

City of Ellsworth
Planning Board Workshop Minutes
Wednesday, July 6, 2022 5:30 PM

Chair John DeLeo, Vice Chair Rick Lyles, Secretary Nelson Geel, Members Marc Rich and Molly Friedland, Alternate Members Patrick Lyons and Michael Hangge, City Planner Elena Piekut, Code Enforcement Officer Lori Roberts, Fire and Life Safety Inspector Thomas Canavan, and Assistant City Planner Matthew Williams attended.

1. Call to Order

Chair DeLeo called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM.

2. Staff Comments

City Planner Piekut provided a brief overview of: purpose of workshop (work session rather than public hearing), focus on solar development in light of Council's moratorium set to expire in October 2022; materials and resources provided in advance as well as plans to engage consultant for joint workshop with Council. City Planner Piekut also provided attendees with potential changes to the local ordinances most affected by solar energy projects.

3. Review and Prioritization of Potential Amendments

- a. Chapter 56 Unified Development Ordinance, Article 3 Zoning Districts and Zoning Map
- b. Chapter 56 Unified Development Ordinance, Article 8 Performance Standards
- c. Chapter 56 Unified Development Ordinance, Article 14 Definitions

Alternate Member Michael Hangge led a discussion of how to best handle decommissioning:

- Tighten up language surrounding decommissioning so we have consistent results across projects.
- We cannot be completely accurate with our predictions of decommissioning costs, but we can be fair by charging each project by the same standards.

Attendees then moved into a discussion headed by Alternate Member Patrick Lyons about potential Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) requirements to benefit the City yearly along with the upfront permit and building fees.

Attendees moved into a discussion regarding updating definitions and allowed uses in different zones under Chapter 56 Unified Development Ordinance, Article 3 Zoning Districts and Zoning Maps.

Members moved into discussion on potential amendments regarding solar energy systems:

- A template for decommissioning guarantees
- Updating definitions
- Whether it is still necessary to distinguish between "medium" and "large" scale projects
- Suitability of sites such as brownfields, clearcuts, old landfills, other marginal lands; rooftops, parking lots
- How to harmonize maintaining agricultural land use and solar energy.
- Do some of these restrictions only affect solar? Do we place the same requirements on other industries?

4. Next Steps

Schedule a Joint Workshop with the City Council regarding the solar moratorium; Provide a draft outline of potential amendments; Research how other similar cities have handled the influx of solar projects.

5. Adjournment

Adjourned 7:57 PM.

Minutes prepared by: Matthew Williams, Assistant City Planner.

Date

Nelson Geel, Secretary

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