

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a meeting of the Planning Commission in and for the City of Albany, Stearns County, Minnesota, was called to order by Chairman Adam Rushmeyer at 6:30 o'clock in the evening on Thursday, February 9, 2017 in the Council Room at 400 Railroad Avenue for the said City.

Other Planning Commission members present for the meeting were: Joseph Wedel, Todd Horton, and Jon Stueve. Will Seiler was absent. Councilor John Greer, Planning Commission Liaison, was present for the meeting.

Chairman Adam Rushmeyer called for any additions or corrections to the minutes of January 9, 2017 and hearing none declared them approved.

Bryan Schiffler, business owner, was present for the meeting.

Mr. Schneider presented to the Board a proposed draft of Ordinance Section 80.14B, Alternative Energy Systems of the Albany City Code. Mr. Schneider noted that the proposed ordinance is to promote the effective and efficient use of energy sources to reduce dependency on and consumption of fossil fuels as sources of energy. Mr. Schneider noted that the proposed ordinance is to set forth installation and operation regulations for alternative energy systems by establishing location requirements and circumstances under which the use of alternative energy sources may be implemented without detriment to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the residents of the City. The Board reviewed the proposed language in the ordinance. Mr. Schiffler recommended that the Board consider increasing the height of a ground mount solar energy system from fifteen feet to twenty-five feet to allow snow to slide off the panels. Mr. Horton questioned if there is any glare from solar panels that may cause concerns for neighbors or vehicle traffic. Mr. Wedel noted that solar panels are designed to absorb sunlight for highest energy levels and any glare or reflective sunlight would reduce the effectiveness of the solar panel. Mr. Schneider noted that there is language in the proposed ordinance that would prohibit any glare or reflective sunlight onto neighbor's properties, structures, or obstruct views. Mr. Stueve noted that he would be in favor of allowing solar panels to cover up to 50% for a pitched roof and 90% for a flat roof. Mr. Horton questioned if there are any issues for the City when it comes to the removal and decommissioning of a solar system when no longer in use for a period of time if a solar energy system on a property is leased or owned. Mr. Schneider also noted that no small wind energy conversion systems will be permitted in residential and Core Commercial (C1) Zoning Districts. Mr. Greer noted that the ordinance may be amended in the future if circumstances exist that are not detrimental to the health, safety, and general welfare of the public. Mr. Schneider recommended that the Board consider scheduling a public hearing for Ordinance 80.14B.

The Board took notice of a proposed amendment to Zoning Ordinance Section 80.11, Signs. Mr. Schneider informed the Board that the purpose of the proposed amendment is to add Public Zoning Districts to Section 80.11, Signs. Mr. Schneider noted that the business owner that leases the kitchen at the Albany Golf Club located in a Public Zoning District requested a permit to install an advertising sign. Mr. Schneider noted that the proposed regulations are the same as those listed within a Core Commercial (C1) Zoning District. Mr. Schneider recommended that the Board consider scheduling a public hearing for the proposed amendment.

After due discussion, a motion was made by Todd Horton and seconded by Joseph Wedel to schedule a public hearing at 6:30 PM in the evening on Tuesday, February 28th, at the Albany City Hall, 400 Railroad Avenue for the following: 1) to consider approval of Zoning Ordinance Section 80.14B, Alternative Energy Systems of the Albany City Code, and 2) to consider an amendment to Zoning Ordinance Section 80.11, Signs, of the Albany City Code. All voted for the motion and it carried.

Chairman Adam Rushmeyer adjourned the meeting at 7:15 PM.

Tom Schneider
Clerk/Adm.