

PROJECT REVIEW GROUP REPORT

TO: ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS PREPARED BY: Monica Richart
Sustainability Planner

HEARING DATE: December 11, 2024

DATE PREPARED: October 11, 2024 CASE NUMBER: Z2409-01

TITLE: PUBLIC STORAGE / 777 W. Wise Road / Site Plan Amendment and Variation to the Renewable Energy Code.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Petitioner: Ms. Emily McCue

Address of Petitioner: Solar Landscape
601 Bangs Ave. 3
Asbury Park, NJ 07712

Status of Petitioner: Agent for Owner

Owner of Parcel: Public Storage, Inc.

Address of Owner: PO Box 25025 07008
Glendale, CA 91221-5050

Existing Zoning: M-1 Manufacturing District

Existing Land Use: Storage Facility

Requested Action:

- Site Plan Amendment to install Ground Mounted Mechanical Equipment [Title 15, Chapter 154, Section 154.186(A) of the Zoning Ordinance]
- Variation to use energy for off-site production [Title 15, Chapter 154, Section 154.70(A)(2)(b.) of the Zoning Ordinance]

ANALYSIS

Staff Discussion:

The petitioner requests to install a roof mounted solar energy system at Public Storage located at 777 W. Wise Road. The system will be part of a small-scale solar energy generation project, distributing energy back to the power grid under a community solar model. The community solar model allows subscribers to receive credit on their electric bill for the energy produced by that project.

Site Plan Amendment

A Site Plan Amendment is requested for the installation of pad mounted mechanical equipment. The Project will require ground mounted electric equipment to be located within the building setback at the northeast corner of the property along Wise Road. Landscaping is proposed to screen the mechanical equipment in accordance with the Village Design Standards for Manufacturing Districts and will be screened from the adjoining roadway by both existing trees and the proposed landscape design consisting of a mix of evergreen and deciduous shrubs. For these reasons staff supports the Site Plan Amendment for new ground mounted mechanical equipment.

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The proposed solar panels will be installed on existing buildings and require minimal site development. The installation of solar panels will not impact the ability of the Public Storage to operate business as usual. The panels will be flush mounted on the roof which will limit the visual impact of the panels if viewed from surrounding properties. The proposed solar system will have limited impact on surrounding properties.

Renewable Energy Variation

The Applicant requests a variation to Section 154.70(A)(2)(b.) of the zoning Code to allow for energy produced through the Applicant's proposed Solar Energy System (the "Project") to be delivered to the power grid regardless if said energy production offsets the cost of energy on the site where the Applicant's Solar Energy System is located (the "Proposed Variation").

The code states:

"Energy produced through the Solar Energy System shall be utilized on-site; however, the energy output may be delivered to a power grid to offset the cost of energy on-site."

The proposed project is a "Community Solar Project," meaning that the energy produced through the Project will be supplied to the power grid directly and members of the public can subscribe to the program and receive credits on their electricity bills. While some energy may be consumed on-site by the property owner, and the owner may subscribe to the Project and use credits to offset its energy costs, the primary purpose is to deliver power directly to the grid rather than using the energy on-site. Therefore, the Project will not comply with the zoning code requirement.

Approving the Proposed Variation will increase renewable energy production, aligning with Schaumburg's commitment to sustainability and environmental goals as outlined in its Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Green Energy Plan. The Green Energy Plan specifically aims to 'Evaluate Village of Schaumburg policies and ordinances to support and encourage the use of renewable energy technology.' This project will contribute more renewable energy to the grid and provide a program for subscribers to buy renewable energy, allowing businesses and residents in the community to benefit from increased access to renewable energy.

While subscribers to this project, like all Community Solar Projects, may come from outside Schaumburg, approval will encourage residents and business to use more renewable energy by making it more readily available in Schaumburg. Additionally, the project will be constructed on the rooftop of a storage facility, making effective use of otherwise unused space and ensures the project remains minimally visible and does not negatively impact the community.

The proposed Community Solar Project reflects current practices and technologies for small scale energy generation not widely in use at the time the village Renewable Energy code was last amended in 2016, and therefore the concept was not considered at that time. Solar projects that were for the purpose of generating power back to the grid were envisioned to be large scale power generation facilities. The proposed system meets the intention of the existing code to promote solar energy generation which is integrated with existing uses and blends with the surrounding neighborhood.

The Project meets all zoning requirements for placement of commercial solar rooftop systems as stipulated in Section 154.70(A) "Solar Energy Systems" as well as for ground mounted utilities as stipulated in Section 154.171(A)(3)(b) "Screening and Location of Mechanical and Utility Equipment". Staff believes the variation

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is warranted to keep pace with expanding technologies for energy production and advance the Village's goals for sustainability and economic development.

Zoning History:

In January 1992, the Village Board approved Ordinance No. 92-4 granting approval of a special use for a mini-warehouse and site development plan for the Public Storage Facility (Case No. Z9109-01). In November of 1996, the Village Board adopted Ordinance 96-97 granting approval of a special use for a truck rental facility on the subject property (Case No. Z9609-02).

Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses:

North: R-6C Single Family Residence District
South: M-1 Manufacturing District
East: M-1 Manufacturing District
West: B-2 Business District

Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses:

The continued use of the property as a self-storage facility is compatible with the surrounding mix of uses. The installation of the rooftop solar system has no impact on the continued commercial use of the property.

Comprehensive Plan Designation:

The subject property is designated as Community Commercial within the Village Comprehensive Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff has reviewed the petitioner's request and is supportive of the project. Therefore, staff recommends **approval** of a Site Plan Amendment and Variation to the Renewable Energy Code at Public Storage, located at 777 Wise Road, Case No. Z2409-01, subject to the following conditions:

1. The terms and conditions of Ordinance 92-4 or other ordinances not specifically revised herein shall be hereby reaffirmed by reference.
2. This approval is based on the codes and ordinances currently in effect. If the codes or ordinances are changed, the project will be required to be amended to adhere to these changes.
3. A Land Development Permit is required prior to commencing any site work, and prior to receiving any Building Permit for the site.
4. Prior to the issuance of a Land Development Permit the applicant shall submit a written agreement that describes the process for decommissioning and removal of the equipment at the end of its useful life. The document shall run with the land and must be recorded and placed on file with the Cook County Recorder of Deeds.
5. Prior to the issuance of a Building Permit, the petitioner shall revise the Engineering Plans to include the following:
 - a. A one line (typical) diagram detailing all bonding requirements per NEC Article 250 for all disconnects, service equipment, and transformer locations shall be shown. Please show a typical raceway diagram for all underground installations per NEC 300.5
 - b. Provide detailed structural load calculations and all attachment specifications for the panels.
 - c. Show disconnects with proper signage that identify the building(s) it serves.
6. Prior to the issuance of a Land Development Permit, the petitioner shall revise the Engineering and Landscape Plans to include the following:

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- a. There is a 12 inch Village water main and 8 inch sanitary running on the south side of Wise Road in the area where the new riser pole and AC trenching are shown. Show these utilities on the plans. Indicate the horizontal and vertical crossing separation between the proposed utilities and Village utilities.
 - b. Provide a separate Tree Preservation Plan which identifies all existing trees over 4" diameter which are within 30' of proposed construction. Indicate species (common & botanical names), size (diameter in inches), condition (good, fair, poor, or dead), and remarks (preserve or remove) for each tree.
 - c. Provide taller ornamental trees (i.e.: witchhazel) to better screen the equipment from the adjacent roadway and help break up the massing of shrubs.
 - d. Provide tree protection fencing around all trees to remain.
 - e. Provide the minimum plant size required at installation.
 - f. New riser poles are not typically allowed if existing pole can be utilized and is proximate. Trench to existing pole to the west.
7. Provide a letter of determination from MWRD for the new impervious surfaces (the electrical equipment pad).
8. The following plans/exhibits, as amended in accordance with the above conditions, shall be adopted as part of the governing ordinance:
- a. Title Sheet G01, prepared by Exactus Energy, dated August 01, 2024, received by the Community Development Department September 5, 2024.
 - b. Overall Site Plan G10, prepared by Exactus Energy, dated August 01, 2024, received by the Community Development Department September 5, 2024.
 - c. Array Plan G20, prepared by Exactus Energy, dated August 01, 2024, received by the Community Development Department September 5, 2024.
 - d. Array Dimensions G21, prepared by Exactus Energy, dated August 01, 2024, received by the Community Development Department September 5, 2024.
 - e. Building Elevations G22, prepared by Exactus Energy, dated August 01, 2024, received by the Community Development Department September 5, 2024.
 - f. Fire Access Plan G30, prepared by Exactus Energy, dated August 01, 2024, received by the Community Development Department September 5, 2024.
 - g. Landscape Plan L-1, prepared by Upstream Design Group, dated August 14, 2024, received by the Community Development Department September 5, 2024.

pc: Petitioner
Owner of Property