



PREPARED FOR THE PLAN COMMISSION

Proposal: Zoning Text Amendment, Tourist Rooming House
Legistar File ID #: [60662](#)
Prepared By: Planning and Zoning Staff

60662– Amend definition of “electric power production and/or heating and cooling plant”, amend supplemental regulations to add solar power production as a *Permitted Use*, modify conditional/permit use requirement, allow “electric power production and/or heating and cooling plant” in the Agriculture District.

This amendment modifies the current regulations for *electric power production and/or heating and cooling plant*. The City and region have seen a number of potential interests in creating solar power production, in various locations, primarily in agricultural areas. These facilities are approved by the State of Wisconsin Public Service Commission, in addition to any local requirements. In some cases, some PSC-approved electric power production facilities can be exempt from any local requirement, but staff has been advised that the solar energy production “power plants” for our area require PSC approval and must also meet local zoning requirements.

A solar electric production facility is classified under the use “electric power production and/or heating and cooling plant.” Basically, this is a field of solar panels, with a low-maintenance ground cover, typically vegetation, and some power transfer equipment, all located inside a perimeter security fence. The current code regulations make no distinction between method of power production, which can include wind, solar, natural gas, biomass, hydro-electric, etc. Solar is a renewable power resource, with zero emissions, zero waste and low impact on neighbors. [Here](#) is a link to an example of this type of facility located in northern Illinois.

Per the Madison Zoning Ordinance, all electric power production and/or heating and cooling plants may locate in the Residential Districts, Commercial and Mixed-Use Districts, and Employment districts, usually as a conditional use, although as a permitted use in the TE, IL, and IG Districts. The broader use is not currently allowed in the Agriculture District.

This amendment would accomplish two substantive changes. First, it allows the broad “electric power production and/or heating and cooling plant” use in the Agriculture District. Second, this amendment separates solar power production within the broader category of “electric power production and/or heating and cooling plants”, and in turn allows a solar power production operation as a Permitted Use in the Commercial and Mixed-Use Districts, Employment Districts, and the Agriculture District. The amendment also eliminates a redundant definition.

NOTE: Heating and cooling plants are currently Conditional Uses in the residential districts. No change is proposed for these districts.

Staff supports this amendment.