

www.wymanparkcommunity.org

Wyman Park

Community Association

Putting Solar on Your Own Roof

By Scott Kaufman, Tudor Arms Avenue



just put panels on my own house? You can. I did it in 2019, so I have real numbers – and a warning about timing.

What mine cost, and what it does

I have a 5.7 kilowatt array on the flat roof of my house on Tudor Arms. It cost \$18,411 installed; a 30% federal tax credit and a \$1,000 Maryland grant brought my real cost to \$11,887. Over the past two years the roof has covered roughly 90 to 97 percent of my household's electricity. Maryland utilities also buy certificates for what you generate – mine bring in about \$37 a month.

The payback arithmetic is simple enough to do on the back of an envelope. An array this size makes somewhere around 7,000 kilowatt-hours a year, worth roughly \$1,200 at current BGE rates, plus the certificate income. Against \$11,887, that's payback in about eight years. Seven years in, I'm at or near it – and the panels have no moving parts.

How I bought it

I found Lumina Solar through a Civic Works solar co-op, a Baltimore nonprofit that negotiates pricing with vetted installers. That mattered, because most Baltimore installers refused flat roofs, and Lumina was the only one willing. My worry then was whether they'd still exist in ten years, since a workmanship warranty is only as good as the

installer. It was misplaced: they still monitor my system, and they have called me in anticipation of issues rather than wait for something to go wrong.

Be prepared for it to take a while. From first meeting to switch-on took me about eight months: proposal, financing, site survey, structural engineering, a BGE interconnection application, city permits, a roof replacement, then installation, inspection, and BGE's permission to operate. The panels themselves went up in a day.

Two deadlines

The 30% federal tax credit is gone. It ended for systems placed in service after December 31, 2025. Buy today with cash or a loan and your federal credit is zero – thousands of dollars' difference from what I paid. The one exception is leasing, or a power purchase agreement: the company that owns the panels can still claim a credit through 2027 and reflect some of it in your rate. You don't own the system and the long-run economics are usually worse, but it's the only place federal money still touches the deal.

Maryland's one-for-one net metering is scheduled to end. Today every kilowatt-hour you export earns a credit at full retail, around 17 to 18 cents – the engine of the whole economic case. Legislation passed in April sunsets it July 1, 2027, or sooner if the state hits a 3,000 megawatt cap, and what replaces it will pay noticeably less. Set that against an eight-month project and the conclusion

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Volunteers needed to serve on the Wyman Park Community Board.

There are currently several openings on the WPCA board that need to be filled by new volunteers. Board members serve a three year term that can be renewed for an additional three years. Officers serve 1-year terms and can be re-elected for a maximum of 3 years. If you would like to be considered to serve on the WPCA Board or run for an officer position, please submit interest in writing by August 21, 2026 by emailing rialster@gmail.com, mrosewinsweeney@aol.com or elisherlock93@gmail.com.

Candidate descriptions will be published in September WPCA newsletter and the election will be held virtually at the WPCA general meeting on October 13.

Mark your calendars for the remaining 2026 meetings of the Wyman Park Community Association.

October 13

Elections and General Meeting

December 8

Final General Meeting for 2026

Neighborhood Noticings.

By Mark Hachey

I don't generally go for the scientific names of things, except when I find them more poetic than the common name. Take our native perennial "Foxglove Beardtongue" – to me, that sounds like someone sneezed on a dictionary and ran out of tissues with four words left. Its cousin, "Hairy Beardtongue", could be a Hobbit who has spent a few nights in jail.

Their latin versions, however, are like little poems – penstemon digitalis sounds like a spell Harry Potter might cast to improve your handwriting. Hirsutus digitalis, to remove unwanted hair from your toes.

Penstemon digitalis is in a lot of gardens around here and grows wild in spots. Sometimes all green stems and foliage, sometimes a burgundy stem with a burgundy rib on the leaf. Deep tubular flowers, white or pink.

"Bombus" is the fancy name for bumble bees and, while plenty pleasant, we nailed it with the rotund "bumble bee". In the vast amount of research I do for this, I learn that "bumble", "bombus", "bomb" and "buzz" are all linguistically related (also that opinions vary on "bumblebee" vs "bumble bee").

That buzz comes in handy for "buzz pollination". When their normal methods (using static electricity!) are ineffective in fully extracting pollen from a flower, they will wedge themselves into that flower and vibrate their bodies to shake loose the stubborn bits, like rocking a



Illustration by Mark Hachey

vending machine to get that last Zagnut. The bees collect this pollen into "saddle bags" for transport back to the hive.

This dance isn't rare. Though we're past peak penstemon, you can observe it right here, and even peep those packed panniers. If you find a patch of penstemon where the bees are busy, stop a while and watch. You'll see them hover, enter, and (perhaps) shake that honey maker.



A Wonderful Picnic for Wyman Park! *Photos by Eli Sherlock*

The annual picnic on June 6 was a rousing success. Thanks to all who attended!



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Wyman Park Pedestrian Bridge Replacement Update

By Andrea Rackowski and Dan Harvey

Work continues on the replacement of the pedestrian bridge over Stony Run in Wyman Park.

As of mid-July, crews had constructed a temporary path for equipment and had begun placing cement and grout bags to reinforce the retaining walls on both sides of the stream where the new bridge will connect.

This work is an important part of stabilizing the walls on either side of the bridge before the final stabilization that will allow it to be reopened.

DPW estimates that the work should be completed in approximately three weeks, putting the anticipated completion around mid-August, assuming the project stays on schedule.

Although the work may appear extensive, much of it is focused on ensuring the stability of the retaining walls, protecting the stream banks, and providing a secure foundation for the new bridge.

If one cannot wait to be able to use the bridge again! Fingers crossed for a speedy completion of the project.

The JHU Data Science and AI Institute (DSAI) Is Not a Data Center

By Arne Schon, PhD

It has come to our attention that some members of our community believe the buildings currently under construction in the Remington area are data centers. This is an unfortunate misunderstanding, and I was asked to help clarify the purpose of these buildings and explain what they are actually intended for.

We are all familiar with the large data centers built solely to house vast numbers of computer servers and networking equipment that continuously deliver the digital services we rely on every day. Few people would want such energy and water consuming buildings in their neighborhood and no one, not even a JHU employed computer engineer, would like to have them close to the JHU Homewood Campus. What JHU is building is something fundamentally different.

The new Data Science and AI Institute is a research and educational facility dedicated to advancing data science and artificial intelligence in areas such as neuroscience, medicine, and climate resilience. Its mission is to educate students, foster scientific discovery, not to operate as a commercial data center. The buildings will not require more electricity than the typical academic building.

For additional information please see <https://jhfre.jhu.edu/capital-projects/projects/dsai/>

WPCA MONTHLY Neighborhood Happy Hour

Join us! If you haven't been, come out sometime:
Third Thursday every month,
5 PM, at Rocket to Venus.

Next one: August 20, 2026.



THE WYMAN PARK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC.

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How to Join:

- 1) PayPal or Credit Card: visit www.wymanparkcommunity.org;
- 2) Mail a personal check made payable to "WPCA" along with your name, address, phone number, and mail to:
Michael Siers, Treasurer,
608 W 33rd St.
Baltimore MD 21211
- 3) NEW!! Scan the QR code to pay your WPCA Dues . \$15 per year



Putting Solar on Your Own Roof

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is uncomfortable but clear: if solar interests you at all, now is when to look at it.

The honest difficulties

Shade is disqualifying, and Wyman Park has beautiful mature trees; a good installer will model your roof and tell you the truth. If your roof is near the end of its life, replace it first. And the one that surprises everyone: the panels don't work in a blackout. Grid-tied solar must shut down when the grid fails, so crews aren't working on live lines. Sunny day, dark house. Backup takes a battery and a transfer gateway – a separate project, well over \$10,000.

Where to start

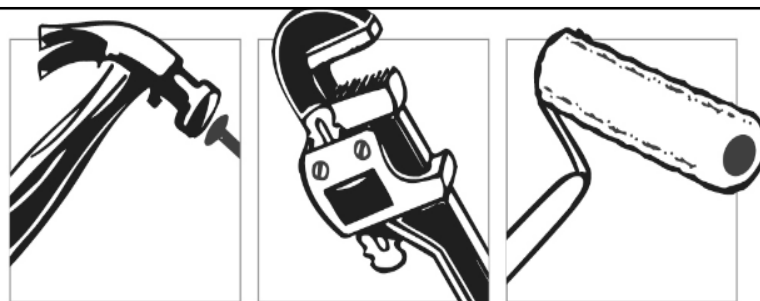
Pull twelve months of BGE bills and note your annual kilowatt-hours; every conversation starts there. Then call Lumina (or another solar installer if you have one) and the process will unfold from there. It's a long haul but it's worth it!

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