Berkshire Design Group

October 6, 2026

Town of Lee
Planning Board
Town Hall
32 Main Street
Lee, MA 01238

RE: Open Door Community Church – Photovoltaic System
87 Summer St, Lee, MA 01238
Special Permit Application

Dear Planning Board members,

On behalf of the property owner, Open Door Community Church, Berkshire Design Group - in collaboration with EcoSave Home Solutions and Old Glory Solar - respectfully submits the attached Special Permit Application for your review and approval.

In accordance with the Town of Lee Zoning Bylaws **§199-10.4 (*Solar Photovoltaic Installations*)**, this project requires a special permit from the Planning Board for proposed construction of a medium-sized solar photovoltaic installation within the R-20 Residential Zoning District.

The proposed project consists of a ground-mounted solar array and associated underground utility infrastructure within the previously developed central portion of the property. The following narrative summarizes site conditions, potential impacts, and proposed mitigation measures depicted in the accompanying site plans and documents.

SITE OVERVIEW

The project site is located at 87 Summer Street (Assessor's Map 012.0-0000-0150.0). The nearly 30-acre property lies on the southern side of Summer Street and is zoned R-20 (low-to-medium density residential), as are the surrounding residential properties. The parcel extends south to Mandalay Road and has the configuration of a flag lot, bounded by residential properties on three sides with primary access provided via an existing paved driveway off Summer Street.

While much of the parcel consists of undeveloped forest and meadow, the central portion of the site contains existing buildings and cleared areas. Construction will be strictly confined to this previously developed central zone, preserving the undeveloped acreage. Estimated wetlands exist on the larger property; however, the proposed work limit lies entirely outside all wetland resource areas and their associated 100-foot buffer zones.

PROPOSED SITE WORK & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The project entails the installation of a new ground-mounted solar array and associated utility work, primarily consisting of driven ground-screw posts and underground utility trenching.

Limit of work
All work is proposed within the previously developed portion of the site, minimizing disturbance to undeveloped land and nearby resource areas. Within those constraints, the array location was selected to optimize solar production.

Topography and Grading
Site topography generally slopes from the southwest toward wetland areas in the southeast and northwest corners of the property. Within the limits of work, the existing buildings occupy a local high point; the proposed array would sit approximately 15 feet lower, closer to the treeline. A second local high point lies between the proposed array area and the rear of the residential properties along Summer Street. This topography, combined with existing vegetation, provides a natural visual buffer between the array and neighboring properties.

Erosion Control
The erosion control plan includes perimeter controls, protection of steep slopes, and additional measures detailed on Sheet LC-101. Because the array utilizes a racking system with in-ground anchors rather than a concrete foundation, the anticipated earth disturbance is comparatively minimal.

Vegetation
The work area consists entirely of existing lawn, so no tree removal is anticipated. Areas disturbed during construction will be reseeded as specified on the site plans. No additional buffer or screening plantings are proposed because of the array's distance from property lines, its lower elevation, and the density of existing vegetation already provide adequate screening.

Environmental & Flood Standards
According to MassGIS and FEMA data, the project limits fall entirely outside mapped Priority and Estimated Habitats of Rare Species (NHESP) and outside both the 100-year and 500-year floodplains.

Utilities (Electric)
The site plans show proposed trenching for underground conduit extending beneath the existing driveway. Metering equipment will be installed at the eastern corner of the existing building, with the main service panel located in the basement directly below.

CONCLUSION

This project has been thoughtfully designed to avoid impacts on environmental resource areas and neighboring properties. Because it will be situated entirely within an existing lawn area on a previously disturbed portion of the site, the installation requires no tree removal and limits land disturbance. Furthermore, as a passive use, the array will not generate traffic, emit noise, or place any additional demands on municipal systems.

For these reasons, we believe the proposal is fully consistent with the intent of the zoning bylaws and meets all application requirements. We respectfully request that the Planning Board approve this Special Permit Application and welcome the opportunity to discuss the proposal at your upcoming meeting.

Sincerely,

Berkshire Design Group