



Legislation Text

File #: 19-228B, Version: 1

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

ACTION REQUESTED:

Waive the first reading and pass the ordinance amending 6-15-2 (Definitions), Section 6-15-5 (Authorization of Use and Height), and other applicable sections pertaining to Solar Energy Systems (PZC 19-1-021)

DEPARTMENT: Transportation, Engineering and Development

SUBMITTED BY: Scott Williams, AICP

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW:

The Planning and Zoning Commission considered this matter on March 20, 2019 and voted to recommend approval of the request (approved 7-0). Staff concurs.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Naperville is pursuing a national SolSmart designation as part of the objectives to advance renewable energy, enact policies to support clean energy, and engage the community in clean energy practices in accordance with the 2010 Naperville Sustainability Plan. This effort is also consistent with the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus' Greenest Regional Compact (GRC) that the City of Naperville joined in April 2017 (Resolution 17-251). The GRC promotes sustainability across the Chicago region with an emphasis on building strong and vibrant communities.

Naperville has partnered with 23 other area communities in pursuit of SolSmart designation in a collaborative effort facilitated by the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus. Currently, 18 communities in Illinois have SolSmart designation. The City's SolSmart application is attached and includes the solar statement and a summary of the different designations (Bronze, Silver and Gold). SolSmart status is a national recognition for communities as being "solar friendly." Communities with this designation have streamlined processes, clear requirements, and trained staff to properly examine and inspect finished work.

As a required part of the application process, national solar experts at SolSmart performed an audit of Section 6-15-5 of the Naperville zoning code and identified potential areas of improvement, cited model code examples, and assigned priority levels. The attached technical review is meant to assist with reducing barriers to installation, streamlining review processes, and adopting best practices.

DISCUSSION:

In 2010 and 2013 the City took the initiative and updated the zoning code sections governing solar energy systems. These comprehensive efforts have resulted in the audit identifying very few items of low and medium priority. As shown in the attachment, these comments are relatively minor and limited in number, particularly compared to other communities in the cohort, some of whom are

developing ordinances for the very first time.

Staff has prepared an amendment to the code addressing the comments received. If adopted by the Council, staff is confident that the City will receive at least silver SolSmart designation.

The following is a summary of the recommend changes:

- Increase permitted height of rooftop and ground-mounted installations.
- Allow smaller sized ground-mounted installations in residential districts as permitted uses.
- Decrease the setbacks for ground-mounted installations.

Planning & Zoning Commission Action

The Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) considered this matter at its March 20 meeting. No members of the public testified at the hearing. A member of PZC asked about neighboring communities' SolSmart Designations. The PZC moved to recommend approval of PZC 19-1-021 (approved 7-0). Staff concurs with the commission's recommendation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A