

Agenda for Solar Coop Meeting

1. Overview of the process
2. What you need to do to get ready
3. Overview of the numbers: group discount, RECs, financing

TIMELINE

December 3rd, 9th: Roof Inspections. Only problem roofs.

December 11th, 7:00PM: Solar Coop meeting to go over the process, the economics and answer questions. 1826 Lamont St.

Late December/Early Jan: Application to DC rebate program worth nearly \$7,000 to each house!

- Final cost and cash flow numbers for all aspects of project
- Contract with installer

February: Letter from DC notifying Coop members their rebate was approved.

- Sign and return rebate agreement
- Financing applications
- Pepco Interconnection Agreement
- Other permits and contracts.

March-May: Installations!

June: Giant Solar Celebration!

Notes: Mt. Pleasant Solar Co-op Meeting 12/11

Lots of handouts were distributed.

Anya attempted to make sense of a somewhat confusing and complicated process. The overview of the timeline is:

- 1) The #1 thing we are waiting for is the DC Dept of Energy's rebate program to open. The rebate will be worth about \$7,000 per house and therefore everything else hinges on it. We do not yet know the start date of the rebate program, but it could be any day now. Please see handout on DC-DOE's rebate process.

The co-op is trying to work with DOE to get them to simplify the process. We could use help on that, if anyone wants to volunteer.

It will be a scramble to get all the applications filled out and submitted as a group.

- 2) Contracts between homeowners and Switch. The details have to be spelled out, and our lawyers have to review it.

Switch is now engaged and is negotiating with manufacturer on price of solar panels. As we get firm numbers of households during rebate process, the price will firm up.

At the same time, roof inspections will be proceeding (more on that later).

- 3) Additional paperwork! PEPCO connection agreement needs to be signed by each household & construction permits. Councilmember Cheh has provided a contact in permitting office for processing as a group.

SO: Jan-Feb is paperwork. All contracts & documents will be between individual homeowners & agencies, but we think the co-op's efforts will save everyone a lot of time & money.

- 4) March – May: Installations. Every roof will be looked at before actual installation.
- 5) June: Big party & lots of press!

Questions on process:

Q: What can we do to push agencies along?

A: Anya is involved in the formal process w/DOE; would welcome assistance – involves daytime meetings, etc. Also could use help from anyone willing to take responsibility for specific pieces of paperwork.

Q: What form are the forms in? Could we use online distribution?

A: Jessica Petrish(?) volunteered to set up Google docs, but bottom line is that some people do not use e-mail/internet. We want to submit everyone's paperwork as a group, so we will still need to do some door-knocking & phone calling to get it done.

Q: How many people are involved?

A: Not a straightforward way to count. We have:

180 e-mail addresses

63 or 64 people who signed up for roof inspections

60 to 70 signed LOAs.

These groups are overlapping. Probably about 70 people quite interested, and with each new deadline, about 10 new people have appeared.

Regarding the cancelled roof inspections: Apologies for the inconvenience. After one day, the installer (Switch) had enough info and felt they could do the rest via Google Earth & follow-up calls to potentially problematic homes.

HOWEVER, the roofer was not an expert on flat roofs and decided they were "out of their league," as we are requiring a 15-year warranty. We are now talking to two other companies: Maggio and Corley(?) and would appreciate feedback on either of those. The roofer will eventually look at every roof and will give 2 free estimates. Bottom line: Roofer will call you for appointment. BUT if you know you have a problem, please contact Anya to make sure you are on the "problem roof" list.

Q: So the roofers are installing the solar system?

A: YES. Switch will do planning, engineering, etc; roofer will install (licensed, bonded roofers & electricians) and warranty the system & roof. This modular approach is being used on larger projects and makes the most sense for us. The standard system we are installing has 4 panels that can be put in any configuration but must be 3 feet from the edge of the roof to avoid visibility from below & problems with Historic Preservation Board. The electric cable will run down the outside corner, along the downspout. If that's a problem, let us know. It can be done differently, but will cost extra.

Repeat, if you think you need roof work, get on the list now.

Q: The contractor has already compiled a list of potential problem roofs. How will that list be handled?

A: They will contact you. But again, if you know you have a concern, please make sure you are on the list. People with trees can be accommodated, but we have to know who you are and measure the amount of shade.

Q: How did you settle on this panel size?

A: Switch decided which would be the best for our needs. It has changed in the last 6 months. They are high-quality panels with a good warranty.

One meeting attendee asked the during his roof inspection about adding a 5th panel; he was told it could be done for a relatively modest cost. Anya: This is a great idea, but the problem is with the paperwork – for example, you’d be eligible for a larger rebate, but you would have to know what you were doing when you apply next month. So, we are still working out the details on this.

Q: Will we have separate contracts with Switch and with the roofer?

A: NO. You’ll sign one contract. The roofer will be a subcontractor to Switch.

Finances: Sam (last name?)

See handouts for numbers.

The contractor has developed a spreadsheet that lets you play with all the assumptions. We’ve used it to create a couple of reasonable scenarios.

(Review of baseline handout.)

Q: Does “energy savings” include tax savings on elec. Bill?

A: Unclear.

Regarding renewable energy credits (RECs), we have proposals from the two REC aggregators in DC, there are lots of options to discuss.

Q: What are the maintenance costs of the system?

A: The systems are low-maintenance; they have 30-year warranties, but the inverter (converts DC to AC) has a shorter life span – about \$1200 to replace, factored in 2 times over life of system. We looked into solar hot water systems, but these require more maintenance.

One of the next steps is to hash out the details of the contract with Switch; it may include a maintenance contract. The panels themselves have a warranty, and it’s simple, proven technology.

(Review of 2 financing models: paying cash, or financing total cost after rebate over 15 years @ 7%.)

On financing: many people will have their own options, but Anya has made a few calls; so far the best product has been from Signal Finance (new @ Irving & 14th): a home equity product 15 years @ 7% = \$124 month. They are interested in the project, said Mt P. Solar Co-op could be a group member (?) and they would assign a designated person to work with us. We can’t guarantee that everyone would qualify, however – the process is tighter now.

Q: Are there other solar co-ops in DC?

A: Yes, but all are waiting for Mt. P to go first. One has formed on Capitol Hill, another in Chevy Chase with a very different model, and one in Silver Spring.

Q: And is PEPCO ready to do net metering?

A: Yes, except that if you produce more than you use in a month (in a billing cycle?), their computers cannot do a negative bill. As a co-operative, that's something we can work on with them more effectively than you could as an individual.

Q: Is it possible that we could stage this? For example, the first 50 people now, and another 50 at a later date?

A: Theoretically, yes – the idea is to do it all over the city, in every ward, and create a regulatory environment that makes solar explode. We can make it happen. Anya personally, however, does not see herself signing up for another round!