



CHELSEA PLANNING COMMISSION WORK SESSION Agenda

February 6, 2024

7:00 PM

Chelsea City Council Chambers

311 S. Main Street

Remote option available for members of the public; commissioners must attend in person.

Agenda:

1. Call to Order
2. Draft Solar Ordinance
3. Staff Updates
4. Adjournment

Zoom Information:

When: Feb 6, 2024 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Planning Commission - Tuesday, February 6, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83412933997?pwd=OHJTY29nZlRxBzNHcFByVnpJdXZiQT09>

Webinar ID: 834 1293 3997

Passcode: 646045

Persons requiring reasonable accommodations due to disabilities in order that the meeting is accessible to them are requested to notify the Chelsea Planning Commission of such disability no later than five (5) business days prior to the date of the meeting.

Item 2
Proposed Zoning Ordinance
Amendment:
Solar



Carlisle | Wortman
ASSOCIATES, INC.

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MEMORANDUM

TO: City of Chelsea Planning Commission
FROM: Paul Montagno, AICP
Michelle Marin, AICP Candidate
DATE: February 2, 2024
RE: Draft Solar Ordinance

Per our discussion at the December work session, we have edited the draft solar ordinance. We intend for this draft ordinance to be used to initiate discussions of where and how solar energy systems will be sited, designed, and zoned in Chelsea.

Since the January work session, we added an Applicability section to indicate that the ordinance applies to projects that do not stand to be preempted by the recently signed package of bills meant to streamline the permitting process for large, utility-scale wind, solar, and energy storage facilities within the state. Carlisle Wortman Associates is preparing a separate memorandum with recommendations for local action to ensure compliance and compatibility with these state regulations.

We look forward to discussing this draft ordinance at the work session on February 6, 2024.

Sincerely,

CARLISLE/WORTMAN ASSOC., INC
Paul Montagno, AICP
Principal

CARLISLE/WORTMAN ASSOC., INC.
Michelle Marin, AICP Candidate
Community Planner

Section 4.29 – Solar Energy Systems

1. Intent.

The City of Chelsea promotes the effective and efficient use of solar energy systems. To protect public health, safety, and welfare, it is in the interest of the City to regulate the siting, design, and installation of solar energy systems so that they are compatible with the subject and neighboring land uses.

2. Applicability.

This section applies to any solar energy system or facility with a nameplate capacity below 50 megawatts.

2.3. Definitions.

- (a) *Solar energy system*: A solar photovoltaic cell, panel, or array that converts solar energy to usable thermal, mechanical, chemical, or electrical energy.
- (b) *Ground-mounted solar energy system*: A freestanding solar energy system that is not attached to and is separate from any building on the same parcel on which the solar energy system is located.
- (c) *Building-mounted solar energy system*: A solar energy system that is attached to a building on a parcel as the principal method of physical support.

3.4. Permit required.

Building-mounted solar energy system installations require a zoning compliance permit, approved by the Community Development Department. Ground-mounted solar energy system installations require a site plan that may be approved administratively. All solar energy systems proposed as part of a site plan must be indicated on the site plan.

4.5. Exemptions.

The following instances are exempt from review by the Community Development Department.

- (a) The installation of a solar energy system to power a single device or specific piece of equipment such as a lawn ornament, lights, weather station, clock, well pump, or other similar device, provided that the solar energy system is no larger than six (6) square feet and the device itself is not subject to zoning compliance approval.
- (b) The repair or replacement of an existing approved solar system does not result in an expansion of the solar energy system coverage area.

5.6. Standards for solar energy systems.

The following requirements apply to all solar energy systems.

- (a) The exterior surfaces of solar energy systems shall be generally neutral in color and substantially non-reflective in light.
- (b) Solar energy systems shall be repaired or replaced within three (3) years of becoming nonfunctional.
- (c) Solar energy systems shall be installed, maintained, and used only in accordance with the manufacturer's directions. Upon request, a copy of such directions shall be submitted to the Building Official prior to installation. The Building Official may inspect the completed installation to verify compliance with the manufacturer's directions.
- (d) All solar energy systems shall comply with the City construction code, the electrical code, and other applicable building and construction codes.

The following requirements apply to building-mounted solar energy systems.

- (a) Building-mounted solar energy systems are permitted as an accessory use in any zoning district and are subject to

the regulations set forth in this Article.

- (b) Building-mounted solar energy systems shall be incidental and subordinate to a use on the same parcel.
- (c) Building-mounted solar energy systems that are mounted on the roof of a building shall not project more than five (5) feet above the highest point of the roof.
- (d) Building-mounted solar energy systems in the M-52 Corridor Protection and Promotion Overlay Zoning District shall not be visible from the street level.
- (e) Building-mounted solar energy systems that are mounted on a wall shall not project above the highest point of the roof.
- (f) Building-mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed the maximum building height requirements for the respective zoning district.
- (g) Building-mounted solar energy systems shall not project horizontally beyond the eaves of the roof.
- (h) Building-mounted solar energy systems shall not be mounted on a building wall that is parallel to an adjacent public right-of-way.
- (i) Building-mounted solar energy systems that are mounted on a building wall shall not project into the required setback of the respective zoning district.
- (j) Solar energy systems mounted on the roof of a building shall be only of such weight as can safely be supported by the roof and the weight of snow and/or ice that they collect. Proof thereof, in the form of certification by a professional engineer or other qualified person, shall be submitted to the Building Official prior to installation; such certification shall be subject to the Building Official's approval.
- (k) Building-mounted solar energy systems shall be permanently and safely attached to the building or structure. Proof of the safety and reliability of the means of such attachment shall be submitted to the Building Official prior to installation; such proof shall be subject to the Building Official's approval.

The following requirements apply to ground-mounted solar energy systems.

- (a) Ground-mounted solar energy systems are a permitted accessory use in the LI – Light Industrial, GI – General Industrial, O-1 Office, MI – Medial Institutional, and PF – Public Facilities zoning districts.
- (b) Ground-mounted solar energy systems shall be located in the rear yard or side yard, not within any required setbacks unless permitted by the Planning Commission as a deviation in its approval of the site plan and provided it does not project into more than one required setback area.
- (c) Ground-mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed forty (40) feet in height, measured from the ground at the base of the equipment.
- (d) The area of the ground-mounted solar energy system shall not exceed fifty (50%) percent of the square footage of the ground floor area of the primary building of the property unless it is sited over required parking in which case there is no maximum lot coverage for the ground-mounted solar energy system.
- (e) Ground-mounted solar energy systems shall not count towards the maximum square footage of accessory structures allowed on site or maximum impervious surface area limits if the ground under the solar energy system is pervious.
- (f) If the ground under the ground-mounted solar energy system is impervious, the total area of ground-mounted solar energy systems shall be included in the calculation of the maximum permitted lot coverage requirement for the parcel of land.

Item 3
Staff Updates

CITY OF CHELSEA 2023 PLANNING PRIORITIES	TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION	COMMENTS
1. Zoning Ordinance Amendments		
1.1 Food Truck Ordinance	Immediate	City Council First reading 2/5/24
1.2 Solar Ordinance	Immediate	Draft in process. Approval anticipated February 2024.
1.3 Site Plan Review	2-5 months	Draft in process. Update to clarify projects that qualify; identify requirements of minor site plan. To introduce at next work session.
1.4 Certificate of Occupancy	6-12 months	Draft in process. Update to reflect current processes.
1.5 Tree Preservation Ordinance	6-12 months	Amendments for tree preservation.
1.6 Conditional Rezoning Amendment	2-5 months	Draft in process. Introduction to PC TBD.
2. General Ordinance Amendments		
2.1 PILOT process and application	6-12 months	TBD
3. Planning Policies		
3.1 Zoning Ordinance Enforcement	6-12 months	Establish clear enforcement procedures and communicate process to residents via website. Consider Ypsi Township zoning enforcement process.
3.2 Greater community outreach and engagement	Ongoing	Establish better tools for outreach and involving residents in planning
3.3 Consider greater collaboration with surrounding communities	Ongoing	Foster regional collaboration
3.4 Reimplement quarterly staff reports	2-5 months	Will do first report at the start of Q1 to summarize Q2 and Q3 (since CWA began)
3.5 Annual report	Immediate	To present to City Council during January meeting.
4. Master Plan / Roads / Pathways		
4.1 Master Plan	1-2 years	Current plan adopted in 2019. Update required every 5 years.
4.2 Redevelopment Ready Certification	1-2 years	September: 61% along the Essentials Path. Today: 74%. Many of the items in this table will contribute to certification
5. Zoning Administration		
5.1 Restructure Webpage	Immediate	Underway. Documents and clarifying info added; zoning changes adopted; planned general website changes will aid in this process.
5.2 Board & Commission Recruitment	2-5 months	Develop and conduct outreach for broad community recruitment
6. Completed Priorities		
		Date