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## DOVER ACHIEVES GREEN COMMUNITY STATUS

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**DOVER MA** – The Town of Dover has long been a community that prides itself on preserving its rural character and protecting green space. But now, Dover has officially gone green.

Last month, the Commonwealth notified Dover that its application to be formally designated a Green Community was accepted. Dover joins 184 other Massachusetts cities and towns in the program administered by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to qualify for localities for grants that finance additional energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

Along with the designation as a Green Community, Dover received an initial grant in the amount of \$137,145 that will be used this year to implement energy conservation projects resulting in additional cost savings for the Town and a significant reduction in its carbon footprint.

The designation is the culmination of a nearly two-year effort initiated by the Board of Selectmen and spearheaded by the Long Range Planning Committee with the help of the Planning Board and Town staff. “We are proud to have achieved this goal that will save the Town money while also helping the environment,” said Jack Donoghue, chairman of the Long Range Planning Committee.

Donoghue thanked the Selectmen, Planning Board and Town staff for their assistance in this effort. “Special thanks to Gino Carlucci for his leadership and hard work on this initiative,” added Robyn Hunter, chairman of the Board of Selectmen.

Carlucci is Dover’s Town Planner who also helped an energy committee in the neighboring town of Sherborn achieve Green Community status in 2011. Since then, Sherborn has received 2 grants for energy efficiency measures, totaling \$215,250. Now that Dover is also a Green Community, both towns can propose projects eligible for state grants at the regional school campus the towns share.

At a ceremony at Brockton City Hall on April 12, Carlucci accepted Dover’s formal certification and a ceremonial check for its initial grant from Lt. Governor Karen Polito and Department of Energy Resources Commissioner Judith Judson.

“I was impressed by the level of commitment and teamwork by all of the Town entities in Dover that made this happen,” said Carlucci.

To qualify for Green Community status, Dover had to meet five specific criteria. It had to pass a zoning bylaw amendment by a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting to allow a renewable energy facility by right, an expedited process for permitting such a facility, and adoption of both an efficient fuel vehicle policy and the stretch energy building code in lieu of the base building energy code.

The required amendments were approved overwhelmingly by Town Meeting votes in May 2016. By that Fall, Dover completed an Energy Reduction Plan listing specific projects the Town will use to achieve a 20% drop in its energy consumption within five years.

Also, almost immediately, the town received an application from BlueWave Solar to site a renewable energy facility under the new bylaw – a 1.4 megawatt community solar farm proposed for a capped landfill site adjacent to the Dover Transfer Station. The Planning Board approved the site plan last year, and thousands of solar panels have already been installed at the [fill in]-acre site.

The solar farm in Dover is the first community solar project in the Town and in the entire Eversource northeast service territory. Dover residents who sign up for net metering credits (or “shares”) of the energy generated by the site can choose clean energy while saving roughly 10 percent on their monthly electricity bills.

According to BlueWave, the Dover Community Solar Project is estimated to eliminate 1,200 tons of CO2 in its first year of operation – the equivalent of taking nearly 300 vehicles off the road.

The Green Communities program is a successful state-local partnership between the Baker-Polito Administration, the Legislature and localities, now including Dover. Funding for the program is derived from proceeds of carbon reduction auctions held by the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a compact of northeastern states. The funds are paid by retail electric utilities.

“Dover’s Green Community status is ongoing process that will benefit both the environment and the Town,” said Mark Sarro, chairman of Dover’s Planning Board. Sarro noted the Town is already working on implementing its Energy Reduction Plan and identifying new projects for future grants. According to Sarro, “Certification is just the start.”

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