**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT:**

Solar panel deal is eyed to offset roof repair costs

Preferred over Somerset County project

By W. JASON FERRY

Chief Writer

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP — In pursuit of energy, the Board of Edu-

cation has pulled out of a Som-

erset County solar panel instal-

lation project and voted to con-

sider a project in the township.

The board is expected to take an

action vote on Monday, March 28, that striking a

Purchase Agreement (PA) with a developer could generate as much as $1 million

offset the cost of future school roof repairs.

Under a PA, a developer would install new rooftop panels and receive a monthly

payment for the use of the panels. The developer would operate the panels for 15

years while revenues, energy credits, and taxes, in exchange. The school district would own the panels at the end of 15 years and continue to reap

benefits.

School Facilities Administr-
ator Tony Maloney said solar panels on new school buildings would not prevent

construction of future school projects.

"We are at a level to at least meet the third through fifth grade comprehen-
sive masters' cameos of solar panels at the High School Ridge and William A

tumn Middle School parking lots, and ground-mounted solar panels at a field at Main

Street Prospect Elementary School.

But some members previously voted against the county project be-

cause they would be concerned about the appearance of the panels or the pos-

sibility of William Atnis and Mount Prospect.

They said the contents and ground-mounted panels could upset the neighbors.

The new third option didn't "fit any better.

"I'm concerned about the county project, but it is a school project," Board President

Karen Brown said. "I am not sure I like that. You could have issues with parking, road re-

struction and students into those things."

Maloney said: However, the board said it would need to make a de-

cision sooner if it wants to replace the schools this summer.

**County Alternative**

Board member Kenneth Miller, head of the facilities commit-

tee, said there was also a need to decide whether to pursue projects in the county program.

Under that program, the board sent out a request for proposals from five different firms, which was to be 70 percent of of the sale price of the solar panel.

That project would also be limited to those who are eligible for the federal tax credit.

The school board decided to pursue the county program, because the cost would be lower and the money would be returned to the county.

The board approved a $4,000 increase in the budget for the project.

The new members are expected to meet the requirements of the county program over the next 15 years.

"We don't want to have to give up a facility to an outside developer," Maloney said. "I am looking at the opportunity to keep those projects at home and keep the students involved."

The board voted to move forward with the proposal and return to the county program. The board will also be able to pursue the county program if it is required.

**FARMSTEAD ART CENTER**

Civil War talk, art workshops

On April calendar in Bernards

To register, visit http://www.farmsteadartscenter.com. Art and music classes also will begin at the center.

Watercolor classes taught by Berkeley Hills artists Frank Petrucca will be held from 12-1 pm on Saturday, beginning April 4.

Color pencil drawing classes taught by James Brown will be held from 9-11 am, Monday, beginning April 6.

To register, visit www.farmsteadartscenter.com. For more information, call 908-869-9786.

*Plans, visits and visits by artists for all ages will be given by Fred and Mary Ann Farnum on Tuesday.*

To register, visit http://www.farnum.org.

Other upcoming events include: Summer Camp at Farmstead for ages 4-11 from 10-12:30 on Monday, July 11, from 1-3:30 on Monday, July 18, through Friday, July 22.

Lessons will be taught by Michael Aronson at Allenswood School.

To register, visit http://www.farmsteadartscenter.com.

For more information about Bernards, call (973) 542-6781 or visit www.BernardsTOWNSHIP.com.

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