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Public Meeting Minutes
Solar Setback Subcommittee

July 16, 2024

Virtual Meeting Minutes

Meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM

1) Roll Call

- John Couture – Present
- Mark Durrenberger – Present
- Luke McKneally - Present
- Ian Finlayson - Present
- Darien Crimmin - Present
- Patty Sheehan - Present
- Jake Nunnemacher – Present
- Sam Pillsbury - Present
- Jason Ferschke - Present
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2) Introduction by BBRS Chair

BBRS Chair Lisa Davey was not in attendance at this meeting, however staff confirmed that the BBRS chair has appointed John Couture to chair this subcommittee.

3) Legal obligations applicable to subcommittees

Board Counsel informed the subcommittee that they are subject to the same open meeting law requirements as the full BBRS, thus in general all subcommittee deliberations had to be held in the open meeting. He also noted that the subcommittee would be approving their own meeting minutes, and reminding the members that if they receive any request by the public for a copy of a document reviewed or received during by the subcommittee that that person should be directed to staff to have the request fulfilled.

4) Work product to be created by this subcommittee

- a) Review 10th edition language regarding solar setbacks and possible future amendments



Mark Durrenberger gave a background of the solar setbacks residential code implementation in Massachusetts and the effect that has had on reducing size of solar systems. Mr. Pillsbury stated that he believes the implementation of the rapid shutdown should be considered and that his goal is to “win back” roof space for solar systems. Fire Chief Jason Ferschke explained the firefighting perspective of energy efficient buildings being more dangerous during a fire and increases the need for vertical ventilation during firefighting operations. This makes the need for solar setbacks “pathways” crucial to firefighter and victim safety.

Members thereafter discussed the fire code and building code language for setbacks, though they did not have all the language for the initial review. Members indicated a need to fully understand these requirements and the rational of why the current language is necessary. Further conversation was had about understanding the concerns from both the fire services perspective and the solar industry to find some middle ground and accomplish the task assigned to the subcommittee.

The subcommittee members deliberated on how the building code and the fire code may overlap or otherwise not be in sync with each other. The Board Counsel reminded the members that the subcommittee’s task is to focus on the building code as the BBRS has no authority to amend the fire code. Ian Finlayson advocated for working together with the fire officials to propose solutions to the conflict between the building code and the fire code. Juke Nunnemacher indicated that the BFPR was considering amendments to the fire code and agreed to supply them to the subcommittee. For the next meeting, staff will provide a copy of the 10th Edition language for comparison. All these proposals will be reviewed at the next meeting.

The subcommittee indicated a desire to review the commercial portion of the code in relation to solar panels in a future meeting.

- b) Draft guidance clarifying permitting requirements for solar installations
This matter was not addressed at this meeting and will be addressed at a future meeting.

5) Other matters not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting.

The next meeting will take place on August 27th from 10 AM to 12 PM.

Jake Nunnemacher made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sam Pillsbury seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:32 AM.

ITEMS RELIED UPON

Agenda