CITY OF WEST DES MOINES
CITY COUNCIL MEETING COMMUNICATION

Date: November 30, 2015

ITEM: Ordinance Amendment – Amend Title 9 (Zoning), Chapter 10, (Performance Standards) and Chapter 14, (Accessory Structures) to establish regulations pertaining to solar energy systems – City Initiated – AO-002916-2015

MOTION: Refer to Plan and Zoning Commission

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Undetermined.

BACKGROUND: The City of West Des Moines is requesting to amend the City Code to establish an ordinance to enable and regulate the installation of solar energy systems.

City Code does not currently address solar energy systems. Following the receipt of two applications for solar energy systems, City staff started work on an ordinance to define and regulate these systems. The draft version of the ordinance along with the two proposed solar energy systems were discussed at the November 2, 2015 Development and Planning Subcommittee meeting. In general, the Subcommittee was supportive of roof mounted solar energy systems, but had concerns on the appearance of ground mounted systems as they are typically more visible than roof mounted systems. The property owners and installer of one of the proposed systems (ground mounted in residential zoning) asked to be placed on the next Subcommittee agenda to discuss their proposed installation and ground mounted systems in general. After discussion at the November 19th meeting, the Subcommittee still had concerns on ground mounted systems and requested staff complete research on how other communities are regulating these systems and then incorporate the comments from both Subcommittee meetings and the research into a revised ordinance for consideration of the Plan and Zoning Commission and the City Council.

At this time the Staff is requesting that the City Council initiate the amendment to City Code and refer it to the Plan and Zoning Commission for their review and recommendation. The initiation of the ordinance amendment by the City Council does not indicate support or opposition to the request. The initiation of the request responds to the due process rights of the petitioner. Staff anticipates further review and discussion of the purpose and details of the ordinance with the Subcommittee and the Council members prior to the ordinance moving forward for approval.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends initiation of the ordinance amendment and forwarding it to the Plan and Zoning Commission for their review and recommendation.

Lead Staff Member: Linda Schemmel, AIA, Planner

Staff Reviews:

Department Director	
Appropriations/Finance	
Legal	
Agenda Acceptance	RJS RTJ

PUBLICATION(S) (if applicable)

Published In	n/a
Date(s) Published	n/a
Letter sent to surrounding property owners	n/a

SUBCOMMITTEE REVIEW (if applicable)

Committee	Development & Planning City Council Subcommittee		
Date Reviewed	November 19, 2015		
Recommendation	Yes ■	No ☐	Split ☐