan Hickey Signature:   
Address: 74 Pinewood Road

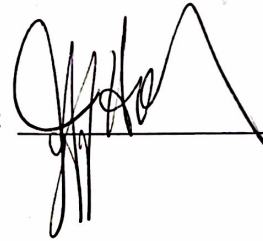
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Name:

Jeff Hook

Signature:



Address:

232 Lafayette St

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



## Wendy Simmons

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**From:** CoastalCat PT  
**Sent:** Monday, February 17, 2025 7:55 PM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons  
**Subject:** Solar farm by Holy Cross Cemetery

Hi Wendy,

Here are my comments on the solar panel proposal.

I'm writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed 12-acre solar farm at Holy Cross Cemetery. This project raises serious concerns—both practical and ethical—for our community.

First, clear-cutting eight acres of forest to install solar panels seems counterproductive from an environmental standpoint. Trees provide far more long-term ecological benefits than a solar farm ever could, and this land is simply not suited for industrial development. There are plenty of open fields where solar panels could be placed without destroying woodlands. I realize that the diocese may not own any other land but that is the reality of how we protect our environment.

Next, this site isn't zoned for such a project, meaning a variance is required. Zoning laws exist for a reason, and granting exceptions like this sets a troubling precedent—what's to stop other unsuitable developments?

Lastly, there's the matter of aesthetics. A solar farm is an industrial eyesore—rows of metal and glass where there was once natural beauty and a habitat for local creatures. Holy Cross Cemetery is meant to be a place of peace and remembrance, and turning it into a commercial energy site is not only disruptive but also deeply disrespectful. I have 15+ family members who have already been laid to rest in Holy Cross as well as countless friends. My mom is 98 and plans to be buried in her plot there. I will probably have my ashes interred there when it's my time as well. I'm sure all of my deceased relatives and all of the other "residents" of the cemetery and their families never imagined clear cutting acres of land for a solar farm adjacent to this peaceful place.

The project may benefit the cemetery's fund, but it does nothing for the town itself. I urge the Planning Board to reject this proposal and encourage a more thoughtful approach to renewable energy—one that doesn't come at the cost of our forests, zoning integrity, or the character of our community. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Tammy DeRoche and Lucy DeRoche  
58 Cleaves Street  
Yarmouth, ME

Mailing contact for Tammy:  
6913 61st Ave SE  
Snohomish, WA 98290

## Wendy Simmons

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**From:** Barbara Pires  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 15, 2025 4:46 PM  
**To:** Wendy Simmons  
**Subject:** Yarmouth Solar 1, LLC

Attn: Yarmouth Planning Board

Please consider my concerns regarding the proposed Smith Street solar farm:

1. Clear cutting 8 acres can not be good for the environment 2. Noise from the inverters will add to noise pollution 3. Clear cutting will result in displacement of turkeys, foxes, hawks, eagles, and deer resulting in this wildlife moving into the neighborhood 4. This area is not zoned for business use

I do not see a benefit to the town. I am asking you to reject this proposal.

William Pires  
202 Lafayette St  
Yarmouth

Sent from my ipad