

Agenda
Tolland Green Historic District Commission
21 Tolland Green, Tolland, Connecticut
Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 7:00 p.m., via Zoom
Remote Participation Only

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Seating of Alternate(s)**
3. **Additions to Agenda**
4. **Public Comment** - Any person wishing to ask a question, make a comment or put forward a suggestion for any item or matter other than a public hearing item (2 minute limit).
5. **Public Hearing(s)**
 - 5.01 Testimony Received
 - 5.1. **HDC #24-02 Continuation of Certificate of Appropriateness**- Request to install building-mounted solar arrays.
 - 5.1.1 Refer to *Testimony Received (5.01)*
6. **New Business**
 - 6.1. Discussion with counsel regarding legal and procedural questions
 - 6.2. Consideration of the COA at 45 Tolland Green by the Commission, and vote thereon
7. **Other Business**
8. **Old Business**
 - 8.1. Discuss COA application requirements
9. **Correspondence**
10. **Approval of Minutes** – February 21, 2024 Regular Meeting, March 20, 2024 Regular Meeting, and April 10, 2024 Special Meeting
11. **Adjournment**

To join the Zoom meeting, either click:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85432768200?pwd=PRsfeTb1Vg1c4sW40q1CjXFGnacAJZ.1>

One tap mobile: +13052241968,,85432768200#,,,*04102024# US

Or call: 1-646-876-9923 and input:

Meeting ID: 854 3276 8200

Passcode: 04172024

Agenda Item

5.01

Laura Smith

From: Jodie Coleman-Marzialo [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 11:02 PM
To: Laura Smith
Cc: Jim Paquin
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Fw: HDC Public hearings

Hi Laura,

For the mtg packet please.

Thanks,
Jodie

From: Hollie Barnas [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 5:08 PM
To: Jodie Coleman-Marzialo [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: HDC Public hearings

Hi Jodie,

As I noted in a previous email, we are not opposed to solar panels as long as 2 conditions are met: 1. Panels are not visible from the street and 2. Tall trees must be planted to obscure any street visible panels as well as for any panels that are noticeable to other residents' sight lines; front, side or back. The church took down all the tall trees which used to obscure our side and back view, now leaving us a view of a parking lot and roof proposed for solar panels. Therefore, I object to any proposed solar panels on the church roof unless they are willing to restore the trees and allow for our view to be obscure thereby restoring our historic ambience. Thank you for allowing comment, Hollie

On Fri, Mar 15, 2024 at 11:37 AM Jodie Coleman-Marzialo <[REDACTED]> wrote:
Hi Hollie and Dave,

I wanted you to know that there is a PH next Wednesday for solar panels on the UCCT and [95 Tolland Green](#). Please consider sending an email and/or attending the meeting via Zoom regarding your opinion. The packet link is below.

Thanks,
Jodie

https://www.tollandct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif11831/f/uploads/2024-03-20_meeting_packet_amended.pdf

Laura Smith

From: Jodie Coleman-Marziano <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, April 12, 2024 9:04 AM
To: Laura Smith; Jim Paquin
Cc: Stella Demand
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Fw: solar panels

I have consent to forward this. Please include in the 4/17/24 mtg packet.

From: Stella Demand <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, November 26, 2023 4:32 PM
To: [REDACTED]>
Subject: solar panels

As residents of the Tolland Green, we hope to preserve the historicity of our neighborhood. We are encouraging the Historic District Commission to decline any request that would degrade the historic aesthetic, the degree to which we feel would be acceptable if the installation were limited to the less prominent parts of the structure. We believe the church is a beautiful building, and is perhaps the most iconic component of our neighborhood. We hope the parties can come to an agreement by which the historical integrity of the neighborhood is preserved far into the future.

Thank you for considering our input.

Phil and Stella Demand
81 Tolland Green

Laura Smith

From: Jodie Coleman-Marziano <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, April 12, 2024 9:09 AM
To: Laura Smith; Jim Paquin
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Fw: HDC Public hearings

Please include in 4/17/24 mtg packet.

From: Hollie Barnas <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 5:08 PM
To: Jodie Coleman-Marziano <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: HDC Public hearings

Hi Jodie,

As I noted in a previous email, we are not opposed to solar panels as long as 2 conditions are met: 1. Panels are not visible from the street and 2. Tall trees must be planted to obscure any street visible panels as well as for any panels that are noticeable to other residents' sight lines; front, side or back. The church took down all the tall trees which used to obscure our side and back view, now leaving us a view of a parking lot and roof proposed for solar panels. Therefore, I object to any proposed solar panels on the church roof unless they are willing to restore the trees and allow for our view to be obscure thereby restoring our historic ambience. Thank you for allowing comment, Hollie

Laura Smith

From: Jim Paquin
Sent: Sunday, April 14, 2024 2:27 PM
To: Laura Smith
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL]Comments to the UCCT Application for Certificate of Appropriateness for solar panels

Laura, for inclusion in the HDC packet please.

Jim
Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Cheryl Nicholas Comcast <[REDACTED]>
Date: April 14, 2024 at 2:20:10 PM EDT
To: Jim Paquin <jpaquin@tollandct.gov>
Cc: Jodi Marziola <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Comments to the UCCT Application for Certificate of Appropriateness for solar panels

Mr. Paquin,

I am planning to attend the meeting on 4/17 to hear the application presentation and all comments regarding the referenced application.

I am writing to you to provide comments to the application. I am a Tolland resident, a member of UCCT and a member of the DAB. By profession I am an architectural designer and a construction project manager for over forty years.

I am concerned about the historical integrity of the green and the proposed addition of solar panels on any structure/property on the Green. We are so privileged to live in a town with a nationally recognized historic Green that we, as a community, need to protect the Green.

Allowing the addition of solar panels on the Green or visible from the Green is very concerning. I think a compromise of having solar panels not visible from the Green would be appropriate. I'm not sure the proposed locations on the main church roof are appropriate but I would like to hear what others may think.

I understand other solar panels projects have been submitted/approved with a similar compromise solution.

Residents that have chosen to buy/own property on the Green are stewards of the history. I would think they would be concerned about maintaining the historical integrity too. I am hoping they will also provide feedback and support to maintaining the Green historically appropriate.

There are many ways to "be green" that could be implemented without requiring exterior impacts to the historical integrity of the Green. I see in the application they have listed a few items that

have already implemented. Perhaps other options could be considered too. For example water saving plumbing fixtures, carports with solar panels in the parking lot, etc.

I feel strongly there must be a compromise to keep the historical integrity of the Green but still allows the Church to pursue solar energy.

I look forward to learning more during the meeting.

Best,

Cheryl Nicholas, PMP

████████████████

Laura Smith

From: Anne Ericson [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 11:47 AM
To: Laura Smith; Jim Paquin
Subject: [EXTERNAL]SOLAR PANELS IN TOLLAND HISTORICAL DISTRICT

To Whom it May Concern:

I have been a Tolland tax payer and resident for 42 years now. We have always cherish our beautiful green. Solar panels of any kind do not belong any where within the district it would downgrade and change the atmosphere of what we have preserved.

This is history not to be changed . I believe there are Connecticut State status / National Guidelines. That were put in place for this very reason and should be followed .

Thank you.

Respectfully,
Annemarie Ericson

Laura Smith

From: mark freeman <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 10:07 AM
To: Jim Paquin; Laura Smith
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Solar panels

As a resident of Tolland I recently was made aware of the UCCT request for solar panels on main historic structures on the Tolland Green. I feel as a historical structure listed on the national registry that placing solar panels on these historic sites contradicts the integrity of the historic district and our Tolland Green.

When these businesses or residences were purchased, and noted as a historical property, the owners were aware of the facts that changes to the properties that would physically alter the appearance of the historic district had to meet approval of the commission.

A compromise can always be found that will meet the requirements and needs of both the owners of properties and the historical districts requirements.

Please consider my opinion and preserve our historic green.

Sincerely,
Bridget Freeman - Tolland resident
82 Deerwood Road

Sent from my iPhone

Laura Smith

From: Craig Surber [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 8:20 AM
To: Jodie Coleman-Marzialo; Laura Smith
Subject: [EXTERNAL]UCCT Solar project

To whom it may concern,

There is no place in a Historic district for Solar. There needs to be some sort of REAL regulations put in place to further deteriorate the historical look of the Tolland Green. Every little inch that's given becomes a mile. The Tolland Green is slowly being stripped of its Historic beauty.

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

Laura Smith

From: Jodie Coleman-Marzialo <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 8:19 AM
To: Jim Paquin; Laura Smith; Ann Deegan; Celeste Senechal; Kathy Bach; Fred Day-Lewis; John Hughes <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Katie Stargardter; Town Council; Brian Foley; SaraBeth Nivison
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Fw: Regarding the Town and Solar Panels on the Green

Hi Jim and Laura,

I received this correspondence yesterday and am forwarding it to you. I believe she is referring to the UCCT tree.

Thanks,
Jodie

From: Amanda Frost <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 8:25 AM
To: Lsmith@tolland.k12.ct.us <Lsmith@tolland.k12.ct.us>; jpaquin@tolland.k12.ct.us <jpaquin@tolland.k12.ct.us>
Subject: Regarding the Town and Solar Panels on the Green

Hello,

I am reaching out to you in support of our Town Historical Society's attempt to preserve the historic look of the Town Green. As this is a historic district, I feel that any visible solar panels on the Town Green would be detrimental to our town and believe that the Town Historical Society is following through with their mission of protecting the history of the town in their efforts to block any visible solar panels on the roofs of buildings. Given the temporary nature of trees, I do not consider a tree a viable visual block of solar panels nor do I see the sense in placing a solar panel behind a tree in the first place. As a long time resident of the town, I can remember taking field trips to the Town Green and learning about its history. It didn't take much imagination at the time to visualize what it would have looked like in 1772. Visible solar panels would ruin that image. Our Town Green was what inspired me to be a history teacher and I appreciate our Historical Society in their attempts to protect it. I hope I am not misplaced in my faith that the Town of Tolland would never deliberately retaliate against members of the Town Historical Society for attempting to preserve our Green for future generations.

Sincerely,
Amanda Frost

Laura Smith

From: Jim Paquin
Sent: Friday, March 22, 2024 7:45 AM
To: Rep. Nuccio, Tammy
Cc: [REDACTED]; Brian Foley; Katie Stargardter; Laura Smith
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL]Solar

Representative Nuccio,

Thank you for your correspondence. It will be included as testimony in the next Historic District Commission meeting packet.

James Paquin
Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 21, 2024, at 9:03 PM, Rep. Nuccio, Tammy <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Good afternoon esteemed members of the Historic District Commission. I hope this email finds you well.

I am writing in strong support of the petition by the United Congregational Church for solar panels on their back building. From my understanding the panels would be on the extension of the church and the small accessory building behind the church and would not be on the historic section of the Church, which is of historical relevance.

The historic district commission has already set a precedence with allowing solar panels on another non historic home in the district in the recent past. The building that will house the panels was built in 2005, and is not directly visible from the road. One could almost argue where the solar would be is more in line with the town hall / library extension more so than the buildings of the historic district. The addition of solar panels will not mar the natural historic beauty of our town green or the homes that are displayed there.

At this time in our existence here on earth it is imperative that we are all being good stewards to our planet. Solar panels have both a positive environmental impact and also a financial impact for our friends at the church. At this time I am hoping the Historic district will look at the long term impact of allowing these solar panels and the role we all play in the history that is being written every day in our community. If we were so stringent with regulations through our time not a single home on the town green would have modern heat, electricity or air conditioning, none the less plumbing! This is our next step in the evolution of our planet, I'm hoping you'll see the value of evolving with time.

Thank you,

Tammy Nuccio
Representative - District 53
Tolland, Vernon, Willington

From: Susan Lucek <>
To: Jim Paquin <jpaquin@Tollandct.gov>
Date: 04/15/2024 4:44 PM EDT
Subject: letter in support of solar in HDC

Dear Town Manager, Town Council and Historic District Commission

This letter is in support of solar applications in the Tolland Historic District, and specifically the UCC application being considered on April 17.

For **continued** reference:

Chapter 97, Sec. 7-147f of the Connecticut statutes prohibit a commission from denying an application for a certificate of appropriateness for a “solar energy system designed for the utilization of renewable resources” unless “the commission finds that the feature cannot be installed without **substantially impairing the historic character and appearance of the district**. A certificate of appropriateness for such a feature may include stipulations requiring design modifications and limitations on the location of the feature which **do not significantly impair its effectiveness**.

"Historic preservation boards are increasingly finding ways to compromise with homeowners who want to install solar panels in historically significant areas..." (see attached article quoting the CT State Historic Preservation Office from **2019**). Yet here in Tolland, it has turned in to a circus. Here, we now need lawyers.

The discussions and decisions in the recent HDC meetings have been biased, arbitrary and clearly not even driven by an understanding of the statutes and the procedures of a town meeting. The entire discussion on March 20 is painful to listen to, arbitrarily based on personal preferences with no factual basis or educated opinion other than attempts by the town staff and Mr. Day-Lewis to interject some common sense and rational understanding of the statutes into the discussion.

Solar in historic districts have been, and are being, accepted and adopted throughout the country more and more. No matter what words the HDC say in response to this, the State Historic Preservation Office, National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Dept of the Interior all echo this fact in the attached article **from five years ago**. I am currently waiting for more updated CT statistics from SHPO and will provide those asap.

These beloved old buildings need a plan in place in order to continue to sustain and thrive into the future. Or they will simply rot away and fall down, as our home (the "Grange") was almost allowed to do.

It's time to allow solar panels in the historic district. I fully support the solar installation as presented by the United Congregational Church.

Respectfully
Susan Lucek Hughes
95 Tolland Green

ENERGY NEWS NETWORK

Connecticut historic preservation boards warming up to solar panels



by [Meg Dalton](#) March 4, 2019



A historic district in New London, Connecticut.

Historic preservation boards are seeing more requests related to solar panels and increasingly finding compromise.

Historic preservation boards are increasingly finding ways to compromise with homeowners who want to install solar panels in historically significant areas.

The acceptance of solar comes as technology helps to make systems less obtrusive, and also as more historic preservationists recognize the urgency to address climate change. Cases involving solar panels are also becoming more common. In Connecticut, about a tenth of the state's 3,000 historic preservation cases last year involved solar installations. That's a

significant increase from five years ago, said Todd Levine, an architectural historian for the state's preservation office.

Of those 300 solar cases, only 10 were concluded to have adverse effects, but even in those cases the state office was able to work with stakeholders and ultimately approve them all.

"In some ways, the solar panels help the historic structure and don't harm it," said Catherine Labadia, deputy state historic preservation officer. "That's not to negate the few cases when it's bad."

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Department of the Interior recommend installing solar panels on the area least visible to the public or on any new addition on the property, like a garage. Typically, historic commissions don't want panels on the principal facade of the building facing the public right-of-ways. If they have to be on the roof, it's better to have them on the non-street-facing part, or even ground-mounted in a backyard. They also suggest solar panels and mounting systems that match the roof's color scheme. In general, the lower the profile the better.

'In some ways, the solar panels help the historic structure and don't harm it.'

While the Department of the Interior provides guidance for installs in historic districts, the responsibility ultimately falls on the local historic commissions. In Connecticut, the state historic preservation office also provides resources and guidance, as well as handles cases that require state or federal permitting.

In New Haven, Connecticut, a home in one of the city's three historic neighborhoods is the latest to successfully petition for approval from its local Historic District Commission. Nestled on a sunny street corner in Fair Haven, the single-family home received immediate approval from the commission last month to install a rooftop solar array, despite a few hiccups during the approval process.

Trinity Solar, the company behind the install, approached the commission in January with a mea culpa after starting the installation before getting formal approval from the commissioners. After realizing its mistake, the company apologized and temporarily stopped the installation, deciding to wait for the commission's approval before proceeding. Since the planned solar array was street-facing and highly visible, the commission's approval was critical.

After making some adjustments — including moving some equipment inside — Trinity Solar received unanimous approval for the three-panel array on the home's rooftop. This case is one example of the evolving relationship between historic preservation and green technology in Connecticut and across the nation.

"It's something people want to see happen and in a way that respects historic integrity in these buildings," said Elizabeth Holt, director of preservation services at the New Haven Preservation Trust.

That hasn't always been the view of historic preservationists. Several cities and towns have pushed back against solar on certain properties, believing it would compromise their historic character. In Washington, D.C, a local commission denied homeowners from installing visible rooftop solar panels on their house in the historic Cleveland Park district in 2013. This year, the same commission loosened its restrictions, allowing for visible solar panels, at least in some cases.

"I have a sense that there's rapidly growing sophistication among preservationists that there's a societal mandate to achieve greater sustainability and energy efficiency," said Anthony Veerkamp, director of policy development at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He only has an anecdotal sense of what's happening on the ground, but noted a shift from commissions defaulting to "no." More boards seem open to working with property owners, whether that means adjusting where to situate an array, or opting for ground-mounted panels instead. He attributes the shift partially to improved technology, with solar panels becoming more streamlined in recent years, as well as the emergence of solar roof tiles. It's analogous to television antennas or satellite dishes. "First, TVs were the size of car, and now they're the size of pizza pan," Veerkamp said.

Plus, a home solar installation can make a difference for state or city climate goals. Municipalities can't just rely on new housing to reduce carbon footprints; they need to maximize older stock, too.

"I want to believe historic commissions around country are looking for ways that historic buildings can help contribute to reaching carbon goals," Veerkamp said. As a preservationist, Holt thinks the realities of climate change mean that preservation and sustainability must go hand in hand. New Haven's commission has become flexible and collaborative, and she believes they can do that while still championing New Haven's historic architecture.

"Each case should be reviewed individually to find a solution that respects the historic integrity of the building and maximizes the effectiveness of the solar panels," she said. At the state level, the historic preservation office has partnered with the quasi-public clean energy agency, the Connecticut Green Bank, to mitigate any adverse effects installs could have on historic properties. Together, they're developing a publication they plan to distribute in the coming months outlining best practices on the intersection of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and historic preservation.

MEG DALTON

Meg is a freelance journalist and audio producer based in Connecticut who reports on the environment, gender and media. She's reported and edited for the Columbia Journalism Review, PBS NewsHour, Architectural Digest, MediaShift, Hearst Connecticut newspapers, and more. In addition, her audio work has appeared on WSHU, Marketplace, WBAI, and NPR. Meg covers Connecticut and Rhode Island.



Agenda Item

5.1

**Legal Notice
Public Hearing**

Tolland Green Historic District Commission

The Tolland Green Historic District Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, commencing at 7:00 p.m., to hear and discuss the following:

45 Tolland Green – Request to install building-mounted solar arrays.

A copy of these applications are on file and available for review online:

<https://www.tollandct.gov/historic-district-commission/pages/applications-pending>

To be advertised twice in the Journal Inquirer: Thursday, March 7, 2024 and
Thursday, March 14, 2024



TOLLAND GREEN HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Application for a Certification of Appropriateness

Property Information

Property Address: 45 Tolland Green
Property Owner: United Congregational Church of Tolland
Phone Number: 860-875-4160

Applicant Information

Applicant Name: Kevin Thompson on behalf of 715 United Congregational Church of Tolland members
Applicant Address: 65 Noah Lane Tolland CT 06084
Phone Number: [REDACTED] **Email:** [REDACTED]

Project Information

Type of Building: Church and Education Building
 Nature and description of work to be done as it affects exterior appearance. Attach appropriate drawing or plans giving the position of the house or structure on the site, ground plan of house with proposed addition, and all pertinent elevations showing size and style of windows, dormers, doors, exterior wall finishes, roofing material, chimneys, vents and ornamentation. *(If more space needed, attach sheet to application.)*
 Building mounted solar arrays (see attached presentation for details)

Estimated Start and Completion Dates:
Start: August 2024 **Complete:** December 2024

1. Attach a photograph of the existing structure or place to be changed as viewed from the street showing that portion of the structure to be altered, together with a drawing of the proposed alteration or change.
2. Application fee of \$75.00 must accompany application *(make checks payable to Town of Tolland)*.
3. Application form, fee, plans, photograph and drawing must be submitted to **Planning & Building Department**.
 Public Hearings will be scheduled within not more than sixty-five days after the filing of an application.
Certificate of Appropriateness will expire 1 year from date of approval.

This application form and all accompanying plans and materials are accurate and complete:
Applicant Signature: *Kevin Thompson* **Date:** February 20, 2024
Property Owner Signature: Not applicable **Date:**

OFFICE USE ONLY

Received & Fee Paid:	[REDACTED]	Hearing Scheduled:	3/20/24
Hearing Advertised:	3/10/24 + 3/13/24	Action:	
Notice of Action to Applicant:		HDC Due Date:	4/25/24



United Congregational Church of Tolland (UCCT)
Tolland Green Historic District Commission (TGHDC)
Compromise Solar Energy Proposal
Revision 2.0
April 2024

Join Us in Supporting the UCCT Holistic Commitment to a Green Environment

- The main source of carbon emissions is powering the electrical grid
- Through the release of 2350 billion tons of carbon dioxide since 1850, the average global temperature has increased 2 degrees Fahrenheit¹
- By 2100 the average global temperature is expected to have increased by 5-10 degrees Fahrenheit¹
- The impact of rising global temperatures includes:
 - Extended periods of drought
 - Severe deluges with flooding
 - Periods of dangerous heat waves
 - Rising sea levels
 - Melting of permafrost and ice caps that release methane and possibly release pathogens
- Solar panels are recyclable. [17 US Solar Panel Recycling Company Directory](#).
- In 2023 investments in UCCT Green initiatives including LED lighting and setback thermostats exceeded \$25,000
 - Similar investments continue in 2024

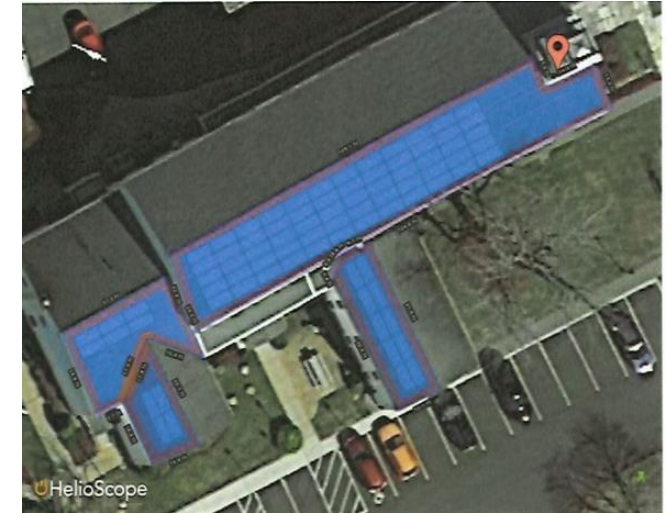
¹ <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/climate-change-global-temperature>

Join Us in Supporting the UCCT Commitment to Tolland

- Supporting all-inclusive faith formation in all church activities
- Providing baptisms, weddings, funerals and other pastoral services to all in the community who desire them
- Hiring a Community Engagement Pastor in 2023
- Supporting young families for 40 years with Tolland Green Learning Center daycare
- Providing a free, safe meeting space for:
 - Alcoholics Anonymous
 - Foodshare Distribution
 - Boy & Girl Scouts
 - PFLAG Tolland-Mansfield Chapter
 - Mother's & Veterans Groups
 - THS Rage Robotics
- Giving out candy on Halloween and providing cider and hot chocolate at the Tolland Light Parade
- Offering the use of the parking lots and bathrooms during events on the Green
- Supporting the Tolland Food Pantry, Cornerstone Soup Kitchen, and South Park Inn
- Providing chaplaincy services for the fire department and state police

UCCT Recent Solar Proposals

- October 2023 building-mounted solar panel installation
 - **60** All-black solar panels on primary church roof
 - Capacity equal to **100%** of Church and Education building electric requirements
 - Total project cost of \$144,000
 - Payback period of 8 years (based on conservative annual electric rate increases)
- November ground-based solar panel site preparation and installation
 - UCCT made a good faith effort to test the feasibility of the TGHDC's suggested ground-based solar array, but unfortunately, that approach resulted in **exceptional practical difficulty and undue financial hardship**
 - Total project cost of \$225,000 (56% higher than the initial building-mounted proposal)
 - Payback period of 15 years (based on conservative annual electric rate increases)
 - Significant ground-based solar panel additional costs:
 - Purchase and install steel solar panel support structure
 - Trench and install conduit and cable 453 feet from array to electric meters
 - Prepare site including church, education building, Tobiassen House and parking lot drainage design and construction
 - Remove and dispose of 18 trees
 - Implement long-term knotweed control
 - Install heavy duty landscape fabric, spread topsoil, and plant grass
 - Install perimeter fencing



UCCT March 2024 ***Compromise*** Solar Proposal

- UCCT proposes a **compromise** solution installing **all-black** solar panels on the Church and Phelps Education buildings:
 - Remove **25** (42%) solar panels from the historic front of the church as requested by the TGHDC
 - Create an **incidental only view** of solar panels from public streets
 - Mount solar panels **on the side or to the rear of buildings**
 - Setback roof solar panels 130 feet from Route 195
 - Total project cost of \$185,000
 - 22% (\$40,000) lower than ground-based solar panels
 - 28% (\$41,000) higher than October 2023 TGHDC proposal due to **all-black** panels
 - Payback period of 11 (+3 from October) years (based on conservative annual electric rate increases)

UCCT Proposed Solar Panels



Number of System Panels = 121

Solar Panel kWh = 500

Total System kWh = 65000

Solar Panel size = 67.8" x 44.6" x 1.18"

Q.TRON BLK M-G2+ SERIES

410 - 430 Wp | 108 Cells
22.4% Maximum Module Efficiency

MODEL Q.TRON BLK M-G2+

Q. ANTUM NEO High performance Qcells N-type solar cells
Q. ANTUM NEO Technology with optimized module layout boosts module efficiency up to 22.4%.

25 A reliable investment
Inclusive 25-year product warranty and 25-year linear performance warranty.

Qcells Enduring high performance
Long-term yield security with Anti LeTID Technology, Anti PID Technology*, Hot-Spot Protect.

Extreme weather rating
High-tech aluminum alloy frame, certified for high snow (5400 Pa) and wind loads (3600 Pa).

Innovative all-weather technology
Optimal yields, whatever the weather with excellent low-light and temperature behaviour.

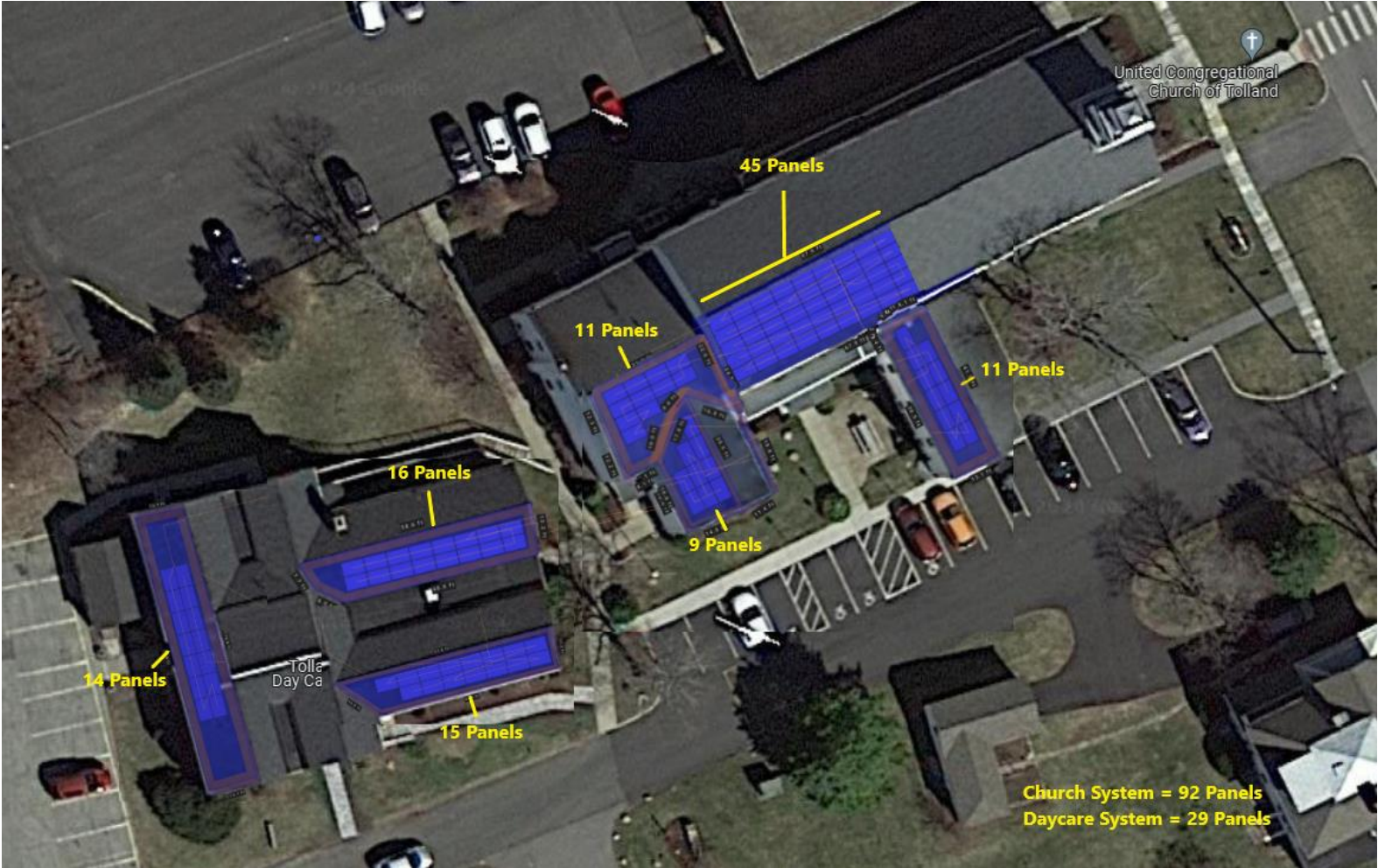
The most thorough testing programme in the industry
Qcells is the first solar module manufacturer to pass the most comprehensive quality programme in the industry. The new "Quality Controlled PV" of the independent certification institute TÜV Rheinland.

* See data sheet on rear for further information.
* APT test conditions according to IEC TS 62804-1:2015, method A (+1500 V, 96h)

The ideal solution for:
Rooftop arrays on residential buildings

Certifications: TÜV Rheinland, IEC, CE, ISO 9001, ISO 14001

UCCT Compromise Solar Proposal



UCCT Compromise Solar Proposal – Spring, Summer, Fall Street View



UCCT Compromise Solar Proposal – Winter Street View

Circa
2003



Circa
1967



Circa
1865

UCCT Proposed Solar Panel Installed Images



Connecticut Historic District Solar Approvals

- The Connecticut State Office of Historic Preservation **approved** the UCCT building-mounted solar proposal
- Connecticut historic district structures with approved solar panels:



Guilford CT



New Britain CT



Salisbury CT

Vernon CT Historic District Solar Approvals



Historic District Guidelines that Support this Compromise Solar Proposal

- Connecticut General Statute 7-147f and Section 96-5 of the Tolland Code: No application for a certificate of appropriateness for an exterior architectural feature, **such as a solar energy system**, designed for the utilization of renewable resources shall be denied unless the commission finds that the feature cannot be installed without **substantially impairing the historic character and appearance of the district**
- Tolland Green Historic District Chapter 96 Regulations: 96-4 Certificate of Appropriateness; ...**For the purposes of this chapter, exterior architectural features which are located on the side or to the rear of buildings or structures and are only incidentally visible from a public street shall not be considered "open to view."** “

Join Us in Supporting this Compromise Solar Panel Proposal

- This Compromise Solar Panel Proposal:
 - Creates green environment support that is only incidentally visible from a public street
 - Results in no substantial impairment of the historic character and appearance of the district
 - Relieves UCCT from exceptional practical difficulty and undue financial hardship
 - Supports long-term continuation and support of UCCT and its 715 members
 - Aligns with UCCT member vote to approve Compromise proposal
 - Encourages continued UCCT community involvement and support
 - Demonstrates meaningful compromise between historic preservation and global stewardship
 - Establishes a tasteful, prestigious Tolland example of historic preservation, reduced carbon footprint, and green environment support
- **UCCT respectfully requests TGHDC approval of this compromise solar proposal**

Appendices

- Appendix One – Neighbor Support Letters
 - Laura Bretas - 16 Tolland Green
 - Tom Calabrese - 59 Tolland Green
 - Anne-Marie & Dennis Carlson - 41 Tolland Green
 - Lisa & Fred Day-Lewis - 63 Tolland Green
 - Mitchell L Doucette - 100 Tolland Green
 - Tonja Kelly - 64 Tolland Greem
 - Susan Lucek-Hughes - 95 Tolland Green
 - Anabel Perez Malone - 699 Tolland Stage Road
 - Kate Vallo - 80 Tolland Green
- Appendix Two – State Representative Support Letter

Appendix One - Neighbor Support Letters

Name	Address
Laura Bretas	16 Tolland Green
Tom Calabrese	59 Tolland Green
Anne-Marie & Dennis Carlson	41 Tolland Green
Lisa & Fred Day-Lewis	63 Tolland Green
Mitchell L Doucette	100 Tolland Green
Tonja Kelly	64 Tolland Greem
Susan Lucek-Hughes	95 Tolland Green
Anabel Perez Malone	699 Tolland Stage Road
Kate Vallo	80 Tolland Green

To Whom it May Concern

My family has lived in Tolland since 1977 and my husband, daughter and I have had a home in Tolland since 2002. We moved to the “Historic Green” a little over 5 years ago.

As with all residents of the historic district, we fully embrace the historical heritage of our homes and the district as a whole. At the same time, we are also keenly aware of a responsibility to the future of our town, and to all of its residents.

We appreciate and fully support the prospect of having solar panels installed on the roof of United Congregational Church, right here in the historic district of Tolland. What a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate the town’s commitment to a clean and sustainable energy future, especially on one of our most beautiful and iconic buildings!

We look forward to the adoption of solar panels at the UCC, as well as other historic buildings and homes in the district.

Thank you for your consideration.

Susan Lucek-Hughes
95 Tolland Green

Appendix One - Neighbor Support Letters

Anabel Perez Malone [REDACTED]

9/19/2023 11:10 AM

Solar Panel Support

To [REDACTED]

Good morning,

I want to express my support for the installation of solar panels on the United Congregational Church of Tolland and education building. Embracing solar panels on buildings on the Tolland Green demonstrates the town's commitment to both preserving the historic integrity of the site as well as the advances in clean and renewable power sources.

While I understand objection to the panels on the basis that they are not historic, that cannot be the only metric by which the Commission reviews proposals. Allowing the solar panels actually gives the Historic District Commission more credibility because it shows that it can balance maintaining the beauty of the Tolland Green with the progress that will keep this town alive and thriving.

As a homeowner in the Tolland Green Historic District, I, again, fully support the solar panel proposal before the Commission.

Best,
Anabel

Anabel Perez Malone
699 Tolland Stage Rd
Tolland, CT 06084

Mitchell Doucette [REDACTED]

9/18/2023 6:12 PM

Support of solar panels for UCC

To [REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

I, Dr. Mitchell L. Doucette, resident of 100 Tolland Green, **fully support UCC's installation of solar panels.** I also find the need to voice my support for a private property owner's ability to make adjustments to their property antithetical to the American process.

Sincerely,
Mitchell L. Doucette, PhD, MS
100 Tolland Green

--

Mitchell L. Doucette, PhD, MS

08/14/2023

To Whom it may concern;

My thoughts re our church adding solar on the roof:

I applaud the plan to add solar; it makes so much sense. A large structure such as our church affords a lot of roof space to effectively generate lots of electricity. That makes it ideal.

I hope the plan gets approved and moves forward. I commend the church leadership for developing this plan. Adding solar on buildings to generate power is what we need to do much more of around the world to reduce generation by fossil fuels.

I will be happy to look over at the church to see the solar panels just as I am when I see the ones at our neighbor's place at the former Tolland Inn.

Tom Calabrese
59 Tolland Green
Tolland, CT 06084

Appendix One - Neighbor Support Letters

August 22, 2023

41 Tolland Green
Tolland, CT 06084

To Whom It May Concern:

My husband and I live next door to the United Congregational Church of Tolland. We rent the first floor of what is commonly known as the Tobiasen House which is owned by the church. We love our spot on the Green and work hard to make sure that our home is visually appealing throughout the seasons.

We would like to take this opportunity to state that we have absolutely no issue with the church's potential use of solar panels. Having lived in a solar-paneled home 40 years ago, we do not find them unsightly. The look of solar panels has come a long way since then and we were thrilled at how much electricity we saved.

Our congregational church, like most towns in New England, is an iconic part of the town's main thruway. A building with solar panels shows that the owners care deeply for the environment and we support the church's use of solar panels 100%.

Thank you!



Anne-Marie & Dennis Carlson

Lisa Day-Lewis
Please feel free to comment -

8/14/2023 5:07 PM

To BAILEY BRENN J. Copy Fred Day-Lewis

We are happy to make changes if needed. If it looks good I will send it as an attachment.

Dear Tolland Historical Committee and all other relevant parties:

This letter is written in strong support for the application of The United Congregational Church in Tolland (UCCT) for solar panels on its primary and secondary buildings.

We will not spend time here spelling out the federal and state statutes for guidance to historic districts in regard to the rights of home and business owners seeking to avail themselves of renewable energy sources. Nor will we quote from the HDC's own charter on the topic. Based on experience, we know the Commission has been presented with that information on numerous occasions. Suffice to say that solar and greening of historic buildings is acceptable and even encouraged in most situations. Talking with solar contractors and historic architects, we know that historic districts all over the state and country are increasingly accepting of solar. In Connecticut, Tolland HDC has been the exception, not the rule, in denying solar applications.

UCCT is an organization that we consider the open heart of this town. In one form or another, at this location or at the north of the Green, this Church has been central to Tolland for 200 years. The UCCT is currently vibrant and financially viable, but financial projections indicate that the long-term viability of the church will require a strategy to decrease energy costs and improve efficiency. Churches all over Connecticut are closing, in part because of the increasing costs of keeping up and heating large, old buildings. It is our conviction that the value of having the Church on the Green (and we mean the Church and not the church building!) is of paramount importance to the historic district and to all of Tolland. We hope the HDC will also appreciate UCCT's ongoing contribution to Tolland and the need to support its continued presence.

UCCT is an asset to the Town, even to residents who are not members. Reverend Jeff Gallagher goes above and beyond his duties as a pastor to volunteer as a firefighter, chaplain, and sports coach. Many UCCT members are active in important roles within our community. UCCT hosts the food share, AA meetings, PFLAG Tolland-Mansfield meetings, and other community events. The church property also hosts daycare and before/after school programs at a location convenient to Tolland Intermediate School and bus routes. If UCCT were to move, there's no telling what sort of business entity would purchase the property and what that would look like for the community. But we can be certain that losing the UCCT on the Green would be an enormous loss.

UCCT's application for solar will allow the church to continue to operate and maintain the large buildings it occupies. We have been members of a church that faced financial hardship before, and it is very difficult for the leaders to continue to focus on the mission of the Church when preoccupied with paying the bills. We don't want that for our church community on the Green. Showing the UCCT and its leaders our support in their endeavors, though it won't guarantee things will stay the same, is one of the ways that our community can show them that we want them here. We want them to be successful, we want them to thrive. And if the UCCT's aim to go green is inspired by principles of stewardship, we want the UCCT to be allowed to exercise those principles where they are now, without needing to move.

And no, the community will not lose its historic designation by allowing homeowners and organizations to add solar. That simply will not happen, despite scare tactics to the contrary. Again, Tolland has been the exception, not the rule, in denying solar applications. Modern, architectural asphalt shingles really have no more historic value or relevance than solar panels.

We know other neighbors feel the same and hope you will be hearing from many of them.

Sincerely,

Lisa and Fred Day-Lewis
63 Tolland Green
Tolland, CT 06084

Appendix One - Neighbor Support Letters

Kate Vallo [redacted]

9/16/2023 4:50 PM

solar panels

To [redacted] Copy [redacted]

Dear Church Moderator Bailey Brenn,

Thank you for alerting neighbors about the United Congregational Church of Tolland's hope to install solar renewable energy collection panels on the church's south roof as well as on the education building. As a neighbor, I am in support of this project.

The Tolland Green has a rich history, including a history of innovation. Solar panels offer an energy solution that is innovative, while also being low profile enough so as to not distract from the historic charm of the neighborhood.

Good luck with the project!

Kate Vallo
80 Tolland Green
(former UCCT parsonage)

Laura Bretas [redacted]

10/29/2023 12:35 AM

Solar panels for church

To [redacted]

Bailey,

I would like to add my support to the proposed solar panel project at our United Congregational Church on Tolland Green. My family has been on the Green since 1951 - it is a part of our character and being, and we hope that the historical character of the Green will remain for a long time. But life goes on and changes occur, generally for the betterment of our way of life. Even our church has made upgrades and additions, keeping the colonial character intact even while expanding and improving its place in the community, growing and changing with the times. Now we all need to be environmentally proactive and make changes in our choices for energy. Solar power is the obvious choice. The rooftop panels do not change the structure of the building and are removable and replaceable. I imagine that the early residents of the Green would have loved to harness the power of the sun in this way! Going solar would be a definite benefit for the life of our church, which has been at the center of our community for generations. We can keep our colonial heritage and still move forward. Thank you.

Laura Bretas
228 Buff Cap Rd and
16 Tolland Green
Tolland CT

Hi Bailey,

As a resident of the Tolland Green, I support the installation of solar renewable energy collection panels on the south facing roof of the United Congregational Church of Tolland and on the education building to the rear of the church building. This is a step in the right direction for the sustainability of UCCT and Tolland Green Learning Center as resources to the community. This is a **common sense** approach in consideration of present day reality and the preservation of this historic building, particularly as many mainline churches are closing their doors due to a decline in membership and financial support.

Sincerely,
Tonja Kelly
64 Tolland Green
Tolland, CT 06084

Appendix Two – State Representative Support Letter

From: Rep. Nuccio, Tammy [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2024 9:03:44 PM
To: jpaquin@tollandct.gov <jpaquin@tollandct.gov>
Cc: Jeffrey Gallagher <[REDACTED]>; Brian Foley <bfoley@Tollandct.gov>
Subject: Solar

Good afternoon esteemed members of the Historic District Commission. I hope this email finds you well.

I am writing in strong support of the petition by the United Congregational Church for solar panels on their back building. From my understanding the panels would be on the extension of the church and the small accessory building behind the church and would not be on the historic section of the Church, which is of historical relevance.

The historic district commission has already set a precedence with allowing solar panels on another non historic home in the district in the recent past. The building that will house the panels was built in 2005, and is not directly visible from the road. One could almost argue where the solar would be is more in line with the town hall / library extension more so than the buildings of the historic district. The addition of solar panels will not mar the natural historic beauty of our town green or the homes that are displayed there.

At this time in our existence here on earth it is imperative that we are all being good stewards to our planet. Solar panels have both a positive environmental impact and also a financial impact for our friends at the church. At this time I am hoping the Historic district will look at the long term impact of allowing these solar panels and the role we all play in the history that is being written every day in our community. If we were so stringent with regulations through our time not a single home on the town green would have modern heat, electricity or air conditioning, none the less plumbing! This is our next step in the evolution of our planet, I'm hoping you'll see the value of evolving with time.

Thank you,

Tammy Nuccio
Representative - District 53
Tolland, Vernon, Willington

Laura Smith

From: Kevin Thompson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, March 17, 2024 11:54 AM
To: Laura Smith
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Re: [EXTERNAL]Re: FW: [EXTERNAL]Re: COA Application 45 Tolland Green
Attachments: UCCT Solar Presentation Rev One 03.16.2024.pptx

Hi Laura,

Attached is the presentation I will use on March 20 in support of the Congregational Church COA for solar panels. There are no significant changes from the previous version submitted. Thank you for your help!

Kevin Thompson

On Mon, Mar 11, 2024 at 9:16 AM Laura Smith <lsmith@tollandct.gov> wrote:

Received. To view the updated meeting packet, please click below:

<https://www.tollandct.gov/historic-district-commission/pages/remote-meeting-packets>

Kind regards,

Laura Smith

Building Permit Technician

21 Tolland Green

Tolland, CT 06084

860-871-3601

lsmith@tollandct.gov

Please note the change in my email address to lsmith@tollandct.gov

From: Kevin Thompson [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 8, 2024 4:44 PM

To: Laura Smith <lsmith@Tollandct.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL]Re: FW: [EXTERNAL]Re: COA Application 45 Tolland Green

Hello Laura,

Attached is a revised presentation that addresses the questions raised by the Tolland Green Historic District Commission Chair. Please see presentation references in [blue](#).

Please confirm receipt and distribution to the TGHDC.

Thank you,

Kevin Thompson

On Mon, Mar 4, 2024 at 8:12 AM Laura Smith <lsmith@tollandct.gov> wrote:

Good morning,

Please see below for the requested information from the Chair of the TGHDC. Any correspondence can be emailed directly to me.

Kind regards,

Laura Smith

Building Permit Technician

21 Tolland Green

Tolland, CT 06084

860-871-3601

lsmith@tollandct.gov

Please note the change in my email address to lsmith@tollandct.gov

From: Jodie Coleman-Marzialo [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 1, 2024 9:36 AM
To: Laura Smith <lsmith@Tollandct.gov>; Jim Paquin <jpaquin@Tollandct.gov>
Cc: Ann Deegan <[REDACTED]>; Celeste Senechal [REDACTED] Kathy Bach
[REDACTED] >; Fred Day-Lewis <[REDACTED]>; Mariah B <[REDACTED]>; John Hughes
[REDACTED] >; Katie Stargardter <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Re: COA Application 45 Tolland Green

Thank you, Laura.

Can you please ask the applicant for:

1. The locations/addresses of the 2 stone churches they reference in the packet so we can see where they are located within an HD. [Given a presumed preference for CT historic district solar panel photographs, new images with CT location references replace previous federal examples and are on slides 12 and 13.](#)
2. For current pictures taken of the property with the tree as seen today (a winter view). [Winter view images are on slide 11.](#)
3. A current (winter view) before and after picture of the proposed solar installation including the # of panels. The after-view picture provided in the packet has the solar panels superimposed on top and in front of a tree with leaves, which does not depict the actual view of the roof demonstrating as it will be seen from the street today. [Winter view images are on slide 11. Number of roof panels is on slide 10.](#)
4. A realistic picture/photograph of the actual solar panel, so we can see how visible the silver lines will be. The flyer included in the packet is difficult to see. [Enlarged images are on slide 7. There is slight variation on panel surfaces based on panel availability at the time of installation. The panels proposed in this revision are all black as compared to the original presentation which were black with aluminum borders.](#)
5. Photographs of the same solar panels installed on existing properties. [Existing property images are on slide 8.](#)

At our next scheduled HDC meeting on March 20th we will be discussing and updating our COA application form to reflect these requirements. Thank you for your assistance with this request.

Much appreciated,

Jodie

From: Laura Smith <lsmith@Tollandct.gov>
Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 4:34 PM
To: Jodie Coleman-Marzialo <[REDACTED]>
Subject: COA Application 45 Tolland Green

Hi Jodie,

Attached is the new COA application for 45 Tolland Green.

Have a nice night.

Laura Smith

Building Permit Technician

21 Tolland Green

Tolland, CT 06084

860-871-3601

lsmith@tollandct.gov

Please note the change in my email address to lsmith@tollandct.gov

Agenda Item

8.1

Type of Building: _____

~~Nature and~~ Description of work **being requested**. ~~to be done as it affects exterior appearance.~~ Attach appropriate **all relevant** drawings, **site plans**, **property boundaries**, **photos**, **arial view with surrounding properties** ~~giv-~~ showing the position of the house or structure, ground plan of house with proposed addition, and all pertinent elevations showing size and style of windows, dormers, doors, exterior ~~wall~~ finishes, roofing material, chimneys, vents, **solar system details**, and ornamentation. (~~If more space needed,~~ **Attach separate sheet if needed.**)

1. Attach a **multiple** photographs of the existing structure or place to be changed as viewed from the street showing that portion of the structure to be altered, together with a drawing/**plans**, **product pictures/specifications including hardware and mounting for solar systems** of the proposed alteration or change.
2. Application fee of \$~~75~~**150.00** must accompany application (make checks payable to Town of Tolland).
3. Application form, fee, ~~plans, photograph and drawing~~ **and all relevant requirements** must be submitted to Planning & Building Department. **A Public Hearings** will be scheduled, ~~within not more than~~ **and a decision will be made within** sixty-five days ~~after the filing of~~ **filing an this** application.

Agenda Item 9

Laura Smith

From: Jim Paquin
Sent: Saturday, April 13, 2024 2:09 PM
To: SaraBeth Nivison; Laura Smith
Cc: Katie Stargardter
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL]Solar at 95 Tolland Green - update
Attachments: To the Tolland Historic District Commission and Tolland Town Council.doc; hdc_21-05_article.pdf; Salisburyhistoricsolar.png

Laura: For inclusion in the packet.

Sarabeth and Katie: Since the Town Manager is out of the office, I am forwarding this to you.

Jim

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Susan Lucek <[REDACTED]>
Date: April 13, 2024 at 1:46:34 PM EDT
To: Brian Foley <bfoley@tollandct.gov>, Jim Paquin <jpaquin@tollandct.gov>
Cc: "Hughes, John" <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Solar at 95 Tolland Green - update

Town Manager Brian Foley
Jim Paquin, Building Official
Town of Tolland

Dear Brian and Jim:

We took a couple steps backwards after the 4-10-24 HDC executive session meeting on our solar application appeal. We were asked to put a letter together summarizing the status to date.

It turns out that we followed some poor advice from the town on simply filing an amendment to our original appeal, which the Lawyer for the town is saying is not admissible and he will be able to get this amendment thrown out.

We assumed the Marshall - that we paid to do the job - would deliver the copies of the appeal correctly, one to the town and one to the Chair of the HDC. He delivered both copies to the town expecting the town to deliver one to the HDC (and he says that THIS is normal procedure).

The town did not deliver the appeal to the HDC, saying the Marshall should have done it. So, the HDC "never got a copy" of the appeal. The Lawyer for the town says he will get our appeal thrown out because of this.

That said, he has asked if we were willing to go to 30 panels -- vs the design of 32 which Jodie rejected as "not symmetrical", and the design of 29 panels which was approved.

30 panels would put the one additional panel hanging off the top of the array, which is about as asymmetrical as it gets.

The Lawyer for the town has reiterated that he is “working for his clients, not the town” and will protect their interests. He also reiterated that the HDC will allow us to put the additional 3 panels to get from 29 to 32 anywhere we want – except for the side facing roof **where there is sun**.

Monday may bring yet a different scenario. But this is where it stands today.

We’ve also attached the letter sent to the HDC that contains links to photos and documents **used by the State of CT to demonstrate appropriate solar designs in historic districts**.

Regards –
John & Susan Hughes

For reference:

Chapter 97, Sec. 7-147f of the Connecticut statutes prohibit a commission from denying an application for a certificate of appropriateness for a “solar energy system designed for the utilization of renewable resources” unless “the commission finds that the feature cannot be installed without **substantially impairing the historic character and appearance of the district**. A certificate of appropriateness for such a feature may include stipulations requiring design modifications and limitations on the location of the feature which **do not significantly impair its effectiveness**.

To the Tolland Historic District Commission and Tolland Town Council:

I would like to submit the below information and attached articles and photos in support of the two applications for solar panels in the Tolland Historic District that will come before the HDC for the second and third time on Wed. March 20.

As stated in Chapter 97, Sec. 7-147f of the Connecticut statutes prohibit a commission from denying an application for a certificate of appropriateness for a “solar energy system designed for the utilization of renewable resources” unless “the commission finds that the feature cannot be installed without substantially impairing the historic character and appearance of the district.”

From the attached Energy News Network article which quotes the CT State Historic Preservation Office:

"Historic preservation boards are seeing more requests related to solar panels and increasingly finding compromise.

Historic preservation boards are increasingly finding ways to compromise with homeowners who want to install solar panels in historically significant areas.

The acceptance of solar comes as technology helps to make systems less obtrusive, and also as more historic preservationists recognize the urgency to address climate change.

Cases involving solar panels are also becoming more common. In Connecticut, about a tenth of the state’s 3,000 historic preservation cases last year involved solar installations. That’s a significant increase from five years ago, said **Todd Levine, an architectural historian for the state’s preservation office.**

Of those **300 solar cases, only 10** were concluded to have adverse effects, but even in those cases the state office was able to work with stakeholders and ultimately approve them all."

I would also call your attention to the photos attached, which show multiple historic CT buildings, with solar systems, one posted on a Ct.gov main page showing a roof mounted solar system on a historic home, zero lot line.

The below links clearly show the preferred use of solar on side facing roof surfaces of historic homes and buildings.

Salisbury Historic District Commission Solar Guidelines – “To Do” photo included in booklet: <https://www.historicsalisburyct.org/solar-energy-booklet-information>

CT.gov photo on main page shows roof mounted solar on historic home, zero lot line: <https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Historic->

[Preservation/03 Technical Assistance Research/Energy-Efficiency-For-Historic-Houses](#)

Energy News Network article quoting CT

SHPO: <https://energynews.us/2019/03/04/connecticut-historic-preservation-boards-warming-up-to-solar-panels/> (hdc_21-05_article.pdf full text attached)

In accordance with state guidance and statutes and many other CT historic districts, we appreciate your prompt review and approval of these solar applications.

Thank you.

John Hughes, Susan Lucek-Hughes

95 Tolland Green

ENERGY NEWS NETWORK

Connecticut historic preservation boards warming up to solar panels



by [Meg Dalton](#) March 4, 2019



A historic district in New London, Connecticut.

Historic preservation boards are seeing more requests related to solar panels and increasingly finding compromise.

Historic preservation boards are increasingly finding ways to compromise with homeowners who want to install solar panels in historically significant areas.

The acceptance of solar comes as technology helps to make systems less obtrusive, and also as more historic preservationists recognize the urgency to address climate change. Cases involving solar panels are also becoming more common. In Connecticut, about a tenth of the state's 3,000 historic preservation cases last year involved solar installations. That's a

significant increase from five years ago, said Todd Levine, an architectural historian for the state's preservation office.

Of those 300 solar cases, only 10 were concluded to have adverse effects, but even in those cases the state office was able to work with stakeholders and ultimately approve them all.

"In some ways, the solar panels help the historic structure and don't harm it," said Catherine Labadia, deputy state historic preservation officer. "That's not to negate the few cases when it's bad."

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Department of the Interior recommend installing solar panels on the area least visible to the public or on any new addition on the property, like a garage. Typically, historic commissions don't want panels on the principal facade of the building facing the public right-of-ways. If they have to be on the roof, it's better to have them on the non-street-facing part, or even ground-mounted in a backyard. They also suggest solar panels and mounting systems that match the roof's color scheme. In general, the lower the profile the better.

'In some ways, the solar panels help the historic structure and don't harm it.'

While the Department of the Interior provides guidance for installs in historic districts, the responsibility ultimately falls on the local historic commissions. In Connecticut, the state historic preservation office also provides resources and guidance, as well as handles cases that require state or federal permitting.

In New Haven, Connecticut, a home in one of the city's three historic neighborhoods is the latest to successfully petition for approval from its local Historic District Commission. Nestled on a sunny street corner in Fair Haven, the single-family home received immediate approval from the commission last month to install a rooftop solar array, despite a few hiccups during the approval process.

Trinity Solar, the company behind the install, approached the commission in January with a mea culpa after starting the installation before getting formal approval from the commissioners. After realizing its mistake, the company apologized and temporarily stopped the installation, deciding to wait for the commission's approval before proceeding. Since the planned solar array was street-facing and highly visible, the commission's approval was critical.

After making some adjustments — including moving some equipment inside — Trinity Solar received unanimous approval for the three-panel array on the home's rooftop. This case is one example of the evolving relationship between historic preservation and green technology in Connecticut and across the nation.

"It's something people want to see happen and in a way that respects historic integrity in these buildings," said Elizabeth Holt, director of preservation services at the New Haven Preservation Trust.

That hasn't always been the view of historic preservationists. Several cities and towns have pushed back against solar on certain properties, believing it would compromise their historic character. In Washington, D.C, a local commission denied homeowners from installing visible rooftop solar panels on their house in the historic Cleveland Park district in 2013. This year, the same commission loosened its restrictions, allowing for visible solar panels, at least in some cases.

"I have a sense that there's rapidly growing sophistication among preservationists that there's a societal mandate to achieve greater sustainability and energy efficiency," said Anthony Veerkamp, director of policy development at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He only has an anecdotal sense of what's happening on the ground, but noted a shift from commissions defaulting to "no." More boards seem open to working with property owners, whether that means adjusting where to situate an array, or opting for ground-mounted panels instead. He attributes the shift partially to improved technology, with solar panels becoming more streamlined in recent years, as well as the emergence of solar roof tiles. It's analogous to television antennas or satellite dishes. "First, TVs were the size of car, and now they're the size of pizza pan," Veerkamp said.

Plus, a home solar installation can make a difference for state or city climate goals. Municipalities can't just rely on new housing to reduce carbon footprints; they need to maximize older stock, too.

"I want to believe historic commissions around country are looking for ways that historic buildings can help contribute to reaching carbon goals," Veerkamp said. As a preservationist, Holt thinks the realities of climate change mean that preservation and sustainability must go hand in hand. New Haven's commission has become flexible and collaborative, and she believes they can do that while still championing New Haven's historic architecture.

"Each case should be reviewed individually to find a solution that respects the historic integrity of the building and maximizes the effectiveness of the solar panels," she said. At the state level, the historic preservation office has partnered with the quasi-public clean energy agency, the Connecticut Green Bank, to mitigate any adverse effects installs could have on historic properties. Together, they're developing a publication they plan to distribute in the coming months outlining best practices on the intersection of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and historic preservation.

MEG DALTON

Meg is a freelance journalist and audio producer based in Connecticut who reports on the environment, gender and media. She's reported and edited for the Columbia Journalism Review, PBS NewsHour, Architectural Digest, MediaShift, Hearst Connecticut newspapers, and more. In addition, her audio work has appeared on WSHU, Marketplace, WBAI, and NPR. Meg covers Connecticut and Rhode Island.







Agenda Item 10

Amended Minutes
Tolland Green Historic District Commission
21 Tolland Green, Tolland, Connecticut
Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at 7:00 PM via Zoom
Remote Participation Only

1. Call to order at 7:11 PM

Roll Call:

Members: Jodie Coleman-Marzialo; Celeste Senechal; Ann Deegan; Frederick Day-Lewis

Alternates: John Hughes; Michael McGee

Town Council Liaison: Katie Stargardter

Guests: Denis Deegan; Joshua Esposito; Heather and Matthew Ferretti; Denmar Lawrence; Marilu Medina; Claudette Morehouse; Ann Nelson

J. Hughes recused himself from his role as an alternate for the matter of *HDC #24-01*.

2. Election of officers for the new year

Motion: To elect J. Coleman-Marzialo Chair of the Historic District Commission (HDC)

By: K. Bach; 2nd A. Deegan

There was no discussion.

Voice vote: Unanimous in favor – the motion passed.

Motion: To elect C. Senechal Vice Chair of the HDC

By: K. Bach; 2nd A. Deegan

There was no discussion.

Voice vote: Unanimous in favor – the motion passed.

K. Bach and A. Deegan thanked the HDC for the privilege of serving in the role of clerk or acting clerk and nominated F. Day-Lewis for clerk, based on the premise that he was the newest alternate, and it would be easier for an alternate than a voting member to keep minutes.

F. Day-Lewis said that he had been appointed by the Town Council (TC) as a seated, voting member. K. Bach noted that it was the practice of the HDC to elevate the longest serving alternate to the open seat. Stargardter confirmed that the TC voted to appoint Day-Lewis to the open seat on the HDC as a voting member. With no alternates expressing interest in serving as clerk, Day-Lewis accepted the nomination to serve as clerk on a trial basis.

Motion: To elect F. Day-Lewis to serve as Clerk of the HDC on a temporary basis

By: K. Bach; 2nd A. Deegan

Voice vote: Unanimous in favor – the motion passed.

M. McGee agreed to continue as enforcement officer.

The HDC and officers for 2024 are thus:

Jodie Coleman-Marzialo (Chair)
Celeste Senechal (Vice Chair)
Fred Day-Lewis (Clerk)
Other voting members: Kathy Bach; Ann Deegan
Alternates: John Hughes; Michael McGee; and Mariah Bumps (absent)
Enforcement office (continuing): Michael McGee

3. Seating of alternates

No ~~additional~~ alternates were seated.

4. Additions to agenda

C. Senechal proposed inclusion of an item for enforcement in future agendas.

5. Public comment

None.

6. Public hearing(s)

6.1. The public hearing was opened for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) at 95 Tolland Green: *HDC #24-01 Certificate of Appropriateness- Request to install PV solar panels, roof-mounted installation 13.60kW- 32 panels- not structural upgrades.*

J. Coleman-Marzialo read the Public Notice as it appeared in the Journal Inquirer, where it ran 8-February 2024 and 15-February 2024; this notice was also posted in the meeting packet online.

J. Hughes presented the COA application for installation of solar panels, continuing with renovations and to make his family's house more affordable in the face of rapidly rising electricity costs. His goal is to enable his family to stay long-term in the house that he has been renovating. Furthermore, he finds solar appealing given its benefits in terms of sustainability, decentralizing the power grid, and reducing our environmental footprint/impact. He said that in his view solar panels do not detract from the historic aspect of the house, and the layout would be barely visible from the street. He said that solar is increasingly accepted in historic districts (HDs) across the country. Within view of his house are plastic fences, metal fences, and houses built in the 1960s or 1980s; hence he does not feel that this project would detract from the HD.

J. Esposito, representing the Hughes' solar contractor, spoke to the environmental benefits of solar and outlined the layout of the system. He showed street views through screen sharing in Zoom. He also showed the results of a shade study which indicated the footprint of panels on the roof and the larger area of roof where solar could be effective, including at the front of the house. The panels would be installed on only one roof, on the side of the house, and not all the way to the front. He said that in the proposed design, the panels were pushed back as far as possible on the roof to minimize view from street under constraints imposed by the roof construction and its exposure to the sun. Driving from the west past the house, there would be "zero view" of panels.

From the east, the panels would be set back far enough to be largely hidden by trees and the adjacent house.

J. Coleman-Marzialo posed questions to J. Esposito about the design of the system and asked that he compare this design to the one in a proposal submitted previously by the applicant. J. Esposito had no information about the former proposal from 2020. J. Hughes said the design goal was to minimize the layout while keeping it economically beneficial (90% of electric use). In the design, the panels were located at the back of the roof to the extent possible.

J. Coleman-Marzialo asked if the use of different roofs located at the back of the house and on a secondary structure had been considered as alternatives to the more visible side roof used in the design. J. Esposito said there were design constraints related to roof pitch and azimuth. He said the use of the back roofs would have negative visual impact because of the additional conduit and electrical that would be required to link multiple buildings. He said the use of lower pitch roofs would require lifting panels off the roof and tilting them, and there are structural issues with low-pitch roofs. He said the proposed design minimized visibility to a reasonable extent.

K. Bach expressed concern over visibility from the street and visibility to the neighbors and suggested that moving panels to the back of the property roofs would be helpful and advantageous to the proposal, and that the extra conduit would be visible only to the homeowner.

K. Bach said she was opposed to solar on moral grounds unrelated to HD considerations. She said her opposition to solar would never be addressed through design modifications, but at least neighbors' concerns might be mitigated if panels could be relocated and made less visible.

A. Deegan asked about a tree on the adjacent property and questioned how effectively the tree would screen the view from the street.

K. Bach likened the role of the HDC to that of a Homeowners Association (HOA). She pointed to Colonial Williamsburg as a model of how an historic community should function.

J. Esposito said that moving panels to the back roof and the roof of the secondary structure, if possible, would require more conduit and connections and questioned whether it would serve to minimize the aesthetic impact of the overall project.

J. Coleman-Marzialo said that 95 Tolland Green is a nationally registered historic property ~~in~~-on a nationally registered historic green, so every effort should be made to minimize visual impact from the street. She said that the DOI and NPS state that solar panels should be installed where not visible from the street.

F. Day-Lewis questioned this characterization of the DOI guidelines, saying that the guidelines allow panels to be visible from the street. He said that panels should be on the sides or rear of houses where possible, but that the guidelines do not require panels to be unseen from streets.

Day-Lewis asked for details of the specific panels to be used including the color of the panels and their offset from the roof.

A. Deegan repeated her earlier question, asking whether J. Esposito could show where panels are relative to the tree on the neighboring property. She said that the panels would be visible from the street and asked if there were town regulations limiting visibility of solar from neighbors' houses.

K. Stargardter requested to speak as a resident of the town and not as a TC member nor as TC liaison to the HDC. She said a recent town manager (TM) report documented extra costs and time devoted by town staff to support processing of the last COA related to solar. She asked that the HDC strive to come to a decision on this COA in a timely manner and not create undue burden for the Town.

K. Stargardter referred the HDC to Connecticut State Statute Section 7.147f (a) "No application for a certificate of appropriateness for an exterior architectural feature, such as a solar energy system, designed for the utilization of renewable resources shall be denied unless the commission finds that the feature cannot be installed without substantially impairing the historic character and appearance of the district." She asked that the HDC, whatever its decision, speak specifically to compliance with this statute. She also referred the HDC to examples at the National Park Service web site showing solar panels on historic properties in historic areas, including examples of NPS-compliant installations in which panels are visible from the street, albeit low-profile and set back as far from the street as possible. She asked the HDC to consider compliance with this national standard.

J. Coleman-Marzialo said she had seen the examples on the NPS site [of the Vermont house that is 3 stories high and the pitch is not as great as this 1½ story high house we have before us today.](#)

C. Morehouse asked if there were any Planning & Zoning (P&Z) limitations with respect to setbacks and if the project had yet been approved by P&Z. K. Stargardter pointed out that the setback restrictions pertain only to ground-mounted systems.

H-~~eather~~ and M-~~att~~ Ferretti, direct neighbors, both spoke and referred HDC members to photographs in the packet showing the view from their house to the house at 95 Tolland Green. H. Ferretti said that the two houses are offset only about 20 feet. The views from the Ferrettis' windows look onto the Hughes' roof which currently is covered in black asphalt shingles.

J. Coleman-Marzialo said that the existing solar installations in the district are on houses offset much farther, with less visibility from neighbors.

J. Huges said the solar panels would not change the Ferrettis' view of his house from their own—it's a black roof with or without panels.

K. Bach asked about the height of panels off the roof. J. Esposito answered that the panels would be 2-4 inches from the roof.

With photographs from the agenda packet showing the views from the Ferrettis' house in Zoom, M. Ferretti posed the question: If you were looking to buy an historic home, would you buy a house with that view? M. Ferretti said that having solar on the roof of the house next-door would make his house more difficult to sell. The Ferrettis said that they would not oppose solar panels they could not see from their house, back yard, or front porch. If panels could be relocated to the other two roofs, they would not oppose.

M. McGee said that as an electrical engineer he could not understand why the COA was not already approved.

K. Bach motioned to close the public hearing.

D. Deegan said that in his view people buying homes in the HD are committing to preserving history in the community. He said that the subject property is not just any house in the HD but rather a former grange. He said that it was beyond him how anyone would buy an historic property and modify it in the way proposed. Regarding the neighbors' comments, "Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder." He said that if he were living next to a house where solar was installed, he would sue that neighbor, the Town, and everyone who had supported the project. He said the solar installation would negatively impact the value of neighboring houses. He opposed installation of solar panels on historic homes and opposed the application under consideration.

J. Hughes said that the house would not even be there had he not purchased it and saved it from demolition.

D. Deegan said the Town should have neither sold the property nor disposed of it. He said that the Town should have renovated the building for use as a social center for youth or for some other public purpose.

J. Coleman-Marzialo said that for its purchase price, someone else could have bought the house, and that it would not have been demolished. J. Coleman-Marzialo and J. Hughes contested whether the house would have been demolished had the Hughes not purchased and renovated it. J. Coleman-Marzialo said the HDC might have stepped in to stop the demolition. J. Hughes said that the demolition permit was before P&Z at the time of his purchase.

Motion: To close the public hearing at 8:26 PM.

By: K. Bach; 2nd C. Senechal

There was no discussion.

Voice vote: Unanimous in favor – the motion passed.

7. Old Business:

None.

8. New Business

8.1. The regular meeting was called to order to consider the *COA HDC #24-01 at 95 Tolland Green by the Commission, and vote thereon.*

F. Day-Lewis said he supported approval of the COA. He said that based on his past discussions with an historic architect and several attorneys, it is his understanding that the CT state statutes explicitly disallow an HDC from denying a COA for solar unless the project would substantially impair the entire district. He said the DOI guidelines are clear that the goal is to minimize solar visibility and blend with asphalt shingles but not to prevent installation altogether. He said that the guidelines allow for panels on the sides of houses and even fronts in some cases. He noted that asphalt shingles have only been used for ~90 years and are also anachronistic in the HD. He found the Hughes' plan to be consistent with the DOI guidelines and said the HDC should not deny the COA based on personal opinions that run counter to statutes and guidelines.

C. Senechal said she found remarks about plastic and metal fences interesting. She said that she feels that plastic and seeing solar panels from the street detract substantially from the historic feeling of a neighborhood. After seeing the photographs of the neighbors' view of the roof and considering the concern over negative impact to house values, it's not about one person versus another but rather the need to preserve the historic nature of the district.

J. Coleman-Marzialo asked about the color of the panels and whether silver-colored lines are visible. Referring to photographs in the packet and by screen sharing additional photos, she said there's a variety of panel appearance, some with grids of metallic lines and a considerable amount of silver metal showing, others all-black cells and black framing. J. Esposito confirmed that his company's panels would be all-black, with no obvious silver showing or highly visible grid within the cells. J. Esposito showed additional photographs of a solar installation within the HD on Tolland Stage Rd., with road-facing solar cells, as well as photographs of his company's product which is all-black with no shiny silver-colored metal.

A. Deegan asked for explanation of the calculation of electrical billing offset as it relates to solar production. J. Esposito provided an explanation but said a complete answer would require assistance from his billing department.

K. Bach described the HD as in a "conundrum," as it was established after the installation of power lines and widening of roads. She said that change occurs, but core values should remain—there should be respect and trust in each other for the individual neighbors and neighborhood trust and respect among neighbors, and there has to be something like an HOA in the HD. She said some things will stay, and some are "flash-in-the-pan conservation tools." She spoke about her personal issue with solar panels on their 50 year old building and She spoke about wastefulness and lack of recycling with solar panels. She said that promises about solar technology have not been kept, and she described this as the basis for her moral opposition to solar power. She said that the only answer is conservation. With respect to the COA before the HDC, she felt no effort was made to put panels farther back on the roofs and used the property differently out of respect for neighbors.

J. Esposito asked whether moving panels to the back of the house would only shift the problematic view to another neighbor. K. Bach said that the rear of the property was not visible from another residence.

J. Coleman-Marzialo laid out options for motions to support, deny, or ask for modifications and requested a motion.

J. Esposito asked that any motion involving requests for modification should provide detailed instruction for what would be acceptable to the HDC.

There was a brief discussion of reopening the public hearing to enable further discussion of engineering modification.

Motion: To deny HDC #24-01 COA for solar panels at 95 Tolland Green as presented because they would substantially impair the historic nature of the district and would be viewed from the public access roads.

By: C. Senechal; 2nd-K. Bach seconded the motion so there could be discussion.

F. Day-Lewis said he opposed the motion to deny the COA, describing the motion's assertion that the project substantially impairs the district as incorrect, inconsistent with state statutes and DOI guidelines, and inconsistent with practices in many other HDs around CT. He said that based on his conversations with an historic architect and attorneys in the past, he believed the Town would lose in court if the COA were denied and an appeal filed by the applicants. He did not want to see taxpayers bear these unnecessary costs.

A. Deegan said she was in favor of the motion as written, that the solar installation would impair the HD, and that decisions by other HDs to allow solar do not make it historically right. She said she did not feel that the HDC should approve a COA out of fear of litigation, as happened with a previous application for solar that came before the HDC.

J. Esposito began to ask a question, but K. Stargardter called a point of order that the public hearing was closed.

J. Coleman-Marzialo said that the project would impair the HD and Green, that visibility would be excessive. She said that other solar projects in the HD had the support of neighbors, and that this was not true for this COA. She described the house in question as unique in the district, as it was formerly a grange. She felt no effort was made to place panels on other, less visible roofs on non-historic additions or outbuildings. She expressed concern about the maple tree's health and how long it would serve to help screen the street view of the panels. She said that this is a nationally registered historic district, with a charge from the TC to preserve the historic nature of the district. She said that the installation would definitely impair the historic nature of all the properties in the district.

K. Stargardter requested a roll-call vote.

Vote on motion to deny the COA:

Roll-call vote:

In favor: K. Bach; A. Deegan; C. Senechal; J. Coleman-Marzialo

Against: F. Day-Lewis

The motion to deny the COA passed.

J. Coleman-Marzialo said that the COA application fee would be waived should the applicant choose to revise the design and submit a new application. A new application would be considered without prejudice.

9. Other business

K. Stargardter informed the HDC that the TC expects the TM's budget on March 13. The TC will soon start deliberations, and any outstanding requests should be submitted as soon as possible. J. Coleman-Marzialo asked how to find information about the HDC budget. K. Stargardter said the budget book is available online. There was discussion of a budget request for streetlights. The installation of streetlights is currently held up while awaiting resolution of the sidewalk issue.

K. Bach asked about the status of a grant for the Jail Museum. K. Stargardter said that this has not yet been presented to the TC. K. Bach asked if the TC would contact the Tolland Historical Society (tenants) to work out the details of the grant application related to building use. K. Stargardter said there are legal issues complicating the process, as the lease was issued to an organization involved in litigation against the Town. K. Bach said the jail shouldn't be an issue. K. Stargardter said she had been advised by legal counsel against engaging in certain discussions, and K. Bach suggested J. Coleman-Marzialo communicate with the TC and TM about the grant.

10. Correspondence

A letter was included in the packet from Rev. Dr. J. Gallagher in support of HDC #24-01 COA.

11. Approval of minutes

Motion: To accept the minutes from the Special meeting on November 29, 2023

By: C. Senechal; 2nd A. Deegan

In favor: J. Coleman-Marzialo, A. Deegan, C. Senechal

Abstentions: K. Bach and F. Day-Lewis

The motion passed.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 9:00 PM

Voice vote: Unanimous in favor – the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Frederick Day-Lewis, Acting Clerk

Amended Minutes
Tolland Green Historic District Commission
21 Tolland Green, Tolland, Connecticut
Wednesday March 20, 2024 at 7:00 PM via Zoom
Remote Participation Only

Note: audio and video recordings of the meeting are available on the Town web site

1. Call to order at 7:02 PM

Roll Call:

Members: Jodie Coleman-Marzialo (Chair); Celeste Senechal (Vice Chair); Ann Deegan; [Kathy Bach](#); Frederick Day-Lewis (clerk)

Alternate: John Hughes

Tolland Building Inspector: James Paquin

Guests: Kevin Thompson (UCCT); Dory Famiglietti (Kahan, Karensky and Capossela); Heather and Matthew Ferretti; Denmar Lawrence; Marilu Medina; Liz Gray Costa; Susan Lucek-Hughes; Denis Deegan; Heather McCann; Bruce Mayer; Tonja Kelly

F. Day-Lewis recused himself from his role as a voting member for the matter of *HDC #24-02*, saying that he had written a letter of support for the applicant's previous application prior to being appointed to the Commission, and that letter was included in the current packet.

J. Hughes recused himself from his role as an alternate for the matter of *HDC #24-03*.

2. Seating of alternates

J. Hughes was seated for the meeting to vote on *HDC #24-02*.

3. Additions to agenda

None.

4. Public comment

None.

5. Public hearings

F. Day-Lewis read the Public Notice for *HDC #24-02* and *#24-03* as it appeared in the Journal Inquirer, where it ran 7-March 2024 and 14-March 2024; this notice was also posted in the meeting packet online.

5.01 Testimony received

Testimony was received and included in the meeting packet: (1) an emailed letter and attached article from Susan Lucek-Hughes to the Historic District Commission (HDC) and Town Council, and (2) an emailed letter from Holly Barnas; these are both appended to the minutes.

5.1.1. Reference to testimony received

The HDC members affirmed that they had seen the testimony received.

J. Coleman-Marzialo asked K. Thompson representing the UCCT to confirm that the UCCT would rescind their open, approved COA in order for another to be considered. J. Paquin asked for clarification as to whether withdrawal of the existing COA would be contingent on approval of the new application, i.e., HDC-02 would be evaluated as a revision to the approved COA. J. Paquin said it was unreasonable to expect the UCCT to relinquish an approved COA to be able to apply for another. There was discussion of whether the UCCT should be required to rescind a COA already granted. C. Senechal asked for a legal opinion, and J. Coleman-Marzialo said that she had reached out to an attorney but not heard back, and that she did not believe it was possible to apply for a second COA to be considered when one had been obtained already for the essentially the same purpose. J. Coleman-Marzialo said that she had reached out to multiple town HDCs or town planners and was unaware of instances of applications for COAs where a pre-existing COA was open. J. Paquin asked what the problem would be in considering the new application, given that the applicant would obviously not install two roof-mounted systems, the previous application was already approved, and the new design would not be implemented without approval of the HDC.

Motion: To open the public hearing

By: K. Bach; 2nd C. Senechal

The public hearing was opened.

Motion: To get a legal opinion about having previously accepted a COA on 45 Tolland Green and now getting a second request for a COA

By: K. Bach; 2nd C. Senechal

K. Thompson of the UCCT asked the UCCT's attorney, D. Famiglietti, to comment on the question of how to proceed. D. Famiglietti said that the HDC had the right obtain a legal opinion itself, but she said that in her own legal opinion no ordinance in the HDC's jurisdiction nor statute would require an applicant to rescind one application to apply for another. She agreed with J. Paquin that considering the new application would allow the applicant to go forward with either, if it were to be approved, and said that clearly the applicant could not go forward with both plans. She said she hoped that we could move forward tonight, but if the HDC wanted to consult its own attorney, then there would be no point in making the presentation tonight.

J. Coleman-Marzialo asked for a neutral opinion given that D. Famiglietti was representing the applicant. D. Famiglietti pointed out that J. Paquin, although not an attorney was a town official, and his opinion was consistent with her own.

J. Coleman-Marzialo said that she had reached out earlier to the state historic preservation office and was advised to get a legal opinion. She asked voting members and the seated alternate their opinions. C. Senechal preferred to wait for a legal opinion. K. Bach said that she was not comfortable working on the case in the meeting, and that she would not pass the application as-is. K. Bach said there were many legal issues to consider in addition to the double COA.

J. Hughes said it was his opinion that the new application was separate so did not see any conflict. He asked why the HDC could not act on the new application.

K. Bach said she had been asking for an attorney to go over a number of items, not limited to the application. She said she did not want to prejudice this application or the next until discussing some issues with an attorney. She asked for discussion with an attorney to avoid putting Town, HDC, or applicants at risk.

Motion: To table the application until the next scheduled meeting on 17-April.

By: J. Coleman-Marzialo; 2nd C. Senechal

In favor: J. Coleman-Marzialo; A. Deegan; C. Senechal; K. Bach

Against: J. Hughes

The motion passed.

J. Paquin pointed out that the application would be approved by default on 25-April if the HDC were not to act prior to that date.

K. Bach discussed a motion to obtain legal counsel on a number of questions that have been coming up in discussions—a broader scope of issues that might require executive session.

J. Paquin said such a motion would be better under New Business. He said he could not guarantee access to the attorney.

K. Thompson asked about the recusal of church members and whether K. Bach, as a church member, would be involved in this matter. K. Bach said she had not been active in the church for the past year.

5.2. HDC #24-03 Certificate of Appropriateness- Request to install building-mounted solar arrays.

5.2.1. Reference to testimony received (see 5.1.1)

J. Coleman-Marzialo noted the change in voting members, with F. Day-Lewis voting and J. Hughes recusing himself.

Motion: To open the public hearing on HDC#24-03 for a COA

By: K. Bach; 2nd F. Day-Lewis

The public hearing was opened.

J. Hughes thanked the HDC for its time and presented the COA application for installation of roof-mounted solar panels. He said that his contractor redesigned the system previously presented, moving panels to the back roof, which will cost him more but reduce visibility of the panels from the street. J. Hughes referred the HDC to the state statutes and said the statutes are clear that the HDC cannot disallow solar because of members' moral objections, neighbors not liking them, or otherwise thinking solar is a bad idea. He said the state law allows solar. He has tried to reduce the visibility from the street and does not feel the design would significantly affect the historic district (HD), which already has solar panels elsewhere. He said the configuration would be minimally visible from the street.

J. Coleman-Marzialo asked a series of questions about the number of panels and whether the three panels nearest the road could also be moved. J. Hughes said that he had moved as many panels as possible to the back of the house.

D. Lawrence, representing the solar contractor, said that they moved 9 panels to the back roof, as many as possible, and reoriented panels all to be in landscape orientation.

J. Coleman-Marzialo said she had done research on solar, visiting other HDs with settings and houses similar to Tolland, where historic properties have character-defining features. She said we are here to decide whether this installation would substantially impair the historic character and appearance of the property and district as a whole. She said that the HDC's charge is to preserve the integrity and character of the Green and its properties as defined in the HDC's guidelines and the DOI's guidelines. She said she appreciated that panels were being relocated to the back of the property.

J. Coleman-Marzialo said that she had visited the solar company Earthlink. Based on her research, she said the average person looks for 70% of their electric use from solar. She said the applicant in the previous meeting said his average bill was about \$500, which she thought high for the size of the house. Her own electric bill is less yet she has old appliances, displays abundant lights at Christmas. She asked if the applicant was looking for 90% offset.

J. Hughes confirmed his goal of achieving 90% offset from solar. He said he and his family have needs for which he should not be faulted. He would prefer 100% offset, but that would result in too much visibility from the road. He said the new plan achieves minimal visibility from the road and whether he aims for 70, 80, or 90% should not matter to the HDC.

F. Day-Lewis said electricity usage depends strongly on the type of water heater, heating system, A/C, etc., explaining variability between residences aside from discretionary use.

C. Senechal said she would like an attorney's opinion as to how many times an applicant may apply for essentially the same COA. F. Day-Lewis said that the HDC had encouraged J. Hughes to revise the plan, resubmit, and that the HDC would even waive the fee for the new application.

J. Paquin said that in his understanding, the law does not prevent someone from continuing to submit applications when rejected, that this is standard in any land-use procedure.

J. Coleman-Marzialo asked for a street-view photograph that would show how the layout would appear. She said the property was very close to the neighbor. C. Senechal agreed. J. Coleman-Marzialo said that she felt like she might not have enough information to make a decision based on the application materials. She wanted relevant information about visibility. M. Medina, representing the solar contractor, said she had some additional photographs not in the packet.

F. Day-Lewis said Google Street View had good images of the house and suggested J. Hughes or his contractor might pull up the street view.

J. Coleman-Marzialo said she wanted more photographs in the packet providing a more realistic depiction than the purple squares that look like sticky notes in the application pictures. She said that it might be best to table the application and get more photos.

K. Bach asked if J. Hughes had discussed the new proposal with his neighbor. J. Hughes said he had not spoken to them.

K. Bach said she wanted to hear the neighbors' opinion because the houses are so close, and the plan last time was so impactful on them. She had two problems with the previous application. The first is personal—not liking the sourcing of solar, which she said is third-world-country-inhumane at the beginning of the process and there's not a good end life to them, so it's not well-thought out as a product. Second, she said we also have to be cognizant of the neighborhood and respectful of neighbors. She said the neighbors are not present tonight, and she wanted to hear neighbors' opinion.

F. Day-Lewis said the neighbors had the opportunity to be here, speak, or write a letter.

The subject neighbors, H. and M. Ferretti, were in fact, in attendance. They said the new proposal is similar to the Hughes' 2020 application. They appreciated panels being moved to the back of the property but said that the new configuration was still very visible. M. Ferretti said maybe his opinion didn't matter given state statutes, but their opinion had not changed from the previous meeting. H. Ferretti said the view from their upper windows would be of solar panels and this would make selling the home difficult.

J. Coleman-Marzialo asked for a motion to table and request more information with realistic pictures.

Motion: To deny the COA because of the incomplete packet.

By: C. Senechal; 2nd K. Bach

Discussion:

J. Paquin said it was difficult to make the case that the packet was incomplete given the amount of information in the packet and fact that everyone voting is familiar with the residence and layout. He cautioned making a denial based on incompleteness.

M. Medina, representing the solar contractor, said that she had photographs from the previous packet and could show those.

Motion withdrawn: K. Bach withdrew her second. C. Senechal withdrew the motion to table.

C. Senechal said that this COA was yet another with multiple applications for the same property.

J. Hughes suggested letting M. Medina show photographs by screenshare to alleviate problems of not seeing the layout. He encouraged members to read the state statute. J. Coleman-Marzialo said the statute was in the HDC's guidelines. J. Hughes read it, with J. Coleman-Marzialo finishing the final sentence: "No application for a certificate of appropriateness for an exterior architectural feature, such as a solar energy system, designed for the utilization of renewable resources shall be denied unless the commission finds that the feature cannot be installed without substantially impairing the historic character and appearance of the district." He said it does not mention moral objections. K. Bach and J. Coleman-Marzialo said no one had said anything about that.

J. Coleman-Marzialo added that the statute says the COA may include stipulations for design modifications and limitations on the location of the feature that do not significantly impair its effectiveness. She said she had asked an employee of the solar company, Earthlight, for his definition of "significantly impairment impair its effectiveness." She said it was his opinion that "significantly impair its effectiveness" meant putting panels on the north side of a house. She asked J. Hughes if that was a fair assessment of what impairment to effectiveness means.

J. Hughes said in his mind impairment would mean reducing the number of panels or moving them out of the area where they get enough light. He said that if the panels were being moved in ways that limit effectiveness, that was impairment.

L. Gray Costa, a Tolland resident, said that she had watched the previous three or four HDC meetings. She said Mr. Hughes has not been respected through this process. She said it was offensive last month when people commented on the price of the applicant's house. She said it was the third time she'd seen solar turned down. She said if we're going to have a HDC in the future, we need to allow solar to keep costs down. She said she was appalled that this could be turned down when there are solar panels on the fronts of houses. She said she understood the neighbors' concern but suggested most people don't object to solar panels. She commended Mr. Hughes for improving the property and recalled the deplorable condition it was in 35 years ago. She said it is not the HDC's job to question whether he should be allowed 90, 70, or 110% electrical offset from solar—it's not the HDC's job. She said the UCCT is trying to endure and we need to honor that. She said the HDC needs to consider the entire community and also to treat people as neighbors.

F. Day-Lewis said he had spoken to an attorney about the impairment question. In his understanding, the HDC has a role in asking questions aimed at minimizing impact, but he said the burden of proving a project would substantially degrade the HD is really on the HDC or the Town and not on the applicant. This is the only instance in the statute where this is spelled out. He thinks we're right to ask questions but not to force the applicant to move panels out of the sun or reduce their number.

S. Lucek-Hughes thanked L. Gray Costa for her comments. She said that she appreciated that J. Coleman-Marzialo had done research on solar and how to run a meeting, but she asked that the Chair listen when people are trying to speak and not talk over them. She said in regard to consideration of neighbors, that she and J. Hughes had gone to the expense of buying adjacent property for a garage in order to respect those neighbors' privacy and let the neighbors use the driveway between the houses, which she owned. She said the neighbors' view was of a roof when they bought their house and that view would not change, whether it was of a roof with solar or of just a roof.

D. Deegan said it was interesting listening to the past couple meetings. He said he felt for the neighbors H. and M. Ferretti. He said that he had owned a house that lost value when his neighbors made changes. He said in a HD, one should be able to expect that properties will not change. He finds it appalling that there's no respect given to what the neighbors are seeing in terms of changes. The Hughes' house was previously not a residence. He said it was shameful that people only think about themselves and about money. He said money drives wedges between people. In his view, solar doesn't belong on an historic property or in a HD.

J. Coleman-Marzialo shared her screen, showing photographs from the previous packet. With photographs displayed in Zoom, there was discussion between J. Coleman-Marzialo, J. Hughes, and K. Bach regarding the placement of panels relative to windows and other property features, as well as views from the neighbors' house. F. Day-Lewis said that the redesign addressed a previous request from some HDC members to orient all panels the same. There was discussion about the visibility of electrical panels, which can be painted, as recommended in the HDC guidelines. J. Hughes said he could also block the view of the utility panels from the street with vegetation.

J. Coleman-Marzialo asked whether the three panels closest to the street could be removed. J. Hughes said that this would significantly reduce solar production.

J. Coleman-Marzialo asked if there was visible silver in the panels. D. Lawrence confirmed that the panels were essentially all-black although silver could be seen on close inspection. J. Paquin said the panel details were included in the previous packet. J. Coleman-Marzialo said she wanted to see exactly what the panels would look like. She asked about the pitch of the roof and said that pitch and height matter to visibility. J. Coleman-Marzialo asked to see photographs of a house with the panels installed. M. Medina showed photographs by screen share.

J. Coleman-Marzialo said silver could be seen in the panels at 63 Tolland Green and also the panels on the house on Tolland Stage Rd.

F. Day-Lewis asked the applicant if he felt that he had done the best he could to minimize visibility while achieving his cost and production objectives. J. Hughes confirmed that he had done everything he could in this regard.

J. Coleman-Marzialo said she did not like the three panels closest to the street because they lacked symmetry. She suggested removing them. She said the roof is a character-defining feature because it's such a large roof.

J. Coleman-Marzialo asked F. Day-Lewis what percent production he had with his solar. F. Day-Lewis said that he did not think this information was relevant to the case before us. J. Coleman-Marzialo said she thought it was a legitimate question, how many solar panels a house of a certain size needed. F. Day-Lewis said one's deal with Eversource depends on when installation happened, the deal with the installer, renting vs. buying panels. He said that it is not reasonable to assign a number of panels per square foot given variation in electrical needs. J. Coleman-Marzialo said F. Day-Lewis had installed mini-splits and she could see the Day-Lewis' cars plugged in.

H. McCann, Tolland resident, said that discussing people's costs and savings is out of the HDC's lane.

B. Mayer, Tolland resident, agreed with the previous speaker that it is irrelevant whether the applicant is looking for 70, 80, or 90%. He said he felt for J. Hughes being put through the ringer, being questioned repeatedly, and not getting a fair hearing. He said J. Hughes was improving his property and was a good neighbor. He felt J. Hughes had bent over backwards to address HDC concerns. B. Mayer has happily had solar for 9 years and feels for the Hughes who have been denied that opportunity to help the planet.

J. Coleman-Marzialo said this decision affects all the people who live in the HD, which is on the national register. She said the HDC has been charged to preserve and promote preservation and try to retain the integrity and historic character and appearance of this nationally registered place. She said the property was formerly a grange where no one slept, and it has historic value to the district, as does the church. She said that she considers the property unique on the Green. She said that the HDC has to look at historic trajectories, integrity, visibility, compatibility, and that she's following what guidelines we have.

T. Kelly, Tolland Green resident, said we will not be able to maintain historic buildings if we do not keep up with the times. She said she pays \$600/mo for electricity and would love to put solar panels on her roof. She said the Church needs to keep up with the times. She said in 1991 the TC voted for a HD, many residents were not in favor of the HD. She said the HDC only came about because of one vote influenced by a photograph of a house torn down. She said she had served on the HDC in the past. She said the HDC has gone too far. She said the guidelines are totally subjective, 'substantially' is a subjective term. We need to use common sense. She said J. Hughes is a prime example of how this HD began. She said it's ridiculous that this was a 2-hour meeting, and the Church, which brought legal counsel, did not even get to make its presentation. She said that this is a neighborhood, and maintaining these old buildings is expensive, and we need to treat each other with respect, and J. Hughes is a prime example of what a HD is about. She said that J. Hughes had built an incredible home for his daughter, so that it's accessible, which is more important than the number of solar panels on a roof.

S. Lucek-Hughes referred to the article included in her letter, which quotes the State Historic Preservation Office and statistics on solar in HDs. Out of 300 applications for solar, only 10 were denied, and all were worked out and approved eventually. She referred to a photograph of a Victorian home on the state web site with solar on a zero-lot line with solar at the front of the

house. If the State can use a photo like that on the ct.gov energy efficiency web site, is the HDC really going to require more hours, meetings, photographs? How is it possible that Tolland is requiring this? She did not understand how the HDC could go around in circles the way it does.

Motion: To close the public hearing
By: C. Senechal; 2nd K. Bach

6. New Business

6.2. Consideration of the COA at 95 Tolland Green by the Commission, and vote thereon

J. Coleman-Marzialo asked for a motion to deny, accept, or ask for stipulations or modifications, which may require design modifications and limitations on the location of the feature that do not significantly impair its effectiveness.

Motion: To accept the application as presented.
By: F. Day-Lewis

J. Coleman-Marzialo said that she would like to make a motion to remove the three panels closest the road, and that she did not think doing so would not significantly impair effectiveness. She said that some solar is better than no solar. She said the house is close to its neighbors, and she feels for the neighbors. She said that this is a gray area as to whether the installation would significantly, substantially impair the historic character and appearance of the district.

There was discussion of various possible alternative configurations of panels to reduce visibility, achieve symmetry, and maintain effectiveness.

J. Paquin said removal of 3 panels (1.275 kW) might be significant. He also said solar panels are not considered “permanent features” and could be removed in the future. F. Day-Lewis said that an historic architect had said the same to him, that the panels are not permanent fixtures, and perhaps would not be necessary in the future. There was discussion of the lifespan of solar panels relative to roofs and the age of the homes in the district. J. Coleman-Marzialo asked about the age of the Hughes’ roof.

Motion: To amend the motion by removing the three extra panels on the east end of the south-facing roof, and relocate the next row to make four rows of five panels.
By: J. Coleman-Marzialo; 2nd C. Senechal
Discussion:

K. Bach said she feels this does impact the defining features of the district. She said this does not preserve the character of the district. She feels the photographs we get are not from HDs. She said she would vote yes but with big concerns.

F. Day-Lewis said he would have preferred to grant the application as presented with all the panels. He said at some point our personal feelings and concerns need to be secondary to the guidelines and statutes. We may have our opinions, but if something is a right of someone in the

district to do with their house, we should not abuse our authority or go beyond our scope in denying it. He thought the application should be accepted as-is but said he would vote yes to allow them at least the amended version.

Vote on the motion:

In favor: J. Coleman-Marzialo; C. Senechal; A. Deegan; K. Bach; F. Day-Lewis

The amended motion passed: To accept the COA with stipulations removing the three extra panels on the east end of the south-facing roof and relocating the next row to make four rows of five panels.

K. Bach said that she had a question for J. Paquin in reference to the “The Great Pumpkin” house, which has solar, and was an exception being on the edge of the HD. She said that there is concern about the number of panels on that house and whether the owner was selling energy back to the grid. She asked if you can make a business of selling energy back to the grid in the Village Center Zone. J. Paquin said that he does not do zoning but can speak confidently regardless. He said a stand-alone solar field is not acceptable in a residential zone, but that’s not what this is—this is not considered a business. It’s a homeowner. Some months the house would produce more, some less. He said Eversource ensures homeowners cannot put in substantially oversized systems and profit. He said there is no violation here of zoning regulations. K. said that Jim’s response clarified that the system is self-regulating. There was further discussion around limitations on panel placement and coverage. K. Bach thanked J. Paquin for his clarifications. She said this would keep the HDC more in its lane. J. Coleman-Marzialo said that this has been an educational experience for the HDC and thanked people who had done research and provided information.

J. Coleman-Marzialo reiterated that the COA was approved with the stipulations of (1) removing the three extra panels, and (2) relocating the next row to the bottom of the layout, for a total of 20 on the main structure as far to the west as possible, and 9 on the roof of the back addition. F. Day-Lewis asked J. Coleman-Marzialo to confirm that the applicant could put the 3 panels lost on the back roof not visible from the street; this was confirmed as being fine because the panels would be out of public view.

6.3. Discuss COA application fees and application requirements

J. Coleman-Marzialo said that based on increasing costs of publishing legal notifications, town staff recommended doubling the fee from \$75 to \$150 to cover the cost of advertising.

Motion: To increase the COA fee from \$75 to \$150.

By: C. Senechal; 2nd K. Bach

In favor: J. Coleman-Marzialo; A. Deegan; F. Day-Lewis

Opposed: None

The motion passed.

J. Coleman-Marzialo said she would draft changes for consideration in a future meeting.

K. Bach asked for the draft changes to be included in the next packet. She said the HDC should revisit its practice of waiving fees, because advertising is expensive and comes out of the budget. J. Paquin said that fees are not, in fact, waived, and waiving fees is not possible.

J. Paquin had spoken with Attorney Conti and explained that it is not within the HDC's authority to raise the fee, but that the HDC's motion would be communicated to the TC as a recommendation.

J. Coleman-Marzialo asked J. Paquin to ask the TC about filling the seat of the alternate.

There was discussion of the need for an enforcement officer; this was left to appointment of another alternate.

7. Old Business:

None.

8. Correspondence:

J. Coleman-Marzialo referred to letters in the packet and said Stella Demand had also reached out and said she felt the same as before.

9. Approval of minutes:

K. Bach said she had corrections to the minutes. She suggested drafting less detailed minutes and instead referring to the recording. F. Day-Lewis said he was using the TC minutes as a guide but asked if there were actual guidelines. She said the important things are to get the motions, speakers, and seated members right. K. Bach said she had corrections to the minutes from the previous meeting. J. Coleman-Marzialo suggested sending changes by email. K. Bach said she would send changes for implementation and voting next month. There was discussion of the importance of getting motions right. J. Paquin said highly detailed minutes are not required but do help with transparency and save people having to listen to hours of recordings. K. Bach thanked F. Day-Lewis for keeping minutes, having done so herself for many years.

K. Bach asked for additional detail in the agenda to help reduce people speaking out of turn. J. Paquin said that more detail could be added to headings to help people who don't know how public meetings operate. F. Day-Lewis suggested the Chair could also introduce the different parts of the meeting with explanation for newcomers.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 9:44 PM

By: C. Senechal; 2nd K. Bach

In favor: Unanimous.

The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Frederick Day-Lewis, Clerk

Laura Smith

From: Susan Lucek <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 11:06 AM
To: Laura Smith; Town Council; Jim Paquin
Cc: Hughes, John
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Examples of historic solar in CT-for 3/20 HDC meeting
Attachments: hdc_21-05_article.pdf; Branfordsolar.jpg; Salisburyhistoricsolar.png

To the Tolland Historic District Commission and Tolland Town Council:

I would like to submit the below information and attached articles and photos in support of the two applications for solar panels in the Tolland Historic District that will come before the HDC for the second and third time on Wed. March 20.

As stated in Chapter 97, Sec. 7-147f of the Connecticut statutes prohibit a commission from denying an application for a certificate of appropriateness for a “solar energy system designed for the utilization of renewable resources” unless “the commission finds that the feature cannot be installed without substantially impairing the historic character and appearance of the district.”

From the attached Energy News Network article which quotes the CT State Historic Preservation Office:

"Historic preservation boards are seeing more requests related to solar panels and increasingly finding compromise.

Historic preservation boards are increasingly finding ways to compromise with homeowners who want to install solar panels in historically significant areas.

The acceptance of solar comes as technology helps to make systems less obtrusive, and also as more historic preservationists recognize the urgency to address climate change.

Cases involving solar panels are also becoming more common. In Connecticut, about a tenth of the state's 3,000 historic preservation cases last year involved solar installations. That's a significant increase from five years ago, said **Todd Levine, an architectural historian for the state's preservation office.**

Of those 300 solar cases, only 10 were concluded to have adverse effects, but even in those cases the state office was able to work with stakeholders and ultimately approve them all."

I would also call your attention to the photos attached, which show multiple historic CT buildings, with solar systems, one posted on a Ct.gov main page showing a roof mounted solar system on a historic home, zero lot line.

The below links clearly show the preferred use of solar on side facing roof surfaces of historic homes and buildings.

Salisbury Historic District Commission Solar Guidelines – “To Do” photo included in booklet:
<https://www.historicsalisburyct.org/solar-energy-booklet-information>

CT.gov photo on main page shows roof mounted solar on historic home, zero lot line:

https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Historic-Preservation/03_Technical_Assistance_Research/Energy-Efficiency-For-Historic-Houses

Energy News Network article quoting CT SHPO:

<https://energynews.us/2019/03/04/connecticut-historic-preservation-boards-warming-up-to-solar-panels/>

(hdc_21-05_article.pdf full text attached)

In accordance with state guidance and statutes and many other CT historic districts, we appreciate your prompt review and approval of these solar applications.

Thank you.

Susan Lucek-Hughes

95 Tolland Green

ENERGY NEWS NETWORK

Connecticut historic preservation boards warming up to solar panels



by [Meg Dalton](#) March 4, 2019



A historic district in New London, Connecticut.

Historic preservation boards are seeing more requests related to solar panels and increasingly finding compromise.

Historic preservation boards are increasingly finding ways to compromise with homeowners who want to install solar panels in historically significant areas.

The acceptance of solar comes as technology helps to make systems less obtrusive, and also as more historic preservationists recognize the urgency to address climate change. Cases involving solar panels are also becoming more common. In Connecticut, about a tenth of the state's 3,000 historic preservation cases last year involved solar installations. That's a

significant increase from five years ago, said Todd Levine, an architectural historian for the state's preservation office.

Of those 300 solar cases, only 10 were concluded to have adverse effects, but even in those cases the state office was able to work with stakeholders and ultimately approve them all.

"In some ways, the solar panels help the historic structure and don't harm it," said Catherine Labadia, deputy state historic preservation officer. "That's not to negate the few cases when it's bad."

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Department of the Interior recommend installing solar panels on the area least visible to the public or on any new addition on the property, like a garage. Typically, historic commissions don't want panels on the principal facade of the building facing the public right-of-ways. If they have to be on the roof, it's better to have them on the non-street-facing part, or even ground-mounted in a backyard. They also suggest solar panels and mounting systems that match the roof's color scheme. In general, the lower the profile the better.

'In some ways, the solar panels help the historic structure and don't harm it.'

While the Department of the Interior provides guidance for installs in historic districts, the responsibility ultimately falls on the local historic commissions. In Connecticut, the state historic preservation office also provides resources and guidance, as well as handles cases that require state or federal permitting.

In New Haven, Connecticut, a home in one of the city's three historic neighborhoods is the latest to successfully petition for approval from its local Historic District Commission. Nestled on a sunny street corner in Fair Haven, the single-family home received immediate approval from the commission last month to install a rooftop solar array, despite a few hiccups during the approval process.

Trinity Solar, the company behind the install, approached the commission in January with a mea culpa after starting the installation before getting formal approval from the commissioners. After realizing its mistake, the company apologized and temporarily stopped the installation, deciding to wait for the commission's approval before proceeding. Since the planned solar array was street-facing and highly visible, the commission's approval was critical.

After making some adjustments — including moving some equipment inside — Trinity Solar received unanimous approval for the three-panel array on the home's rooftop. This case is one example of the evolving relationship between historic preservation and green technology in Connecticut and across the nation.

"It's something people want to see happen and in a way that respects historic integrity in these buildings," said Elizabeth Holt, director of preservation services at the New Haven Preservation Trust.

That hasn't always been the view of historic preservationists. Several cities and towns have pushed back against solar on certain properties, believing it would compromise their historic character. In Washington, D.C, a local commission denied homeowners from installing visible rooftop solar panels on their house in the historic Cleveland Park district in 2013. This year, the same commission loosened its restrictions, allowing for visible solar panels, at least in some cases.

"I have a sense that there's rapidly growing sophistication among preservationists that there's a societal mandate to achieve greater sustainability and energy efficiency," said Anthony Veerkamp, director of policy development at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He only has an anecdotal sense of what's happening on the ground, but noted a shift from commissions defaulting to "no." More boards seem open to working with property owners, whether that means adjusting where to situate an array, or opting for ground-mounted panels instead. He attributes the shift partially to improved technology, with solar panels becoming more streamlined in recent years, as well as the emergence of solar roof tiles. It's analogous to television antennas or satellite dishes. "First, TVs were the size of car, and now they're the size of pizza pan," Veerkamp said.

Plus, a home solar installation can make a difference for state or city climate goals. Municipalities can't just rely on new housing to reduce carbon footprints; they need to maximize older stock, too.

"I want to believe historic commissions around country are looking for ways that historic buildings can help contribute to reaching carbon goals," Veerkamp said. As a preservationist, Holt thinks the realities of climate change mean that preservation and sustainability must go hand in hand. New Haven's commission has become flexible and collaborative, and she believes they can do that while still championing New Haven's historic architecture.

"Each case should be reviewed individually to find a solution that respects the historic integrity of the building and maximizes the effectiveness of the solar panels," she said. At the state level, the historic preservation office has partnered with the quasi-public clean energy agency, the Connecticut Green Bank, to mitigate any adverse effects installs could have on historic properties. Together, they're developing a publication they plan to distribute in the coming months outlining best practices on the intersection of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and historic preservation.

MEG DALTON

Meg is a freelance journalist and audio producer based in Connecticut who reports on the environment, gender and media. She's reported and edited for the Columbia Journalism Review, PBS NewsHour, Architectural Digest, MediaShift, Hearst Connecticut newspapers, and more. In addition, her audio work has appeared on WSHU, Marketplace, WBAI, and NPR. Meg covers Connecticut and Rhode Island.





**Special Meeting Minutes
Tolland Green Historic District Commission
21 Tolland Green, Tolland, Connecticut
Wednesday April 10, 2024 at 7:00 PM via Zoom
Remote Participation Only**

Note: audio and video recordings of meetings are available on the Town web site

1. Call to order at 7:02 PM

Roll Call:

Voting Members: Jodie Coleman-Marzialo (Chair); Celeste Senechal (Vice Chair); Kathy Bach;
Ann Deegan; Frederick Day-Lewis (Clerk)

Alternate: John Hughes

Town Council Liaison: Katie Stargardter

Guest: Attorney Carl Landolina

2. Executive session: Pending Claims and Litigation; Discussion with Counsel under C.G.S Section 1-200 related to Hughes v. Tolland Historic District Commission TTD-CV24-5017836-S

Kathy Bach motioned at 7:04 PM, seconded by Ann Deegan, to enter executive session to discuss pending claims and litigation and invited voting members Jodie Coleman-Marzialo, Celeste Senechal, Ann Deegan, Fred Day-Lewis, and Attorney Landolina to join. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of 5-0-0. The executive session concluded at 9:01 PM, and Jodie Coleman-Marzialo stated that no votes were taken and that no further action would be taken tonight.

3. Adjournment

Kathy Bach motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 PM, seconded by Celeste Senechal. The motion passed with a unanimous vote of 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Frederick Day-Lewis, Clerk