

**Planning Board**  
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### **SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS BYLAW LISTENING SESSION**

**Date: Saturday, January 12, 2013**

**Time: 10 am – 12 pm**

**Where: Town Hall Annex Meeting Room**  
**856 Main Road**

The Planning Board invites the Westport community for input to guide revisions to the Solar Energy Systems Bylaw. The bylaw did not pass by the required two-thirds majority at the recent Special Town Meeting and will benefit from more discussion with residents. Please join us on Saturday, January 12, 2013 at the Town Hall Annex, 856 Main Road, at 10 am with questions or concerns.

While elements of the bylaw need some clarification and revision, the bylaw is necessary to establish local control over large scale systems that are exempt from state zoning. The proposed bylaw would have created a tiered regulatory structure for the permitting of all solar energy systems. Small systems could be installed “by right” at any home or business – no permit other than a building permit would be required. The Planning Board defined a “small” system as a ground mounted system occupying 1,000 square feet of land area or less or any sized roof-mounted system. Area coverage rather than energy output was used because solar panels keep changing (panels of a given size keep getting more efficient) and zoning bylaws deal with land area measurements rather than electrical output.

At town meeting, we heard concerns relative to small lots and that the threshold was too restrictive for small lot owners to capture a sufficient amount of solar energy for home use. We factored into our analysis a typical residential system providing approximately 7,500 kilowatt hours per year, with a panel area of 500-600 square feet using standard technology.

The Planning Board is eager to learn more from the community at this listening session prior to any redrafting of the bylaw and public hearings. The public hearings will be held in February and March. The draft bylaw may be obtained from the Planning Board Office or on the Town’s website [www.Westport-MA.com](http://www.Westport-MA.com). We invite concerned community members to stay in touch with the Planning Board, participate and collaborate.