

Town of Falmouth Massachusetts



Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2021



Town of Falmouth
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Falmouth Economic Development Industrial Corporation (EDIC)

The Falmouth EDIC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization established on April 7, 1981 by a Falmouth Town Meeting vote, in accordance with Chapter 121C of the Massachusetts General Laws for the purpose of improving local economic conditions and to promote employment opportunities for Falmouth residents. Our mission is to attract, advocate and support economic vitality and seek to constantly improve the business climate in Falmouth.

Falmouth Landfill Solar - Phase II

In July of 2020 the Falmouth EDIC entered into a 20-year sub-lease agreement with Falmouth Landfill Solar LLC / Citizen's Energy Corp. to develop and operate a second ground mounted solar array energy generation facility on an 18.7-acre portion of land at the Falmouth Dept. of Public Works Waste Management property located at 0 Blacksmith Shop Road in Falmouth, MA – a capped municipal landfill. The Solar Phase II development is a 2 Megawatt (DC) Solar Photovoltaic System.

Landfill Solar Phase II construction began in March 2021, mechanical construction was completed in May 2021 and commercial operations began in August 2021. This solar array is estimated to generate energy production of 2,500,000 Kilowatts of electricity per year and 51,000,000 Kilowatts (51 Gigawatts) over the lifetime of the project. The Falmouth EDIC evenly shares all the solar rental income it receives with the Town of Falmouth, remitting \$88,825 each year to the Town from this 2nd phase of the solar project. Additional to this, the Town will receive approximately \$67,000 annually from Eversource from the sale of net metered credits and Citizens Energy PILOT payments (payment in lieu of taxes); a total of approximately \$155,000 of annual revenue to the Town of Falmouth resulting from the Falmouth Landfill Solar – Phase II.

One of the important elements of the Solar Phase II agreement with Citizen's Energy Corp. was to develop a program to support families in need in Falmouth. To this end, Citizens Energy created the Joe-4-Sun program composed of discounted electricity rates offered to 250 lower income Falmouth

residents (who qualify). Eversource turns this energy into bill credits that will often lower electricity bills by \$40-80 per month, saving 50% on the bill credits - about \$300 a year. The benefit to the Falmouth residents over the lifetime of this program is estimated to reach \$1.7 Million dollars. We are hopeful that the residents in Falmouth will continue to apply and take advantage of these available savings. To learn more or apply to this program go to: [JOE-4-SUN Falmouth | Citizens Energy](#) .



Falmouth Landfill Solar Phase I, a 4 Megawatt (DC) Solar Photovoltaic System was completed in 2017. Since inception thru September 2021 this system has generated 22,236,130 of electricity and is expected to generate 99,000,000 Kilowatts (99 Gigawatts) of energy in the next 20 years. The Phase I project provides approximately \$500,000 each year to the Town from the same sources but with varying amounts as noted in Phase II. Over the course of both of these 20-year agreements, Falmouth Landfill Solar Phase I & II, developed by Falmouth EDIC, will provide the Town of Falmouth with over \$15 Million dollars in revenue.

The Falmouth EDIC is extremely proud of our accomplishment to provide clean and affordable energy to our community with a significant monetary benefit to our Town.

Community Development Block Grant for Small Businesses in Falmouth

The Falmouth Select Board, working in partnership with the Falmouth EDIC, received \$148,840 in funding by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program.

The Falmouth EDIC was responsible to develop the on-line grant application, market the program and facilitate and assist applicants thru the process. These grants for up to \$25,000 are to support low to moderate income business owners of micro-enterprises in Falmouth that have been negatively and significantly impacted by COVID-19 business disruptions. The Falmouth CDBG grant program officially opened and began accepting applications on March 1, 2021.

Working in conjunction with the Falmouth Chamber of Commerce, Cape Cod SCORE and the Town of Falmouth Planning Department, our team awarded a total of \$129,300 in CDBG assistance grants to 13 small businesses in Falmouth as of October 2021. In separate emails to the Select Board, grant recipients expressed just how meaningful the grants have been to their operations. Diane Edelberg owner of Funtastic Getaways in Falmouth, a tour company with three employees, offering senior tours to over 8,000 Cape residents, wrote "I spent 2020 cancelling trips as each month dragged on....The funds from the grant allowed us to be able to print and mail brochures and keep the business going until we were allowed to run tours again. I can't thank you enough for the grant. It was a life saver that came at exactly the right time..." Some of the other Falmouth small businesses receiving grants were Artisan Salon, Byway Barber, Collaborative Therapies, D. Hazelton Inc., Falmouth Auto Center, Stone's Barber Shop, Tanorama Day Spa, The Art of Beauty, Woods Hole Passage Inn and Courtney's Floral Creations.

Interest in the program has been strong but unfortunately many impacted businesses were not able to be awarded due to the stringent State grant guidelines. Never the less, we have been able to award 87% of the grant funds to Falmouth small business that have experienced substantial losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most businesses are using the grant funds to help pay back rent, utilities, payroll, special equipment, supplies and marketing expenses. The Falmouth EDIC is committed to awarding the remaining funds to deserving small businesses in Falmouth before the end of 2021.

Falmouth Station

The original Falmouth Station, located at 50 Depot Avenue, originally a train station, was built in 1872 of wood, and provided service for more than forty years.

The New Haven Railroad improved the station in the summer of 1908 with the addition of platform canopies. In 1914, a new "fancy" brick station was constructed with stone cornices, a red tiled floor and an iron and glass canopy. As the years passed and rail service declined, the station was scheduled to be razed; however, a group of citizens petitioned that the station be saved for usage primarily as a bus station. This third restoration of the Falmouth Station to improve the station facilities was completed in 1989 with funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In 2015, the Falmouth EDIC entered into a long-term ground lease with Mass DOT to acquire and renovate the historic Falmouth Station. In conjunction with the lease, Mass DOT provided the Falmouth EDIC with a \$1.4 million grant to renovate the Station. With the help of its members, local representatives, local business leaders and Mass DOT, this main portion of the renovation project was completed in the Spring of 2017.



The Falmouth EDIC has continued to develop the facility by contributing to date over \$250,000 by adding furniture, air-conditioning, landscaping, outdoor wrought iron hand rails, extra security measures, energy efficient outdoor lighting, among other embellishments. There are on-going endeavors to continue to upgrade the facility. One of the most significant events this year was the award of a \$57,000 in grant funds from MassDevelopment to study and create a master plan of the existing Falmouth Station site inclusive of the development of the 1.4-acre vacant lot that is adjacent the currently used property. The project goals include but are not limited to:

✓ Enhance and improve safety at the station for patrons and visitors

✓ Improve bicycle connections from the Shining Sea bike path as well as Palmer Ave (Route 28)

✓ Identify location and footprint for potential building for workforce housing and/or mixed-use business

✓ Improve and expand parking quantity, access, and overall internal vehicle movement and bus operations.

One of the most popular additions to the Falmouth Station was the opening of the Station Grill café in the summer of 2018, awarding the café tenancy to Chef John Marcellino. This new small business added a much-desired service but also promotes a wonderful social gathering element to the facility. A large assortment of delicious breakfast, lunch, ice-cream, snacks and beverages are served to the bus patrons and Shining Sea Bikeway users. The overall feedback the Falmouth EDIC has received about the café food service is summarized in one word.. “Yum”!

Most importantly, the Falmouth Station offers a wide range of bus service to Falmouth and the Cape Cod community. Peter Pan Bus Lines has been a long-time and valued tenant at the Falmouth Station and continues to operate a 7-day a week bus service to Boston, Logan Airport and Providence RI. This year the Falmouth EDIC was very pleased to add the Plymouth Brockton Street Railways bus service who also provides daily service to Boston, Logan Airport, Providence RI and a new direct route T.F. Green Airport. Though bus runs have been reduced this past year due to COVID-19 and the associated reduction of ridership, these two bus companies are offering in excess of 25 bus runs each day, both to and from Falmouth to locations on Cape Cod, Boston and Rhode Island. This is in addition to the 15 arrival/departures by the Cape Cod Regional Transportation buses to locations to and from Hyannis, and the delightful Whoosh Trolley that passes thru the Falmouth Station transporting local Falmouth travelers 20 times per day during the summer.

At this time, the Falmouth Station does not hold an official designation as a significant historic building from the relevant agencies, nor is it located within the Falmouth Village Historic District. However, the

Falmouth Historical Commission is considering inclusion of this building into the Falmouth Village Historic District and possibly revising the Falmouth Village Green Historic District National Register nomination to include Falmouth Station as a significant contributing building.

In the late 1800’s and early 1900’s the Falmouth Station was noted as one of the busiest railroad stations on Cape Cod. In *The Book of Falmouth*, late historian Phil Choate remembered the Falmouth Depot as the center of activities. The Falmouth EDIC believes that the Falmouth Station has once again become a vibrant, socially centered and important transportation center for our community.

Falmouth Technology Park

In 1979, the Town of Falmouth in Town Meeting purchased 420 acres, with 114 acres set aside for the Falmouth Technology Park – located off Thomas B. Landers Road. In 1981, as its first project, the Falmouth EDIC took on the task of developing the park. All the lots were sold, and currently over 15 businesses now call this park home. During this past year two important events took place regarding the Falmouth Technology Park.

First, the Falmouth EDIC successfully negotiated with the Cape Cod Commission to obtain a multi-year extension of the Falmouth Tech Park’s exemption from the Commission reviews. Tolling the effects of the 2010 Permit Extension Act on the current Development Agreement granted to the Falmouth EDIC in 2018, the Cape Cod Commission signed an Acknowledgement Agreement with the Falmouth EDIC extending the expiration of the Falmouth Technology Park’s Development Agreement from February 2021 to February 2025 and beyond, depending upon when the current State of Emergency is lifted. This action will preserve a competitive advantage for those businesses within the Falmouth Technology Park to further develop their property. It is hoped that this in turn will improve the tax base and job creation in Falmouth.

Second, the Falmouth EDIC was able to advocate, petition and obtain a rezoning of the Falmouth Technology Park to allow for ground mounted solar arrays, thus clearing the way for renewable energy development projects to be included with the Park’s permitted uses. Yet, another added benefit to the

Falmouth Technology Park business owners and business development in Falmouth.

Marine Renewal Energy Collaborative Sponsorship

The Falmouth EDIC successfully submitted and the Seaport Economic Council approved a grant application for grant funding in the amount of \$197,063 in sponsorship and on behalf of the Marine Renewable Energy Collaborative of New England, Inc. (MRECo). The grant funding was provided in by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative and is being used to establish the Massachusetts Ocean Sensor Testbed (MOST) located on the Cape Cod Canal in Bourne, MA.

The MRECo Bourne Tidal Test Stand (BTTS) provides an accessible, secure and stable location for sensor testing. Many businesses and agencies have used the platform in the past or are planning to do so in the future. However, past usage has been limited due to lack of connectivity. This resulted in the need to use battery power and low data rate wireless communications. This funding will allow power and broadband communications to be extended to the platform, greatly enhancing its usability for sensor testing and education. It would also allow the BTTS to be grid connected making it more attractive to tidal developers and will assist to support the economic development of this industry.



The Blue Economy is an essential and growing part of the Massachusetts economy and sensors are a critical enabling technology in every segment of this industry. The oceans represent some \$1.5 trillion in annual global value (World Ocean Council, Feb 2018). As a source of minerals and protein for an ever-expanding world population, this economic impact will grow rapidly in the future. For that growth to be sustainable economically and environmentally, it must be carefully managed and management is only as good as the information available. Therefore, the future health of the oceans will be dependent on the ability of sensors and instruments to measure and monitor the physical, chemical and biological properties on an ever-broader scale. The estimated annual impact of the MOST effort is \$900,000 and 14 full time jobs in the Blue Economy. The site also will provide the opportunity for students to learn about sensors and their capabilities.

The testing platform upgrade is currently well underway and is expected to be completed by March 2022. The Falmouth EDIC was pleased to be able to assist MRECo with this important project that will not only benefit Falmouth, but other coastal Towns, Universities, businesses and environmental agencies associated with the Blue Economy.

OpenCape/ Main Street Gigabit Project

In 2019 the Falmouth EDIC and the Falmouth Chamber of Commerce approached OpenCape on behalf of Falmouth Main Street merchants who were having consistent difficulties related to internet connectivity. At times unable to even run credit cards for sales, these local businesses were suffering due to slow or intermittent internet.

After researching a variety of funding opportunities to develop a connectivity platform to the OpenCape fiber-optic network that would be affordable to the Falmouth business community, the EDIC and OpenCape teamed up with MassDevelopment to become one of their initial recipients of a newly launched loan program, TechDollars, which assists nonprofit organizations in the State to implement regional technology initiatives. OpenCape was able to secure a \$200,000 loan with the EDIC acting as guarantor. \$50,000 of this loan is being used solely for free connections to local business owners to the OpenCape high speed fiber optic internet service. Falmouth's Statehouse delegation also assisted to

secure an \$80,000 grant from the Massachusetts Office of Business Development, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development to complete the necessary funding package.

OpenCape's Falmouth Business Gigabit Project, so called because its connected businesses have access to a shared Gigabit of Internet, including connections to the downtown area which is scalable in the future for all of the Falmouth region, including Woods Hole to support a wide swath of Falmouth businesses.

Together, the EDIC and OpenCape worked to market and are continuing to promote the "free connection program"; i.e. the \$50,000 funding to be used for the free installation/ connection of the OpenCape fiber-optic internet service to Falmouth businesses. This has been saving each business owner anywhere between \$600 - \$1,700 depending on the complexity of the installation. It was unfortunate that the foundational groundwork for the project was not completed until the beginning of 2020. And then, the COVID-19 pandemic arrived and many local businesses were not open or they were not comfortable with either letting installation staff into their facilities or making any business changes. With the continued reduction of COVID-19 transmission, this situation is improving. To date 43 Falmouth Businesses have connected to the OpenCape fiber optic internet free of charge. There are still funds available for additional connections and OpenCape's Stephen Tom, Customer Care & Development for Main Street Initiatives, is actively out and about on Main Street, educating and assisting Falmouth business owners about this beneficial program and opportunity.

The Falmouth EDIC, OpenCape and the Falmouth Chamber of Commerce contributed an extensive amount of development, planning and community outreach to be able to embark on the Falmouth Business Gigabit Project, bringing progressive, stable, reliable and affordable internet connectivity to the Falmouth Main Street area businesses.

Feasibility Study for a Community Fiber Optic Network

The Falmouth EDIC contracted CCG Consulting to conduct a feasibility study to analyze Falmouth's

broadband infrastructure and make recommendations regarding the viability of a new, alternative, broadband network that would address shortcomings and limitations in the current system and provide capacity for future growth in Falmouth, MA.

The idea of a Falmouth community network was conceived by a grassroots group of Falmouth residents as a competitive, locally controlled alternative to service providers like Comcast or Verizon. In June 2019, FalmouthNet brought its idea to the EDIC, and the Board voted to fund a \$50,000 feasibility study. Christopher Land, Chairman of the Falmouth EDIC noted "All sectors of Falmouth's economy require reliable, high speed Internet service. This first ever assessment will give us a handle on what problems our residents and businesses are experiencing and whether a community fiber optic network is a possible solution".

CCG Consulting surveyed Falmouth residents and businesses about their current internet services, their desires for future service as well as examined Falmouth's communications infrastructure to determine the cost of building an envisioned network and defined several options for financing and operating a new more stable and functional network. The final report was completed in November 2020. The top-line findings as reported in the study's Executive Summary is "that a community network in Falmouth is feasible and is needed. Slow broadband speeds put Falmouth at a competitive disadvantage. The long-term residential demand for a new network could be as high as 61% of Falmouth homes. Business demand is also likely to be substantial. There are several scenarios under which a Falmouth Community Network could be financially successful. That said, there are significant issues to be addressed. The cost of building fiber to the entire town is approximately \$70 million, so financing is critical, though there are intriguing alternate financing models that could require substantially less borrowing. Furthermore, community support is critical. The decision whether to build a community network must be made locally".

The Falmouth EDIC presented the full results of the feasibility study to the Falmouth Board of Selectmen in May 2021. The FalmouthNet group has continued to work on this project with the EDIC to gather information: speaking to network builders, engineering firms and ISP's to research how to best build, operate and fund a community network in

Falmouth. There also has been significant outreach activities to the residents, business owners and Town and State agencies to educate and collaborate with the Falmouth community. Their goal is to move the feasibility study into a reality. The Falmouth EDIC supports FalmouthNet's endeavors, believing that a reliable, affordable locally-directed, fiber optic internet network capable of serving all residents, businesses, non-profit and government entities is an important step for the future well-being and economic development of Falmouth.