

CLEAN ENERGY COMMISSION

February 27, 2023

7:00 PM, Room 217, Town Hall

MEETING MINUTES

1. Opening / Call to order – 7:08 PM

a. Roll call

Commissioners present: Bernie Pelletier, Joe Campanella, Catherine Diviney (Energy Specialist), Steve Sack; Student reps present: Dawson Bondi (Hall HS), Nathaniel Goldschmidt (Hall HS); Member of the public present: Emilee Scott, Jim Fishman, Kim Hughes, Rick Bush, Ted Newton, Emily Sexton (phone), Christine Feely, Noah Schulman; Town staff present: Helen Rubino-Turco (Director of Leisure & Social Services), Katherine Bruns (Recycling Coordinator)

b. Approval of minutes – January, *approved.*

2. New Business

a. Guest Speaker – Helen Rubino-Turco, Director of Leisure & Social Services

Helen gave an overview of her personal background and her department's operations, focusing on Leisure Services side, not Social Services (may be another meeting?). She highlighted some of their key project priorities including accessibility, landcover/tree canopy, equity, and education. She also highlighted groups that the Town works closely with including the Parks & Rec Commission, Friends of WH Parks (formerly Friends of Fernridge) WH Garden Club, WH Tree Project, Land Trust, and more. Her department is unique b/c there are often community partners on projects and the Town may take in fundraising donations towards projects (e.g., Youth Baseball LED Lighting at Wolcott Park). There was specific discussion about the tree canopy study that is being funded by \$140K allocation of the Town's ARPA funds for "sustainability projects." Once the scope of this work is clearly defined, a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an external consultant will be released. Kim Hughes, Emilee Scott, (and Sean Daly) were identified as the Cons & Env't Commissions representatives for this project at a prior meeting. A potential Commission Earth Day event possibly at Westmoor Park, or with WHPS Foundation at Town Hall was also discussed.

b. Working groups

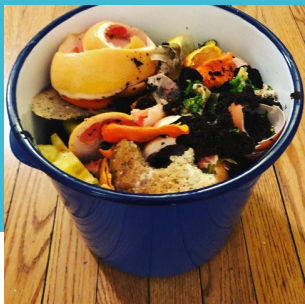
- *Waste – CT DEEP food waste & PAYT pilot (Katherine Bruns) Katherine provided an overview of the Town's CT DEEP grant for food waste pilot (slides attached). Rick Bush indicated that there needs be more explanation of the financial why? we are doing this. Volunteers for this group: Ted Newton, other SAG members?, Chris Feely, Dawson Bondi, Rick Bush.*
- *Sustainable Landscaping – incl. electric lawn equipment, gardens, pollinator pathways, etc. Volunteers for this group: Kim Hughes, Emily Scoot, Chris Feely.*

- Earth Day? – Sat Apr 22, 2023 “invest in our planet” e.g., Water Wyland Foundation National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation (Apr 1-30) – or Other? *Commission decided not to participate in Wyland Water Challenge as it was felt that this program, while nicely packaged, was better-suited to community (e.g., Western states) will real drought crises. West Hartford should at some point focus on developing an educational campaign with MDC, and other partners more grounded in local water issues (e.g., water quality, storm water, LID, irrigation, waste, costs, etc.) Immediate Earth Day event should concentrate on 3-4 “info stations” at Westmoor Park on Town Hall lot. Volunteers for this group: Kim Hughes, Bernie Pelletier, Emily Sexton, Emily Scott, Catherine Diviney.*
 - WH Celebrates? – June 10-11, 2023 – *There was thought that the Earth Day themes/work might carry over for this event.*
- c. Status of town-related new construction projects: *deferred to next meeting due to time*
- Community Center
 - Fellowship Housing
 - Animal Shelter
- d. Legislative activity: *deferred to next meeting due to time*
- e. Stats just released by EnergizeCT: *deferred to next meeting due to time*
 Recommendations for spending the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG). \$123,000 formula grant. Next milestone: April 28, 2023.
Catherine indicated would likely be easier to spend on one project (e.g., Remaining decorative street lighting that needs to be converted to LED)
3. Old/Ongoing Business:
- a. Sustainable West Hartford Commission – status update: ordinance, logo, etc.
Catherine indicated that Corporation Counsel is working on this. She plans to ask for update at the Public Works, Facilities, and Sustainability Committee meeting on March 2.
- b. Plan priorities for 2023
4. Staff Report – Catherine indicated the E-Transit Van for Nutrition Services is here. *They are working on logo. There is potential to create a similar version of logo for residents on their own cars? Rick suggested may be a public logo competition? (That may take too long.)*
5. Public Comment – *Chris Feely presented information on the Town’s current solar regulations and urged that the restrictions of ground-mounted solar be revisited (handouts attached). There was general agreement that this could be brought up at next meeting with Todd Dumais, Town Planner, as guest speaker.*

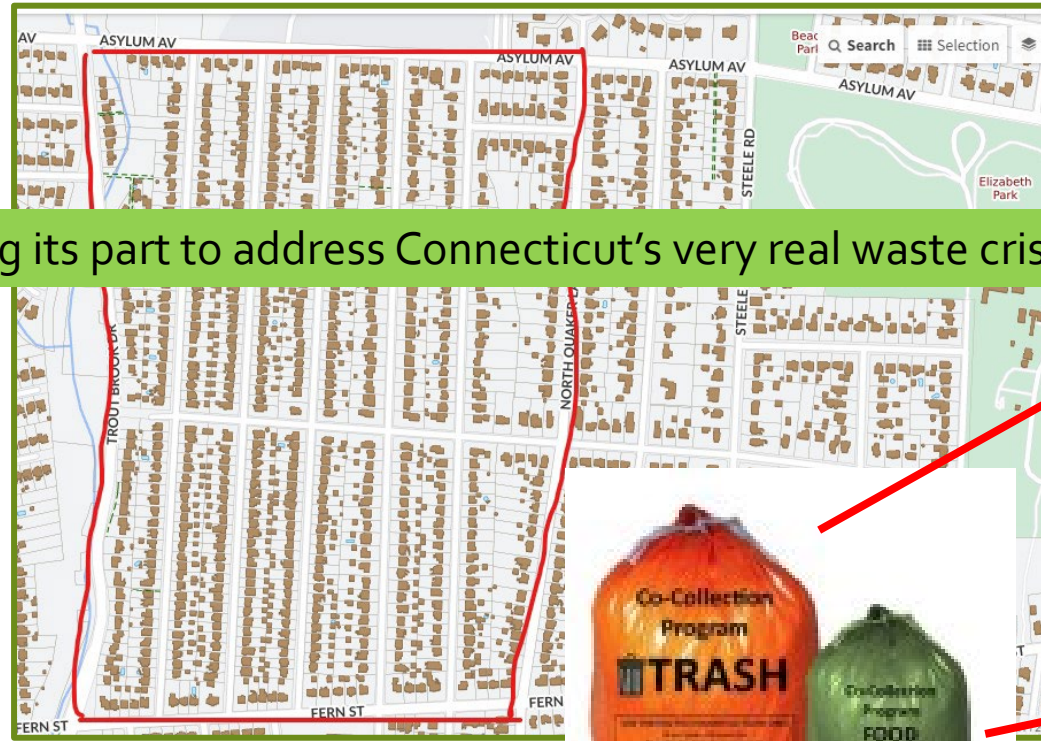
6. Agenda for Next Meeting – *Todd Dumais, Town Planner, has agreed to come. Duane Martin, Director of Community Development, indicated he would be there too.*
7. Adjournment – 9:30 PM

Anyone requiring auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or modification of policies or procedures to participate in a meeting, service, program or activity of the Town of West Hartford, should contact Suzanne Oslander, ADA Coordinator, at suzanneo@westhartfordct.gov or (860) 561-7580, as soon as possible, preferably seven days beforehand.

West Hartford Curbside Food Scrap Collection and PAYT Pilot



West Hartford is doing its part to address Connecticut's very real waste crisis




- West Hartford is one of 15 municipalities that won a CT DEEP Grant intended to reduce waste by combining food scrap recycling with PAYT (pay as you throw) curbside collection
- 690 residents in this pilot neighborhood are being asked to participate
- Food scraps will be separated into 8 gallon green bags. Trash will go in 15 gallon orange bags.
- Each household will get one green and two orange bags per week for duration of pilot and a five gallon barrel to collect food scraps. Recycling remains the same
- Towns adopting food scrap collection combined with PAYT have proven to reduce waste by as much as 40-60%

Outreach & Education Plan

- Create Waste and Organics working group
- Waste Zero – PAYT and Food scraps consulting
 - Bags, educational material, brochures
 - Program app
 - Website (reducethetrashct.com/westhartford)
- Decker – Outreach consulting
 - Toolkits for towns, press release, videos, graphics
- Blue Earth Compost
 - Food scrap hauler
- Identify Outreach opportunities
 - Town leaders meeting
 - High School Environment Groups
 - Neighborhood Meeting at Morley (Pizza!)
 - Town Hall Community Info Evening
 - Lawn Signs with QR Code

Ideas and Input Welcome!

West Hartford Declares Moratorium on Certain Solar Installations

 we-ha.com/west-hartford-declares-moratorium-certain-solar-installations/

January 27, 2016

Permits will not be given for ground-mounted and pole-mounted solar installations in West Hartford for the next six months while revisions to the existing ordinance are made.



The size of this ground-mounted solar installation in West Hartford has raised concerns among neighbors. Photo credit: Ronni Newton

By Ronni Newton

When the West Hartford Town Council adopted an ordinance in October 2014 allowing certain alternative energy systems, they did not not anticipate installations that would fill an entire yard.

Council members voted unanimously Tuesday night to declare a six-month moratorium while they consider revising the ordinance to ensure that future systems are kept to a scale that is in balance for the size of the property.

Complaints from neighbors about a large pole-mounted solar tracker in a resident's modest-sized corner lot were part of the impetus for looking to amend the ordinance.

The ordinance currently specifies that: "Ground and pole-mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed the height limitation for accessory buildings in the zone where they are located." In most cases that is 15 feet, Deputy Corporation Counsel Pat Alair said.

"There are ardent supporters [of alternative energy] who think nothing is wrong, and equal number who think what we did is let people go too far, said Alair.

The pole-mounted system that concerned neighbors was originally designed so that the solar trackers would follow the sun and alter the angle of the panels for maximum exposure. At their fullest angle they were out of compliance, Alair said.

Although the system has been modified so that it is now in compliance, it's still a large installation for the property, said Alair. He said that the resident who installed the system lives near an elementary school and thought it would be a great opportunity for kids to learn about alternative energy.

"Clearly that was not the sentiment of the neighborhood around this one," said Alair. The ordinance revision was recommended to avoid future installations that would be considered obtrusive.

Town Manager Ron Van Winkle said that changes to the ordinance will not impact roof-mounted solar panels, which can still be installed after obtaining a building permit.

"We didn't expect someone to build something like this. This is clearly, in my opinion, too large a structure for the size of the lot," Van Winkle said. "We are going to come back with something that provides a better idea of how this will fit within the neighborhood."

Minority Leader Denise Hall said that she found the large installation startling. "While I am in favor of renewable energy we want to protect home values," she said.

The moratorium will allow the Town Council time to reevaluate the zoning ordinance to better support the neighborhoods while ensuring that West Hartford residents can still have solar installations, Van Winkle said.

"We're going to come back with something that is going to balance it better," said Alair.

Mayor Scott Slifka said that the Town is "not backing away from clean energy," but rather is just balancing it.

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transmission lines owned or managed by any public utility company.

- (d) All solar energy systems, fuel cells and closed loop geothermal systems shall be installed according to manufacturer specifications, the requirements of any applicable utility company interconnect agreements and any applicable codes including, without limitation, the Connecticut Building Code.
 - (e) Where the system is designed to generate electricity, clearly visible warning signs concerning voltage shall be placed at the base of all pad-mounted transformers and substations or fence.
- (2) In addition to the requirements of Subsection C(1), closed loop geothermal systems shall be subject to the following additional requirements:
- (a) The design and installation of geothermal systems and related boreholes for geothermal heat pump systems shall conform to applicable industry standards, including those of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the International Ground Source Heat Pump Association (IGSHPA), the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), the Air-Conditioning and Refrigeration Institute (ARI), or other similar certifying organizations, and shall comply with the Connecticut Building Code and all other applicable requirements of law such as, but not limited to those pertaining to the installation of wells. The manufacturer specifications shall be submitted as part of the application.
 - (b) Only nontoxic, biodegradable circulating fluids such as food grade propylene glycol shall be permitted.
 - (c) Horizontal closed loop systems shall be no more than 20 feet deep.
 - (d) Wellheads located above ground level shall be labeled clearly to identify that they are part of a closed loop geothermal system and not a source of potable water.
- (3) In addition to the requirements of Subsection C(1), solar energy systems shall be subject to the following additional requirements:
- (a) The system must be designed to avoid glare or reflection onto adjacent properties and adjacent roadways and shall not interfere with traffic or create a safety hazard.
 - (b) Height limitations:
 - [1] The highest point of a roof-mounted solar energy system shall not exceed the maximum height limitation for the building upon which it is mounted or two feet above the roof of the building to which it is attached, whichever height is lower, except:
 - [a] On buildings with flat roofs which are located in multifamily residential, commercial or industrial zones, a roof-mounted solar energy system may extend up to 10 feet above the roof of the building upon which it is installed, provided that the solar energy system shall be set back from the perimeter of the roof by a distance equal to one foot for each one foot in height less the height of any parapet wall at the perimeter of the roof; or
 - [b] Where a main use is subject to special use permit approval pursuant to § 177-42A, an applicant may seek such approval for installation of a roof-mounted solar energy system extending up to 10 feet above the roof of the building upon which it is installed.
 - [2] Where permitted, ground-mounted solar energy systems shall not exceed 10 feet in height. In residential zones, ground-mounted solar energy systems shall not cover more than 10% of the area of the required rear yard in which the system is to be located, except that where a main use is subject to special use permit approval pursuant to § 177-42A, an applicant may seek such approval for installation of a ground- or pole-mounted solar energy system extending up to the maximum height permitted for main buildings in the zone. Height shall be measured at the highest point on the system. Where components of the solar energy system track the sun's movement across the sky, the height shall be measured relative to the system's most vertical position. Ground-mounted solar energy systems shall also be subject to the following limitations:
[Amended 11-9-2016]

Zone	Ground-Mounted	Pole-Mounted
All multifamily zones, R-6, R-10, R-13	Prohibited	Prohibited
R-20	Permitted in rear yard only	Prohibited
R-40, R-80	Permitted in rear yard only	Permitted in rear yard only
All commercial and industrial zones	Permitted	Permitted

- (c) Building-integrated systems are deemed to be a component of the structure into which they are integrated and are subject to the requirements of this chapter which otherwise apply to the structure itself.
- (d) The surface area of ground and pole-mounted solar energy systems, regardless of mounted angle, shall be calculated as part of the maximum lot coverage of all buildings.
- (e) Solar energy systems shall be maintained in good working order at all times. If a solar energy system ceases to perform its originally intended function for more than six consecutive months, the property owner shall promptly remove the collector, mount and associated equipment except where it is in the process of being

repaired or is out of service pending the completion of other ongoing work at the property.

(f) The owner of a property on which a solar energy system is installed and/or the owner(s) of the solar energy system itself assume(s) all risk associated with diminished performance of said system caused by any present or future use of nearby property that may interfere with the system's ability to produce power at its rated capacity, regardless of when that adjacent structure or landscaping is constructed or installed.

(4) In addition to the requirements of Subsection C(1), fuel cells are permitted accessory uses in the zones designated in § 177-6C subject to the following requirements:

(a) When located within an accessory structure, the fuel cell and all related equipment shall be completely enclosed by a minimum six-foot-high fence with a self-locking gate.

D. Permitted main uses.

(1) General requirements. Solar energy systems and fuel cells are permitted main uses in the zones designated in § 177-6B subject to the following requirements:

(a) Unless the energy generated by the system is to be used exclusively to meet the needs of nearby properties through private transmission facilities, the applicant shall demonstrate that:

[1] Existing electrical distribution or transmission facilities are adequate to connect the solar energy system or fuel cell to the utility grid; and

[2] That the intended use of any electrical distribution or transmission facilities is permitted under existing law.

(b) Solar energy systems and fuel cells shall meet the minimum yard requirements for main buildings in the zones where they are located.

(c) The solar energy system or fuel cell shall be completely enclosed by a minimum six-foot-high fence with a self-locking gate.

(d) A clearly visible warning sign concerning voltage shall be placed at the base of all pad-mounted transformers and substations or fence.

(e) All on-site transmission lines shall be located underground to the extent feasible. This requirement shall not apply to transmission lines owned or managed by any public utility company.

(f) The applicant shall demonstrate that sufficient on-site parking exists to meet the needs of the facility.

(g) All solar energy systems or fuel cells shall be installed according to manufacturer specifications, the requirements of any applicable utility company interconnect agreements and any applicable codes including, without limitation, the Connecticut Building Code.

(2) In addition to the requirements of Subsection D(1), solar energy systems shall be subject to the following requirements:

(a) The system must be designed to avoid glare or reflection onto adjacent properties and adjacent roadways and shall not interfere with traffic or create a safety hazard.

(b) Solar energy systems installed as main uses shall not exceed 20 feet in height except that an applicant may seek special use permit approval pursuant to § 177-42A for installation of a solar energy system extending up to the maximum height permitted for main buildings in the zone where there is good cause to increase heights to more than 20 feet. In the case where components of the solar energy system track the sun's movement across the sky, the height shall be measured relative to the system's most vertical position.

(c) The surface area of ground or pole-mounted solar energy systems, regardless of mounted angle, shall be calculated as part of the maximum lot coverage of all buildings.

(d) Solar energy systems which are obsolete or otherwise no longer in use shall be removed completely. For purposes of this subsection, a solar energy system shall be deemed to be no longer in use if it has not been used to generate electricity for a continuous period of six months except where it is in the process of being repaired or is out of service pending the completion of other ongoing work at the property.

(e) The owner of a property onto which a solar energy system is installed and/or the owner(s) of the solar energy system itself assume(s) all risk associated with diminished performance of said system caused by any present or future use of nearby property that may interfere with the system's ability to produce power at its rated capacity, regardless of when that adjacent structure or landscaping is constructed or installed.^[1]

[1] Editor's Note: Former Subsection E, regarding a moratorium on the installation of ground-mounted or pole-mounted solar energy systems, which immediately followed this subsection, was repealed 11-9-2016.

§ 177-37.4 Food truck parks.

[Added 3-28-2017]

Food truck parks can provide a unique setting for the service of food in areas that have historically not been serviced by a concentration of traditional restaurants. Food truck parks can serve as vibrant public spaces where a variety of activities take place, but where the primary function is the sale and consumption of food from a diverse array of vendors. While the operation of food truck parks should contribute to the liveliness and vibrancy of the community, they must not be allowed

ZONING

177 Attachment 3

Town of West Hartford
 Standards for One-Family Residence Districts
 [Amended 10-28-1969; 11-28-1978; 1-13-1981; 7-14-1981; 9-22-1987; 2-13-1990; 10-25-2005]

District	Minimum Lot Area per Dwelling Unit (square feet)	Average Lot Width (feet)	Minimum Lot Depth (feet)	Minimum Front Yard	Side Yard (minimum)			Rear Yard (minimum)			Maximum Height				Maximum Lot Coverage of All Buildings	Maximum Horizontal Dimension per Building (feet)		
					Main Building (feet)	Accessory Building (feet)	Minimum (feet)	Main Building (feet)	Accessory Building (feet)	Minimum (feet)	Main Building (feet)	Accessory Building (feet)	Stories	Feet			Stories	Feet
R-50	40,000	As specified in § 177-14	200	1. Building shall observe building line.	25	10	10	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	10%	250
R-20	20,000	150	140		20	10	10	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	15%	250
R-13	12,500	110	110		15	5	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	25%	250
R-10	10,500	85	110		10	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	30%	250
R-5	5,000	70	100		4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	30%	250
		50	100														30%	250

NOTES:
 1. Lots of record in these zones filed with the Town Clerk on or before July 24, 1956:
 A. R-20; 18,000 square feet in area; 100 feet in width.
 B. R-13; 10,500 square feet in area; 75 feet in width.
 C. R-10; 9,000 square feet in area; 60 feet in width.

ITEM #6 - CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT CALENDAR: ITEMS 11, 14 AND 19-21 TO RECEIVE.

Councilor Davidoff: I move that we place items 11, 14, 19-21 on the Consent Calendar.

Councilor Kerrigan: Second.

President Cantor: Motion's been made and seconded. All those in favor?

Councilors: Aye.

President Cantor: All those opposed? Motion carries. And number seven, Mr. Davidoff.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

ITEM #7 - ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING REVISED STANDARDS FOR GROUND-MOUNTED SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

ADOPTED, 9-0

Councilor Davidoff: Thank you, Madam Mayor. I move we adopt the Ordinance Establishing Revised Standards for Ground-Mounted Solar Energy Systems.

Councilor Kerrigan: Second.

President Cantor: Motion's been made and seconded. This was the subject of a public hearing prior to this Council meeting. Mr. Alair, could you briefly describe what we are voting on?

Mr. Alair: Sure. You already have in place an Ordinance permitting amongst other alternative energy equipment, ground-mounted solar energy arrays. This Ordinance imposes additional restrictions on those as a result of a particular incident where somebody installed something that met the requirements of our existing Ordinance but was less than satisfactory to their neighbors, so we have put together some additional restrictions regarding the zones in which they're permitted, the height, setback, that sort of thing to address those concerns.

President Cantor: Thank you, Mr. Alair. I, okay. Go ahead.

Councilor Wenograd: Thank you, Madam Mayor. Let me just say, I was actually a little reluctant when we passed the moratorium, and I saw the ugly thing and I certainly was impacted the way a lot of people were by seeing that. But I was reluctant because of the importance to the planet of encouraging use of solar. It is one of the methods that we need to adopt more and more to prevent the climate change that is happening. So any move by our, on our part to limit that or slow down that was disturbing to me. But we certainly again needed to do something to fill that loophole. But it does bother me that we've had a moratorium and even, you know, the idea of extending it, which a few minutes ago I thought was actually maybe a good idea given the very interesting, you know, comments made on public session. I don't want to extend it because I want to, in fact, allow proper ones to proceed if, if that's, you know, achievable. I do believe that this Ordinance addresses the concerns that we had. It does make it possible to continue to promote solar energy in town. I am thrilled to hear about the organization. I was not aware of it, and I'm certainly hopeful that if there are improvements that can be made in the Ordinance, if one passed, of course, we will consider it and we'd love to hear your input. So I think it's

important for us to end the moratorium, get this passed as-is, and move it along so that we can, you know, not have the uncertainty of a moratorium, move it forward, and then certainly continue to consider any changes that would meet that balance of encouraging solar while protecting our neighborhoods. So I will be voting yes on this Ordinance.

President Cantor: Thank you, Mr. Wenograd. Any other comments? Mr. Barnes.

Councilor Barnes: I'll just, I'll just follow up on that. While I agree that solar is a, you know, an important renewable energy, I think we have to be careful not to, you know, approve things at the expense of, you know, residents' quiet enjoyment of their property. So there is a balance, you know, there that, you know, we have to respect. You know, the, the residents in the community to protect them against something excuse me, I'm not getting emotional but to protect them against something like, you know, what we have over, you know, within, in the Norfeldt area. And so I, too, support, you know, the changes and we, we had a conversation during the public forum about, you know, what the, the purpose and the goals were of making those changes, and it also sounds like, you know, there may be ways to, to make it even better. And if there're people in the community after looking at it or having studied it, have suggestions, you know, I encourage them to bring them forward to make the Ordinance, you know, the, the best it could be. So thank you.

President Cantor: Thank you, Mr. Barnes. Any other Councilors? Mrs. Casperson.

Councilor Casperson: Thank you, Madam Mayor. I was going to say clean energy and saving money makes me weepy with excitement, so I, you know, I am definitely in support of that but really do understand and appreciate that this is something that we can mold and grow and change as the needs of the community do and that we will find ways to make it work well for those who would be able to do that and those who want to have that quiet retreat in their homes. So with that, I will be supporting that this evening and look forward to, if we have any changes, we will come together and make those. Thank you.

President Cantor: Thank you, Mrs. Casperson. Any other comments? I, I would like to thank the Clean Energy Task Force for their work on the overall Ordinance when we, and the commitment that they've made for years to improving our, the quality of life and the quality of our air in our area as well as the country and the world. Mr. Pelletier raised some great points and solar canopies is something I think we should look into. Mr. Campanella, thank you also for your service. And Mr. Chase brought some wonderful ideas and comments and that roof is pretty amazing, I think, the one that doesn't look like solar panels. So I think there are things that're, again, are, are sort of outside this direct fix that we're doing now for this particular change, the, the three primary things that we were, we were addressing but I, I do think the location, the size on the yard and the height. But I also think that maybe it's not perfect and technology changes, and ~~we're going to have to readdress things periodically~~. And I, I'm sure we will be working with the Clean Energy Task Force to perfect this Ordinance as we move down the road, so I will support this Ordinance. And if that's all, we can do a roll call vote. Ms. Labrot?

Ms. Labrot: You're ready?