

PC Approved
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Village of Gurnee
Joint Plan Commission & Zoning Board of Appeals Workshop Meeting Minutes
October 6, 2010

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 P.M.

Plan Commission Members Present: Chairman James Sula, Stephen Park, David Nordentoft, Sharon Salmons, Patrick Drennan

Plan Commission Members Absent: Richard McFarlane, Gwen Broughton

Zoning Board of Appeals Members Present: Tom Hood, Edwin Paff, John Spadaro, Jerry Kolar, Robert Monahan

Zoning Board of Appeals Members Absent: Don Wilson, Richard Twitchell

Other Officials Present: Dave Ziegler, Community Development Director; Tracy Velkover, Planning Manager; Molly Booth, Associate Planner; Ryan Mentkowski, Associate Planner

1. Informal Review: Sign Ordinance Modification

Ms. Velkover stated a new State law regarding political signs on residential properties will go into effect on January 1, 2011 that basically states municipalities can only establish reasonable restrictions as to size. She stated municipalities cannot establish any restrictions regarding the period of time that they are displayed on the property. She stated currently the Village limits political signs on residential properties to sixty (60) days prior to an election and removed within five (5) days after the election event. She stated the Village will need to process an amendment. She noted Staff surveyed other communities to investigate what sizes are allowed in other communities. She stated those sizes ranged from 6 - 20 square feet and some communities establish no size limit at all. She stated Staff is proposing 9 square feet for political signs as this is the current size of the "for sale/for lease" signs for residential properties, as well as being in the range from 6 – 20 square feet which other communities have established for political signs. She stated there will be a Public Hearing prior to January 1, 2011 to process this Sign Ordinance amendment.

Chairman Sula stated what the politicians have done to the political call list is what they have done to the political signs and to bring the ordinance amendment back as tight as possible.

Mr. Paff asked if there was a limit on the number of signs.

Ms. Velkover responded no, there is no limit on the number.

Chairman Sula asked Ms. Velkover to make it as tight as she can and noted these signs are eyesores no matter what.

Mr. Paff asked if it was reasonable to limit a larger residential lot to just a 9 sq. ft. sign. He asked if it was possible to tie the size of the sign to the size of the property.

Ms. Velkover stated the "For Sale/For Lease" signs do have a property frontage ratio and noted Staff would look at whether it would make sense to use the same formula for political signs.

Mr. Spadaro stated he didn't know if it is pertinent, but the Commissions might want to consider the same regulations for banners. He asked what would stop a resident from putting up a sign post on either side of a driveway having a banner running across the driveway.

Ms. Velkover stated the Village can only restrict the size and cannot put other restrictions on reasonable restrictions as to size. She stated size is the only thing that the Village can do. Banners that have political messages would be treated the same as other political sign. It does not matter the type of material the sign is printed on.

Mr. Kolar asked what the current size is.

Ms. Velkover stated there is no limit on the size and the Village does not limit the size of political signs. She stated the Village limits the duration and as of January 1, 2011 the duration will no longer be able to be limited. She stated the only thing the Village will be able to do is size. Since the possibility exists that these signs may be up year round, the Village should now establish a reasonable size limit in the ordinance.

Mr. Spadaro asked if he put up a 20 foot square foot sign at this time would it be legal.

Ms. Velkover responded yes, it would be legal.

2. Informal Review: Solar Energy Systems

Mr. Mentkowski stated Solar Energy Systems are broken down into *Building-Mounted* Solar Energy Systems; *Ground-Mounted* Solar Energy System; and *Utility* Solar Energy Systems. He stated Building Mounted and Ground Mounted are intended to generate energy or hot water for a person's own personal use, whereas the Utility Solar is for electricity generated as the principal or main use on a property.

Building mounted

Mr. Mentkowski stated Staff is looking to regulate the types of Solar Energy allowed along the front elevation of a home where it would either have to be building integrated or a flat mounted solar panel. He stated it is an aesthetic issue and he looks for direction as well as ideas from the Commission on this restriction.

Chairman Sula asked what would be the frontage on corner lots. He stated from his perspective if it is along the street it is frontage.

Mr. Mentkowski stated currently it is just front yard and noted he would change it to front and corner yard along a public street and it would have to be building integrated.

Mr. Park asked what if a house backed up to another street and asked if the rear would also be applicable.

Mr. Mentkowski responded in that case the lot is a double frontage lot.

Mr. Park stated yes, with or without access.

Ms. Velkover stated on a through lot, one frontage is always considered the front the other is considered the rear. She stated that non-building integrated or flat systems would be allowed along these frontages unless the Commission wanted to require building integrated or flat systems for these frontages.

Mr. Park noted Chairman Sula stated if it abuts a street for this purpose it was defined as frontage. He stated therefore a corner side yard, front yard and a rear yard.

Chairman Sula stated front and side yard for sure. He stated it would be best to talk about the rear yard and figure out what the Commission would like to do.

Mr. Mentkowski stated "projection" limits the distance the solar panels can extend beyond the edge of the house and currently it is proposed at four (4) feet. He stated height is limited to five (5) feet above the highest peak of a house.

Ground Mounted

Mr. Mentkowski stated that Ground Mounted solar energy systems is anything attached to the ground or placed on the ground that is used for solar purposes.

He stated the height will be the same, from the ground to the top of a solar panel being the maximum height of the panel at the top which is currently proposed to be fifteen (15) feet in all Zoning Districts.

Utility Solar Energy

Mr. Mentkowski stated Staff has mixed opinions on whether to allow Utility Solar Energy systems in the Village. He stated those opinions are to prohibit them, to allow them as Permitted Uses for Industrial Districts (I-1, I-2 & I-3) but not allow in any other zoning district, or to allow them as Special Uses in Industrial Districts (I-1, I-2 & I-3) but not allow in any other zoning district.

Mr. Mentkowski asked the Commission for direction with this. He stated it would be helpful to know whether the Commission feels that Utility Solar Energy systems are appropriate for Gurnee or not.

Mr. Park stated Lake County Partners in the month of September had a request for sites within Lake County for a Solar Farm. He stated they wanted anywhere from a minimum of 100-200 acres up to 500 acres. He stated, in his opinion that is these types or uses for "utility" are not appropriate for this area.

Chairman Sula stated he agrees and his general idea is toward residential applications or not. He stated as it relates to "utility" he believes the same rules that were put in place for "wind energy" would apply to "solar energy".

Ms. Salmons asked if there are any solar systems currently in Gurnee.

Mr. Mentkowski stated he has heard that there have been a number of requests for solar panels, including requests that were put forth to the Mayor.

Chairman Sula asked what the status is and asked if there is a moratorium.

Mr. Mentkowski replied the moratorium ends 12/31/10.

Chairman Sula stated he assumed the Board would want to extend the date until the Commission gets through all of this.

Ms. Salmons asked if there is any Ordinance within Lake County or if this has been studied as was done with Wind Energy.

Mr. Mentkowski replied as far as Solar Energy there is a Lake County Task Force, just as there was for Wind Energy and the Task Force approved a model ordinance. He stated what he has come up with is based on the Model Ordinance developed by the Task Force.

Chairman Sula asked for any other questions or directions from the Commission or Staff.

Mr. Mentkowski asked if there are any other major issues including aesthetics; "no" to "utility"; double frontage lots; no projections for the front and corner side yard lots; any height concerns.

Chairman Sula stated he would be interested in any comments from Public Safety as it relates to the extensions from the buildings in terms of any of their concerns relating to encroaching into side yard setbacks, i.e. a fireplace extending, but not counting as an encroachment and safety not only in terms of egress and ingress for the fire department but safety as far as persons running around a home as well.

Ms. Salmons asked if this would be limited like the wind energy or will this just be a blanket where they will be allowed on a person's roof.

Mr. Mentkowski stated currently it is blanket residential and non-residential zoned lots combined. He stated non-residential would contain industrial, commercial, and retail and that all the standards to this point would incorporate non-residential.

Ms. Salmons asked if non-residential would be addressed some day.

Mr. Mentkowski stated it is addressed because non-residential is incorporated within the standards.

Chairman Sula stated there are 2 issues. One issue is "utility" magnitude; and the second is use on commercial property.

Mr. Mentkowski stated he has heard from the Commission that "utility" it is not appropriate for Gurnee and will not be included as a permitted use in any Zoning District. He stated the Building Mounted and the Tower Mounted would be permitted as long as they meet the other restrictions in the ordinance.

Mr. Mentkowski stated currently there are no regulations for the installation of solar panels, but that there is currently a moratorium which limits the installation of alternative energy devices such as solar panels. This will enable the Village to put together regulations.

Chairman Sula asked Mr. Mentkowski to pick a date and schedule a Public Hearing.

Chairman Sula adjourned the meeting at 9:28 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

Joanne Havenhill
Plan Commission Secretary