

**CITY OF HANOVER
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
AUGUST 24, 2020
DRAFT MINUTES**

Call to Order

Stan Kolasa called the August 24, 2020, Planning Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Members present were Stan Kolasa, Jim Schendel, Dean Kuitunen, Mike Christenson and Gretchen Barrett. Also present City Planner Cindy Nash, Council Liaison Doug Hammerseng and Administrative Assistant Amy Biren. No guests were present

Approval of Agenda

MOTION by Schendel to approve the agenda, seconded by Kuitunen.

Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes from the July 27, 2020, Regular Meeting

MOTION by Schendel to approve the July 27, 2020, minutes, seconded by Kuitunen.

Motion carried unanimously.

Citizen's Forum

None

Unfinished Business

Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance Related to Solar

Nash brought the draft solar ordinance back to the Planning Commission at the request of the City Council. She included additional information for the Board.

Directing the Board to the Memo in the packet, Nash reviewed several items.

The types of installation allowed would be building integrated and building mounted. Ground mounted systems would not be allowed under this draft ordinance.

Kuitunen said that the Board had tabled this a couple of years ago and had decided to deal with solar energy when the request was made.

Schendel said that solar businesses have been to the Industrial Park businesses and that the time frame to recoup expenditures was actually longer than presented. Hammerseng said that when it was proposed to City Hall in the past, it was determined that a 12 year period was the recoup period.

Nash went on to say as it had been presented, the draft ordinance made solar energy an accessory use in every zoning district with guidelines to be followed. Kuitunen, Christenson, and Barrett agreed that it would be allowed in every zoning district.

Hammerseng said that Council had asked him questions about the draft ordinance and there were several things that he was not able to provide an answer. More clarification and substance to the draft ordinance is desired.

Nash continued with the discussion about the type of building permit that would be required. Currently, the draft has it an over-the-counter building permit with administrative review, but if the Board desires, it could also be a conditional use permit or an interim use permit. That said, there have been complaints in the past about the cost and length of time of a land use permit.

Kuitunen said that if the draft ordinance is strong and specific, there would not be a need for a conditional use permit or an interim use permit.

Hammerseng said that the resident interested in having solar panels has commented on how long this process is taking.

Nash directed the Board members to the draft of the solar ordinance and led the discussion, explaining the changes.

Currently, the draft ordinance is written to allow solar panels on accessory buildings. Was this something the Board still wanted or did they want it remove, allowing only panels on the principle structure? The City Council brought up the scenario of someone building an accessory building solely for the purpose of mounting solar panels. After discussion, the Board decided to remove accessory buildings from the draft ordinance.

The Board was directed to the section on building mounted systems in the draft ordinance. The plane of the roof and the solar panel will be the same. The draft ordinance outlines the most common type of roof styles and that the solar system cannot be higher than six (6) inches above the roof plane. Christenson asked if the six inches was a standard figure. Nash said that she used the same figure that neighboring cities had in their solar ordinances. Christenson asked if there needed to be something about the overhang. Nash said that yes, it was outlined in Section C. Hammerseng referred to Section D and whether or not the equipment should be visible on the structure. Christenson stated that there is so much already on structures that most people would not even detect it. Section F referred to the possibility of glare and Hammerseng stated he is concerned about how it would impact neighbors. Nash said that reflectors are more common in solar gardens and showed the Board an example. The reflectors redirect sunlight to the solar panels. If someone wanted reflectors, a glare analysis would be required. Hammerseng asked for clarification regarding residential and commercial roofs and the type of system allowed. Nash said that if a residential home had a flat roof, it would have to follow the requirements for a mounted system, not an integrated system. Most residential homes are built to the maximum height allowed so it would be a rare occurrence that a mounted system would be on a residential home.

Barrett confirmed that solar energy applicants would not have to come to the Planning Commission unless a variance or other land use permit was required. Nash confirmed this.

Nash directed the Board to the section on utility notification. She explained that net metering is where any excess energy goes back to the energy grid and is not stored onsite. When there is not enough solar energy generated, the structure would use energy from the grid. She also gave an example of an off-grid system such as a solar panel attached to a traffic sign—it is not attached to the energy grid, nor is it metered.

Hammerseng asked if the City needed to manage the recycling of the solar panels when the lifespan is completed. Nash said no, only if it was a solar garden. In the case of a solar garden, there would be a reclamation plan within the interim use permit similar to that of mining. Recycling of solar panels is also regulated by the State.

Christenson is concerned with houses changing ownership and the new owners would be left with an aging system or possibly having to recycle the panels.

He went on to ask if the newly drafted ordinance would apply to existing solar systems. Nash said they would be grandfathered in if the system was installed legally and if it wasn't, then enforcement action would be taken. If the system was updated or switched to newer technology, it would need to follow whatever current ordinance was in place.

Nash confirmed with the Board that she is removing accessory buildings as an option for solar panels and that it would only be allowed on the principle structure. The Board confirmed this.

Hammerseng stated that he is concerned with the possibility of glare. Nash said that he may be thinking of older systems or technology in solar panels or even reflectors. She continued that with the new technology, solar panels are supposed to absorb the sunlight. There may be a little reflection, but it would be similar to the glare on a windshield.

MOTION by Barrett to recommend sending the draft solar ordinance forward to the City Council for approval with the removal of accessory buildings as an option for solar systems, seconded by Christenson.
Motion carried unanimously.

Reports and Announcements

Schendel asked if the City would look into having a porta potty along the River Road trail as there have been runners using the pine trees as a restroom. He also mentioned the flickering street light at Rosedale and CSAH 19. Biren said she would pass along the request and that the street light has been called into Xcel several times.

Christenson asked for an update on the 15th Street project. Nash said that the City is working on the developer's agreement which needs to be in place before the project starts. Also, the plans are taking longer than anticipated. Hammerseng asked if the trail was going to be done. Nash said the plans for the trail are included and Fehn was given permission for the trail to be completed next year.

Barrett asked for an update on the Hilltop. Nash said that she and Brian Hagen, City Administrator, will have a meeting this week with the applicants and Hennepin County. Some of the aspects of their plans are not congruent with Hennepin County's requirements.

Nash said that the preliminary plat for River's Edge is scheduled to be at the October Planning Commission meeting and will require a public hearing. The developer is planning on submitting materials mid-September and they will be available on the website if Board members want to start reviewing them. Barrett asked how Council decided on the Planning Commission's recommendation to remove the three houses at the 5th Street entrance. Nash said that Council suggested that it become one single family home. Hammerseng said they also suggested taking some of the villa homes around the corner and turning them into single family homes as well as put a trail segment in the southern part of the development. He continued that the Council meeting went well and that Council approved the concept plan.

Hammerseng said that Mercantile Pass received a vote of support and the developer is moving forward and starting the planning process. Nash said that there is a purchase agreement for the southern corner for a gas station/grocery store/liquor store. Hammerseng said that the City is trying to assist with the County and the CSAH 19 traffic issues.

Kuitunen asked if Covid 19 was causing delays to happen within governmental entities. Nash responded that it depends on the department or the city.

Adjournment

MOTION by Kuitunen to adjourn, seconded by Schendel.

Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

ATTEST:

Amy L. Biren
Administrative Assistant