



Rivermoor-Citizens LLC moving forward with Agawam solar panel parks

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By **Sandra Constantine, The Republican**

AGAWAM – Rivermoor-Citizens LLC expects to break ground this spring on two solar panel parks here at a cost of \$4.4 million and \$4.5 million each that will generate electricity to be fed into the Northeast Utilities power grid.

The way was cleared for the groundbreaking by the City Council last week approving tax incentives for the two projects.

“We’re very excited about it,” John H. Tourtelotte, managing director of Rivermoor Energy of Newton, said about the Agawam ventures.

Rivermoor is partnering with **Citizens Energy**, a nonprofit founded by Joseph P. Kennedy III, to do the two projects.

“I think they are showing a lot of leadership,” Tourtelotte said of the local officials he worked with on the venture.

The parks are proposed for 912 Shoemaker Lane and Mushy’s Driving Range at 369 Main St., the site of the former Grasso Landfill. The Shoemaker project is estimated to cost \$4.4 million and the landfill one \$4.5 million.

The tax agreement calls for a payment of taxes of \$5,000 for the first year for the Shoemaker Lane project and \$8,000 for the Main Street one.

The agreement spans 25 years with the Shoemaker land annual payment eventually reaching an estimated \$8,042. Payments will total an estimated \$160,151.

The tax payments on the Main Street site would come to an estimated \$14,470 in the 25th year, for a total of an estimated \$273,262.

Because Rivermoor-Citizens LLC is leasing the sites the city will still collect taxes on the land, according to

Mayor Richard A. Cohen. The taxes paid to the city would be for so-called personal property, that is, equipment used in the two ventures.

The site on Shoemaker Lane is a 14-acre parcel owned by Westmass Area Development that was formerly part of the now-defunct Bowles Airport. Plans call for setting up a complex of solar panels on just under 20 percent of property.

The agreement will also result in the city getting an energy credit from Western Massachusetts Electric Co. of 15 percent, or \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year, on the energy from the Shoemaker Lane operation that Rivermoor-Citizens will sell to the regional electric grid. A 15 percent Western Massachusetts Energy Co. energy credit will also be available on the energy from the former landfill site Rivermoor-Citizens will sell to the regional electric grid will accrue to H.P. Hood on Main Street.

Cohen said is particularly pleased the city can help Hood.

"We want to keep them here; keep local people employed," the mayor said.

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