

City of Winsted  
Planning Commission  
City Council Chambers  
March 14, 2016  
6:00 p.m.

Present: Jolynn Cafferty  
Marvin Ebensperger  
Mike Guggemos  
Allison Moses  
Tom Ollig – City Council Liason

Absent: Michael Henrich

Staff Present: Daniel Tienter, City Administrator  
Raquel Kirchoff, Deputy City Clerk

1) Call the Meeting to Order

Mr. Ebensperger called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

2) Approval of Minutes

**Ms. Cafferty motioned to approve the minutes from the Planning Commission Meeting on February 8, 2016. Ms. Moses seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.**

3) Public Hearings

Ms. Joanne Foust, Municipal Development Group, addressed the Planning Commission regarding the amended zoning ordinance for solar energy systems and reviewed the memo from Municipal Development Group provided to the Planning Commission members.

Mr. Tienter stated that the addition of solar panels would not generate as much of a property tax base compared to a business located on the parcel in question. Mr. Tienter stated that according to the City Attorney, the City may determine, at its discretion, who it sells City owned land to and how much land to sell or lease.

Ms. Foust gave a general overview of the proposed ordinance amendments. The amendments include adding 18 definitions to the zoning ordinance relating to solar energy systems and adding language that would reference roof or building mounted solar energy systems, ground mounted solar energy systems, community solar energy systems, and solar farms (which would not be permitted in any Winsted districts). Roof and ground mounted solar energy systems would be considered accessory structures. Systems in the Airport District would be classified as interim use. Community solar systems would not be admitted in any district except the Industrial District and would require an Interim Use Permit.

Ms. Foust stated that Planning Commission Resolution PCR-16-02 is proposed for Planning Commission consideration that would recommend amendments to the Winsted Zoning Ordinance regarding solar energy systems.

Mr. Ruiz, Minnesota Solar, LLC, explained the process of how stray voltage is monitored within solar gardens. Mr. Tienter recommended to address the concern of stray voltage as part of the interim use permit process and not as language within the ordinance.

Mr. Tienter stated that City staff recommends a minimum space of one half mile between solar gardens for density, which would limit the amount of developable space for a community solar garden in city limits. Mr. Tienter stated that the ordinance could be revisited in the future if a density change is desired. The Planning Commission members agreed with this recommendation.

**Mr. Guggemos motioned to close the public hearing. Ms. Cafferty seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.**

**Ms. Moses motioned to adopt Planning Commission Resolution PCR-16-02, recommending that the City Council adopt an ordinance amending the Winsted Zoning Ordinance regarding Solar Energy Systems with language added to require a minimum space of one half mile between solar gardens as discussed. Mr. Guggemos seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.**

- 4) No Old Business
- 5) No New Business
- 6) No Other
- 7) Adjourn

**Ms. Cafferty motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Moses seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0. Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.**

*Daniel Tienter*

Daniel Tienter  
City Administrator  
City of Winsted

ATTEST:

*Raquel Kirchoff*

Raquel Kirchoff,  
Deputy City Clerk  
City of Winsted