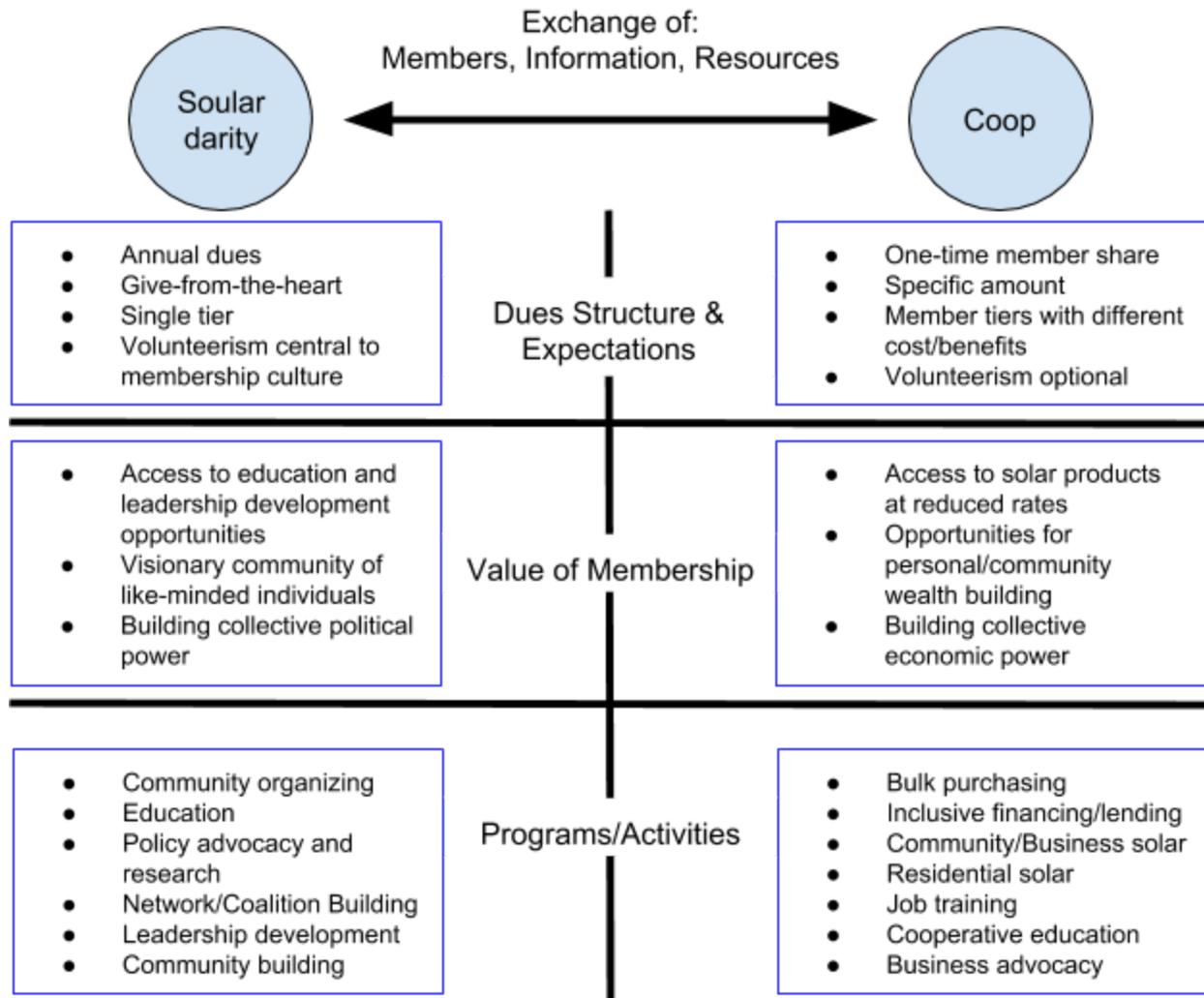# SOULARDARITY

Organizing for Infrastructure in Highland Park, MI

OVERALL VISION: Create two distinct forms of membership with clear value propositions. One is membership in Soulardarity as a movement building non-profit. The other is in the (currently untitled) Energy Coop as an avenue for personal and community wealth building.

THE STRUCTURE: FIGHT AND BUILD

This model can be understood in terms of creating two structures with two primary functions: fight and build. Soulardarity becomes focused on fighting for structural change, liberating resources from bad systems, and building the community.. The Coop is formed to build the new system, channeling resources into community-owned clean energy and organizing the buying power of the community into enterprises that reflect our values.

Exchange of:
Members, Information, Resources

Soular darity ←→ **Coop**

Dues Structure & Expectations

Soulardarity	Coop
• Annual dues • Give-from-the-heart • Single tier • Volunteerism central to membership culture	• One-time member share • Specific amount • Member tiers with different cost/benefits • Volunteerism optional

Value of Membership

Soulardarity	Coop
• Access to education and leadership development opportunities • Visionary community of like-minded individuals • Building collective political power	• Access to solar products at reduced rates • Opportunities for personal/community wealth building • Building collective economic power

Programs/Activities

Soulardarity	Coop
• Community organizing • Education • Policy advocacy and research • Network/Coalition Building • Leadership development • Community building	• Bulk purchasing • Inclusive financing/lending • Community/Business solar • Residential solar • Job training • Cooperative education • Business advocacy

HOW WILL THEY INTERACT?

We envision an ongoing exchange of resources between the two structures, as mutually reinforcing wings of the same central body of work. Here are a few examples of how they might interact:

Example 1: Leadership Development

Tierra is a homeowner and single mother who can't afford a DTE bill on a new light for her house, which she needs to feel secure in her home. She joins the Coop to get a small loan to install solar lighting, which fits her budget and works tremendously. The next year, she gets a low-interest loan through the Coop to weatherize her home, which saves her a lot of money every month, and becomes excited about investing in clean energy. She finds out at the next Coop meeting that Michigan laws prevent low-income people, like herself, from investing in community solar. Angry, she asks what can be done and is directed to the Soulardarity working group on community solar policy. She attends the next meeting, gets involved, and later goes to the public service commission with a Soulardarity contingent to give comment on the policy, having received training from Soulardarity on public speaking and advocacy. She is now a member of both the Coop and Soulardarity and a champion of clean energy in her community.

Example 2: Sharing services for mutual benefit

The Coop runs an annual bulk purchase of solar lighting and generators, with discounts for Coop members. It establishes a contract with Soulardarity to provide 2 educational events in exchange for 10% of program revenue. At the close of the bulk purchase, the program was able to generate $5000 of revenue thanks to Soulardarity's expertise in community education. Soulardarity takes $500, which covers the cost of staff time and administration, the Coop distributes $2000 back to the members, and reinvests $2500 in the future program. The Coop was able to expand their bulk purchase size, and Soulardarity generated new members and built community capacity.

Example 3: Transformative solutions

Soulardarity is advocating for the City of Highland Park to negotiate an agreement with DTE in which DTE will contribute a portion of their profits to local clean energy businesses for job training, but elected officials are not convinced of the benefits. The Coop, which has already installed solar on 5 buildings in Highland Park, supports the advocacy by providing data on the savings the buildings achieved, the number of Highland Parkers who were employed by the installations, and the growth potential this agreement would create. This data, combined with personal testimonials from the Highland Parkers employed by the Coop, encourages elected officials to negotiate with DTE and secure the funding. This advocacy victory for Soulardarity becomes a victory for the Coop as well. The Coop appies for and receives funding through the new agreement and is able to train more Highland Parkers for solar installation.

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SOULARDARITY MEMBERSHIP?

The following changes will go into effect following the 2018 annual meeting:

- **Dues amount** will change to Give-From-The-Heart model. Members will need to give at least $10 annually, and still be encouraged to give at least the $50 which pays for the cost of membership. Additionally, we will provide annually a $ amount per member which would be needed for the organization to be 100% member-funded, and encourage members to give as much as they can to move towards member-funded operations.

- **Expiration and Renewal** will be simplified. Once annually, in the time leading up to the annual meeting, a member renewal form will be sent out to all current members. It will include what you pledge to donate during that year. At the time of any decision or benefit which applies to eligible members, the following will be assessed to determine eligibility:
  - Has the member donated at least the $10 minimum in the past 12 months?
  - Has the member filled out the renewal form for the current member year (demarcated by the annual meeting)?

- **Specific Member Benefits:** Staff will have the operational authority to assign specific benefits to different levels of giving, such as receiving thank-you gifts or programmatic benefits, from year to year.

- **Membership Drives** will be held annually, in the lead-up to the annual meeting. These drives will be focused on renewing memberships with increased pledges, growing new memberships, and encouraging members to vote on new board members and member issues.

- **Member Meetings** will be held quarterly, with one of those meetings being the annual meeting, on the first Saturday of June. These meetings will be focused on conversations about member issues and will happen on a regular schedule, with roughly the focus areas identified in the schedule on the following page.

The ED Jackson Koeppel is currently seeking board approval for these changes to membership.

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Meeting Date	1st Sat Feb	1st Sat June	2nd Thursday Sept	1st Sat Dec.
Standing Topics	*Formation of Annual Meeting Committee *Annual priorities/goals *Action group ideation	Annual Meeting: *Board election *Financial report *Program report	*Year-end fundraising *Action group ideation	*Year-end assessment *Action group ideation
Member Leadership Needs	*Meeting volunteering	*Member drive *Board candidate recruitment *Meeting volunteering	*Meeting volunteering *Year-end fundraising	*Meeting volunteering *Year-end fundraising