

**Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission****Wednesday, May 17, 2023 – 4:30pm**

Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center  
75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville, GA 30046  
Conference Room C (Second Floor)

**Present: Laura Hernandez, Robert Blatecky, Daniel Hilton, Krupesh Patel, Dr. Marshall Shepherd**

**1. Call to Order**

Laura Hernandez, Chairperson, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone at 4:30pm.

- Robert Blatecky and Krupesh Patel have been reappointed to the GCSC and will continue to serve until 2025.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

{Action: Approved: Blatecky; Second: Shepherd; Vote: 5-0; Hernandez-Yes; Blatecky-Yes; Hilton-Yes; Patel-Yes; Shepherd-Yes}

**3. Approval of Minutes**

The April 19, 2023, meeting minutes were approved.

{Action: Approved: Patel; Second: Hilton; Vote: 5-0; Hernandez-Yes; Blatecky-Yes; Hilton-Yes; Patel-Yes; Shepherd-Yes}

**4. Update on Sustainability Booth at Multicultural Festival**

Gwinnett Multicultural Festival and County Government Open House was held on Saturday, May 13 from 10:00am to 2:00pm at Gwinnett Place Mall. GCSC members Krupesh Patel and Robert Blatecky attended the event and represented the GCSC at the Sustainable Gwinnett booth, raising awareness about opportunities to volunteer on new GCSC Advisory Committees. County staff provided the signup sheets from the event to GCSC Advisory Committee leads for follow-up.

**5. Outgoing Chair Presentation and Discussion on Next Steps**

Laura Hernandez, Chairperson, presented an overview of 2021-2023 accomplishments and next steps for the GCSC. GCSC members discussed recommendations, updates, and lessons learned.

**6. Discussion on Bylaws Amendment: Article VI, Section 2. Eligibility, Election, and Term of Office**

- Motioned to amend Article VI, Section 2. Eligibility, Election, and Term of Office as follows:

*The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the GCSC shall be elected annually, serve a term of one year, and may serve no more than two consecutive terms. ~~Except for the initial year, for a board member to be nominated for the office of Chairperson or Vice Chairperson, the member shall first have actively served on the GCSC for no less than one calendar year and have attended no less than 75% of the previous calendar year's meetings.~~ Election shall be by a majority vote of all members of the GCSC in attendance at the time of election. Except for the initial year, future elections shall be held at the last scheduled meeting of the calendar year ~~or when the office is vacated.~~ The term of office shall begin immediately upon election during the inaugural year of the board ~~and; otherwise, when the office is vacated or on January 1 of the next calendar year for all future regular elections.~~*

*{Action: Approved: Shepherd; Second: Hilton; Vote: 5-0; Hernandez-Yes; Blatecky-Yes; Hilton-Yes; Patel-Yes; Shepherd-Yes}*

#### 7. Election of New Chairperson

- Motioned to elect Robert Blatecky as new Chairperson, effective June 1, 2023.

*{Action: Approved: Shepherd; Second: Hilton; Vote: 5-0; Hernandez-Yes; Blatecky-Yes; Hilton-Yes; Patel-Yes; Shepherd-Yes}*

#### 8. Presentation from Solar CrowdSource

Sophie Mullinax, Project Manager, presented an overview of Solar CrowdSource. Solar CrowdSource consists of community group purchasing programs for Solar Energy and Battery Storage, including the recently launched [Solarize Gwinnett](#) program. Solar CrowdSource's mission is to harness the power of the crowd to reduce the cost of solar and make clean, sustainable energy available to every community.

<https://www.solarcrowdsource.com/>

#### 9. Public Comments

Dr. Scott Presson thanked Laura Hernandez for her efforts as Chairperson and encouraged GCSC members to spread information pertaining to the Solarize Gwinnett program and assess funding opportunities to assist the County in developing a long-term sustainability plan with a pathway to a renewable energy future.

#### 10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:46pm.

*{Action: Approved: Patel; Second: Blatecky; Vote: 4-0; Hernandez-Yes; Blatecky-Yes; Hilton-Yes; Patel-Yes; Absent: Shepherd}*



**SUSTAINABLE**  
Gwinnett

Outgoing Chair  
Presentation & Next  
Steps Discussion

5.17.23

# The GCSC's Broad Mandate

## PURPOSES

- Reviewing and considering the environmental sustainability needs of Gwinnett County now and in the future based upon existing and projected growth patterns.
- Reviewing and assessing environmental sustainability options for Gwinnett County, including those suggested by members of the community.
- Reviewing and assessing the feasibility of differing environmental sustainability options in Gwinnett County.
- Reviewing and assessing options for reducing Gwinnett County's environmental impact through its buildings, fleets, and practices.
- Providing public education and outreach on sustainability issues and encourage the community to reduce its environmental impact.

## OBJECTIVES

- Upon request, reviewing and providing comments on any sustainability plans in which the County is currently engaged, or in which the County plans to engage.
- Upon request, assessing current and planned infrastructure and programs with regard to their level of environmental sustainability, while considering the current and future needs of Gwinnett County's residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Upon request, assessing and providing recommendations for public outreach and education on sustainability issues.
- Preparing at least one annual written report, including recommendations, concerning the County's existing sustainability practices and programs with the goal of maintaining the Gwinnett Standard of being an environmental leader of local governments in Georgia.



Gwinnett

**SUSTAINABLE**  
Gwinnett

# We've Made Meaningful Progress...

- ✓ Familiarized ourselves with the landscape of sustainability teams, organizations, and projects in Gwinnett County Government; provided input on initiatives **(ongoing)**
- ✓ Helped design, launch, and analyze the first public survey that focused on environmental sustainability in Gwinnett County **(May-July 2022)**
- ✓ Recommended the establishment of an Environmental Sustainability Officer role within Gwinnett County Government **(August 2022)**; had recommendation approved
- ✓ Developed and submitted first annual GCSC report to Board of Commissioners and County Administrator's Office **(Sept. 2022)**; presented report to BOC **(Nov. 2022)**
- ✓ Provided recommended revisions to draft of Gwinnett County's first environmental sustainability strategic plan **(October 2022)**
- ✓ Provided strategic input on job description for Environmental Sustainability Officer **(March 2023)**
- ✓ Voted to establish Advisory Committees on sustainability topics of concern to residents and other stakeholders **(March 2023)**

# ...But There Is Still Work to Do

- Launch Advisory Committees to foster citizen engagement and oversight
- Develop closer working relationships with county staff/Internal Sustainability Team
- Forge partnership with new Environmental Sustainability Officer (when hired)
- Receive more opportunities to respond to requests related to 1) assessing current and planned infrastructure and programs with regard to their level of environmental sustainability and 2) assessing and providing recommendations for public outreach and education on sustainability issues
- Continue networking and connecting county with potential community partners
- Collaborate with other relevant county Boards and Commissions (BACs)
- Revisit priority recommendations from 2022 GCSC Annual Report; pursue next steps
- Help county and Environmental Sustainability Officer finalize sustainability plan

# Opportunities to Leverage

- Gwinnett County can be a regional or national leader in sustainability
- Sustainability can deliver cost savings and efficiencies
- Sustainability can deliver more equitability
- Sustainability can enhance quality of life
- As a commission, we now have a good idea of Gwinnett's sustainability strengths and weaknesses and can be an influential voice
- Citizens and county government employees are interested in getting involved and being part of a meaningful movement on sustainability
  - Many local and regional organizations are also driving change and can be partners
- There are significant grants available to fund county sustainability efforts
- Some or all of Gwinnett's cities may be interested in partnering—let's think bigger than unincorporated Gwinnett!

# 2023 Annual Report

- Last year, we discussed the outline for the annual report at our July meeting, reviewed the draft at our August meeting, and submitted it at the end of September
  - Would recommend kicking off the report development process one month earlier this year for better timing with budget process and to allow time for graphic design
- Suggested timeline:
  - **June meeting:** Discuss outline and writing assignments; start working draft in Google Docs
  - **July meeting:** Review draft; finalize and submit to Communications for design
  - **August meeting:** Approve report for submittal to BOC and CA Office by end of month
    - Chair to submit via email on behalf of GCSC



# Discussion

- What is our proudest accomplishment so far?
- What is working well? What is not working well?
- What should the GCSC ideally seek to achieve in the next year?
- How would you like to see your involvement evolve?

**Thank you for the opportunity to serve!**



SOLARIZE  
GWINNETT

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**SolarizeGwinnett.com**

*Clean energy group purchasing program for homes and businesses in participating communities*

# Community Partners

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# What is Solarize?

- Community-based
- Clean energy
- Group purchasing program
- Residential, commercial, and nonprofit
- Makes solar energy and battery storage more accessible, affordable and accurate.



# Why Solar?

- **Convert** an expense into an investment
- **Hedge** against rising utility rates
- **Add value** to homes and businesses
- **Tax incentives** available
- **Low O&M:** operating and maintenance required
- **Monitor** in real time
- **Clean and renewable** energy
- **Contribute** to local carbon reduction goals



# Why Solar Now? Top 5 Reasons in 2023

Federal tax credit available

- 30% in 2023 –  
Inflation Reduction Act

Utility rates are going up  
and electricity usage is  
going up

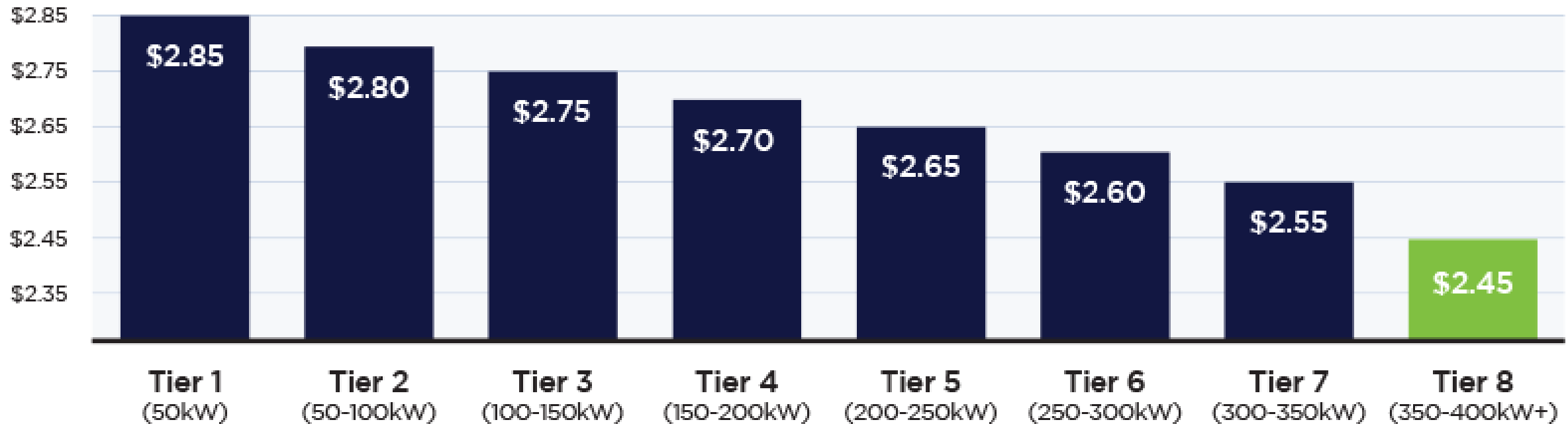
Energy independence and  
self-reliance in times of grid  
uncertainty

Group purchase discount  
through Solarize for limited  
time

Not time like the present: generate your own clean energy on  
your own property using your own resources

# Residential Pricing

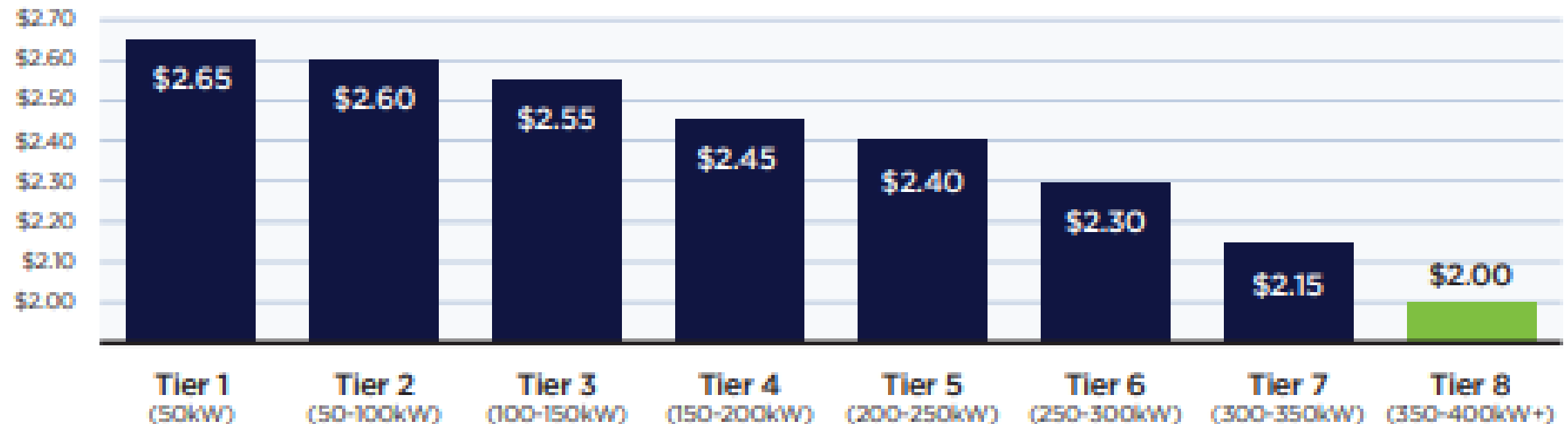
## Solarize Gwinnett Residential Tiered Pricing (aggregate kW)





# Commercial Pricing

Better Tomorrow Commercial Solarize Gwinnett Tiered Pricing  
(flat system size per kW)



# Solarize Benefits

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## Plug and Play

- Vetted contractors
- Vetted materials
- Predetermined discount pricing
- Trusted and safe
- Community support





# Important Dates

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- **May 9, 2023:** Launch
- **September 30, 2023:** Enrollment deadline
- **December 31, 2023:** Residential contract deadline
- **March 31, 2024:** Commercial/nonprofit contract deadline



# **Selected Contractor**

**RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL/NONPROFIT APPLICATIONS**

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