**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Information Session for Conway residents on possible by-law changes for large scale solar facilities**

**zoning**

**Contact: Beth Girshman, Planning Board Chair, 413-369-6079,**

**planningboard@townofconway.com**

The Conway Planning Board wants to hear from Conway residents on the topic of large scale solar facilities and our existing by-law (Article 9, section 91). The Board invites all Conway residents to a meeting on Thursday, February 18, at 7:00 p.m. Residents will be able to join the meeting via internet video or by calling in from any phone, including landlines. The session will be recorded and available for later viewing/listening.

Note that Conway’s large scale solar by-law does NOT impact residential-size solar structures or roof-top solar.

As part of the 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act, Massachusetts set mandated greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, including an 80% reduction in emissions by 2050. In order to reach these goals, large amounts of renewable electricity-generating capacity will have to be added to the New England grid, with solar photovoltaic (PV) systems representing a significant portion of that added capacity. The Town of Conway owns acreage in Solar Overlay District zoning as part of the state’s Green Community Program. A 23 acre large scale solar facility is currently under construction on privately owned land, off Main Poland Road.

The state of Massachusetts currently has about 2.5 GW of solar installed. In order to reach optimum capacity levels, solar capacity will need to expand to 4-20 times what it is currently. (from Pioneer Valley Planning Commission’s 2020 Solar Best Practices Guide)

 “This information session is an opportunity for the Board to present information and get input on important concerns that have the potential to impact our entire community,” Conway Planning Board Chair Beth Girshman said, “The town has had some input and opinions during the construction phase of this large scale solar facility, and we would like to continue with this process. This session will help determine the direction of possible changes to our existing large scale solar by-law.”

This information session will be held in accordance with state mandated social distancing

requirements. The session will be accessible via Zoom - links for internet connection as well as

via call in are below. The session will be recorded and available for later viewing/listening. Contact the Planning Board chair for more information at planningboard@townofconway.com.

Join Zoom Meeting on February 18, 7pm at

<http://bit.ly/Feb18InfoSession> or
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82244994143?pwd=ZWpBWkZUc0J3T1QvbCtLaXZqdklLZz09>

Phone in from any phone, including landlines: 1-929-205-6099
Meeting ID: 822 4499 4143
Passcode: 76453178