



Legislation Text

File #: 19-288, Version: 1

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

ACTION REQUESTED:

Receive the Zoning Review Report findings provided as a part of the City of Naperville's SolSmart Application. Conduct the public hearing to consider amendments to the Naperville Zoning Code, based on the Zoning Review Report, pertaining to Solar Energy Systems (PZC 19-1-021).

DEPARTMENT: Transportation, Engineering and Development

SUBMITTED BY: Scott Williams, AICP

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW:

Staff has prepared proposed amendments to the solar energy systems portions of the zoning code for public hearing and before the Planning and Zoning Commission. Official notice for the public hearing for PZC 19-1-021 was published in the Daily Herald on March 4, 2019.

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 Mayors Caucus' Greenest Regional Compact (GRC) the City of Naperville joined in April 2017 (Resolution 17-251). The GRC promotes sustainability in Chicago communities across the region with an emphasis on building strong and vibrant communities.

Naperville has partnered with 23 other communities in the region in pursuit of SolSmart designation in a collaborative effort facilitated by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. Currently, 18 communities in Illinois have SolSmart designation. Attachment A is the City's SolSmart application which includes the City's 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 SolSmart application process, national solar experts at SolSmart performed an audit of Section 6-15-5 of the Naperville Zoning Ordinance and identified potential areas of improvement, cited model code examples and assigned a priority level (Attachment B). This technical review is meant to assist with reducing barriers to installation, streamlining review processes and adopting best practices.

Staff is presenting these findings for PZC for review. Presentation of this information to the PZC provides the City of Naperville with 5 additional points in the SolSmart application. Currently, the City is on track to obtain the Bronze designation. The City cannot earn a higher designation unless

zoning amendments are approved as detailed below.

DISCUSSION:

The City in 2010 and again in 2013 took the initiative and updated the zoning code sections governing solar energy systems. The comprehensive efforts of the city to proactively address these requirements has resulted in the audit identifying very few items of low and medium priority. As shown in Attachment B, these comments are very limited in number and relatively minor, particularly compared to other communities in the evaluation cohort, some of whom are developing ordinances for the very first time.

Staff has provided in Attachment C an analysis of the zoning review, including draft ordinance revisions to address the comments received. 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.

Preparation of amendment language provides the City with 5 additional points in its SolSmart application. However, in order for the City of Naperville to receive a status beyond Bronze, it is required that ordinance amendments addressing the zoning review comments be approved. If zoning code amendments are approved, staff is confident the City of Naperville will receive at least silver SolSmart designation.