Dear neighbors,

Unspoken words go unheard and unheeded.

Raise your voice directly by penning a small email to each of these Town Council members. What concerns you most regarding the Solar Amendment? Why do you feel we can do better? Rely on facts and speak for all residents of Portsmouth. There is not one target site, this affects us all.

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Ideas:

1. Concern for the lack of input by residents throughout Portsmouth. *I write to you today concerned that the Solar Ordinance, as presented to the Town Council on May 11, 2020, has not had sufficient resident input. This ordinance will affect every property in Portsmouth and reaches the bare recommended minimum protections. I/We call for further review with a Town Council sub-committee of a Zoning Board sub-committee that represents all stakeholders.*
2. Concern for the character of our Town. *Council members, I have just learned of the solar ordinance that is the subject of a Public Hearing November 23rd. I have read the ordinance and am very concerned that if enacted it will change the character of our Town. One needs only to be near a solar farm to know it is a raw industrial viewscape. The ordinance as presented will threaten our rural routes, our property values, and the character of this Town. We in Portsmouth can do better.*
3. Concern for the Tax Base and Home Value. *Dear Council Member, A recent study by the University of Rhode Island found that there was a significant depreciation in the properties surrounding a large solar farm. There findings were sobering to not just me as a homeowner abutting a site that had a previously declined solar farm, but for the Portsmouth Tax Base as well. The study found that prices of homes within a mile of a solar installation declined by 1.7%. Homes within a tenth of a mile went down by 7%. The study found some of the largest impacts were in suburban communities when a solar project was built on a farm or forested property. In those instances, housing prices within a mile of the array dropped by 5%. Has the Town Council reviewed this impact on residents? What impact would this have on the Tax Base?*
4. Concern for Open Space. *Dear Councilors, your stated planning goals are to preserve community character, enhance fiscal stability, and protect the quality of the natural environment for the benefit of present and future generations. The proposed solar ordinance fails these three core principals. Can we as residents work together to protect our core principals while still providing landowners/developers the right to construct?*
5. Concern for Set-Back. *Dear councilors, I would ask you look out your front window to the middle of your road. Chances are that is 50 feet. How would you feel if your usual summer was filled with hawks, deer, white tail rabbits, ground hogs, and an occasional coyote; to be replaced with row upon row of industrial plight? How would you feel if your average home of $450,000 was now valued at $ 400,000? How would I and my neighbors feel if my quite neighborhood lost millions in equity? 50 foot buffers going to 150 foot buffers protects us all and still provides rights.*