

Town Manager Gibson Remarks  
Solar Celebration; Nantucket Surfside Wastewater Treatment Plant  
August 10, 2023  
11:15am

Good Morning, Everyone!

Thank you for joining us on this very special occasion as we celebrate the installation of the Town of Nantucket's first solar energy system. Today marks a very proud and momentous occasion in the history of our beloved island, and is a day we have eagerly anticipated for years. Congratulations to each and every one of you who contributed to this remarkable achievement.

The Town of Nantucket is deeply committed to advocating for policies and initiatives that prioritize sustainability and protect our natural resources for generations to come. The implementation of this solar-energy system is a testament to the power of collaboration and our collective dedication to securing a more resilient and sustainable energy future for Nantucket and support for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' ambitious climate goals.

This project serves as more than just an addition to our infrastructure. It is a symbol of our dedication to climate action, energy independence, and environmental leadership. By investing in renewable energy to power our wastewater operations, we are taking a significant step towards mitigating the harmful impacts of climate change and rising sea levels, which leave Nantucket particularly vulnerable.

The benefits of sustainability are numerous and far-reaching, especially on a remote island, located 30-miles out to sea.

First and foremost, this solar system will significantly offset the use of fossil-fuel generated power, which will help to reduce the island's peak demand and decrease local greenhouse gas emissions.

Moreover, investing in renewable energy means investing in our local economy. Aside from the significant energy savings this solar system will produce, it was designed, permitted and installed entirely by a Nantucket-based labor force. From construction to maintenance and operation, these green jobs contribute to the economic growth of our community.

Beyond the economic aspect, embracing sustainability enhances our island's reputation as an environmental leader, attracting residents and visitors alike who recognize Nantucket's deep commitment to preserving the environment and embracing sustainability practices and principals.

But perhaps the most significant benefit of this solar-energy system is the message it sends to our community, our children, and future generations. By leading by example, we hope to demonstrate how seriously we take our responsibility as stewards of this beautiful island. By choosing sustainability today, we are creating a legacy of environmental consciousness for the leaders of tomorrow.

Lastly, I want to extend my gratitude to all those involved in making this project a reality. From the town's energy, sewer and procurement staff who managed every detail of the project development, to the solar technicians who designed and installed this impressive system, and to the community members who supported this endeavor, each one of you has contributed to a brighter and greener future for Nantucket.

And let us not understate the importance of the generous Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and their Gap Energy grant, without which this accomplishment would not have been possible. To the entire MassDEP team — Commissioner Heiple, Donna Tench, and Mike DiBara, specifically--we extend our most sincere thanks for your unwavering support and dedication to this project over the last several years.

So, in closing, today we celebrate not just the sun power that will illuminate this facility, but also the power of collaboration, innovation, and teamwork. It is through the combined efforts of dedicated individuals, forward-thinking policymakers, and a community that values sustainability that we have reached this momentous achievement. Thank you to all who have been a part of this remarkable journey.