

Tower Lakes Public Hearing on Solar Energy Systems

The Tower Lakes Plan Commission
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Summary of the Public Hearing Process

- Purpose of this Public Hearing: Codify solar energy system policies in Tower Lakes
- Role of the Plan Commission in this Public Hearing: Advisory
- The Plan Commission will endeavor to make a recommendation to the Village Board to approve or disapprove the proposed amendments to the Village's Zoning Regulations
- The final decision on the proposed text amendments will be made by the Village Board in the form of an Ordinance after the Board receives the recommendation from the Plan Commission

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Public Hearing

- Motion to open the Public Hearing
- Swearing in by the Village Attorney of members of the public who wish to speak and/or testify
- The Plan Commission will make a presentation on the proposed text amendments relative to the regulation of solar energy system installations

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Local Ordinances that Allow Residential Solar Energy Systems

	Rooftop	Ground-mounted
Barrington	✓	✓
Barrington Hills	✓	✓
Deer Park	✓	
Lake Barrington	✓	
South Barrington	✓	
Tower Lakes		
Wauconda	✓	✓

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Proposed Amendments to Title 10 Zoning Regulations

- Chapter 1, “Administrative Provisions”
- Chapter 4, “Districts Enumerated”
- Chapter 6, “General Requirements” (New section 10-6-12 Solar Energy Systems)

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Chapter 1, “Administrative Provisions”

- Allows fences of no more than 1800 square feet around ground-mounted solar systems
- Defines terms related to solar energy systems
- Permits accessory structures on the same lot as a residence or on a group of contiguous lots held in common ownership
- Exempts ground-mounted solar energy systems from the requirement of being attached to the residence
- Stipulates that solar energy systems are in compliance with the regulations of Title 10 which are applicable to Solar Energy Systems

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Chapter 4, “Districts Enumerated”

- Allows solar energy systems in all current zoning districts
- Requires solar energy systems to adhere to maximum lot coverage ratios and impervious surface ratios
- Stipulates that solar energy systems are in compliance with the regulations of Title 10 which are applicable to Solar Energy Systems

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Chapter 6, “General Requirements” New Section 10-6-13 “Solar Energy Systems”

- Scope/Applicability
- Purpose/Intent
- General Requirements
- Roof-Mounted Solar Energy System Requirements
- Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems
- Requirements for Battery Storage Systems for Solar Energy Systems
- Disposal of Solar Energy Systems

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New Section 10-6-13 “Solar Energy Systems” Scope/Applicability

- Regulates the location, installation, operation, and maintenance of solar energy systems installed after the effective date of adoption of this Chapter

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New Section 10-6-13 “Solar Energy Systems” Purpose/Intent

- Encourages the efficient and effective development and use of solar energy systems located in Tower Lakes
- Emphasizes protecting the public health, safety, and welfare
- Focuses on encouraging economic development while preserving the community’s semi-rural character
- Decreases the community’s reliance on fossil fuels
- Enhances the reliability and resiliency of the local power grid
- Promotes consumer choice
- Improves air quality and protects public health
- Establishes reasonable and uniform regulations for solar energy systems
- Facilitates energy cost savings for residents
- Supports national and state related goals

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New Section 10-6-13 “Solar Energy Systems” General Requirements

- Permits solar energy systems as an accessory use in all current zoning districts
- Mirrors the maximum height otherwise permitted in the respective zoning districts
- Allows for the sale of excess energy
- Conforms to industry standards
- Requires a building permit and inspection
- Specifies that systems must comply with the Building Code
- Does not restrict or limit the use and/or development of any adjacent properties or other properties within the Village
- Includes a Hold Harmless and Indemnification Agreement
- Reduces the visual impact upon surrounding properties from adjacent properties and streets

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New Section 10-6-13 “Solar Energy Systems” Roof-Mounted Solar Energy System Requirements

- Specifies design and installation requirements
- Requires that solar energy systems are as unobtrusive as possible from the street level
- Includes safety requirements

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New Section 10-6-13 “Solar Energy Systems” Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems

- Allowed if a roof-mounted system is impossible or impractical
- Prohibits systems with motorized solar tracking
- Requires that systems are not built within 10 feet of any portion of a septic system
- Prohibits raising, filling, or landscaping to circumvent height restrictions
- Requires screening (landscaping, non-deciduous trees, and/or a berm approved with a permit) from adjacent lots
- Specifies location, lot coverage calculations, array surface areas maximums, and height
- Requires a site plan

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New Section 10-6-13 “Solar Energy Systems” Electrical Considerations

- Specifies that components must be grounded
- Includes requirements for disconnects
- Requires that all cables are underground

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New Section 10-6-13 “Solar Energy Systems” Requirements for Battery Storage Systems

- Must auto disconnect in the event of a power failure
- Must include a Battery Management System to prevent overcharging and thermal runaway
- Not allowed in living areas
- Shall be enclosed and installed away from sources of heat in a well-ventilated area
- Must have a separate disconnect switch near or within the system
- Must be certified and approved by Underwriters Laboratory (UL) or another approved independent testing agency and installed by a licensed contractor, solar contractor, or electrician

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New Section 10-6-13 “Solar Energy Systems” Disposal of Solar Energy Systems

- Old or abandoned systems must be removed no more than 180 days after the date the operation of the system has ceased
- All structures, equipment, and electrical wiring must be removed
- Hazardous waste must be in compliance with all waste disposal and recycling regulations
- Stabilization or re-vegetation to minimize erosion must be completed for ground-mounted systems

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Public Hearing

- Questions and comments from members of the Plan Commission
- Public comments: questions and/or testimony from members of the public and/or their attorney(s)
- Plan Commission discussions and deliberations
- Plan Commission motion to recommend approval or denial of the proposed solar energy regulations
- Motion to close the Public Hearing

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Recommendations & Next Steps

- The Plan Commission will vote whether to approve or disapprove the proposed draft Solar Energy Systems Ordinance
- The Village Board will receive the Plan Commission's recommendation and will then consider whether or not to approve the proposed text amendment to the Village's Zoning Regulations relative to the regulation of solar energy by the passage of an Ordinance
- The final action of the Village Board will occur at a separate Village Board Meeting where the Village Board may approve such Zoning Text Amendments by Ordinance
- Adjournment

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