



## OFFICIAL NOTICE AND AGENDA

of a meeting of a City Board, Commission, Department Committee, Agency, Corporation, Quasi-Municipal Corporation, or Sub-unit thereof.

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>SUSTAINABILITY, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Members:</b>	Jean Abreu (C), Carol Lukens, Christine Daniels, Jesse Kearns, Britnie Remer, Daniel Zinsmeister, and Lauren Leitner
<b>Location:</b>	Maple Room of Wausau City Hall, 407 Grant Street
<b>Date/Time:</b>	<b>Thursday, October 2, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.</b>

---

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
  - Introduction of new members
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of the September 4, 2025, meeting minutes
4. Discussion and Possible Action: Work Plan reports
  - Sustainability Manager – Carrie
    - SolSmart status update
    - Wausau Sustainability Awards
  - Media and Public Education – Christine/Jean/Carol
    - Future radio spots – October
    - Newsletter – SEEC will have one full page in the newsletter, ½ page infographic and 1-2 paragraphs.  
2025 Deadline:
      - Friday, November 14 winter
  - Elected Official Education – Jesse
    - Topics for Council – recap of September 23, Common Council presentation
  - Working w/Departments – Carrie
    - Item completed
  - Policy and framework to guide decisions, etc –
    - Sustainability, Climate Action, Resiliency Plan – exploring grant opportunities and funding
  - Sustainable Food Systems
    - UW Extension backyard gardening class for winter 2026
5. Next meeting date: Thursday, November 6, 2025, 5:00 p.m.
6. Adjourn

It is likely that members of, and a quorum of the Council and/or members of other committees of the Common Council of the City of Wausau will be in attendance at the abovementioned meeting to gather information. **No action will be taken by any such groups.**

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the City of Wausau will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs or activities. If you need assistance or reasonable accommodations in participating in this meeting or event due to a disability as defined under the ADA, please call the ADA Coordinator at (715) 261- 6622 or ADAServices@ci.wausau.wi.us to discuss your accessibility needs. We ask your request be provided a minimum of 72 hours before the scheduled event or meeting. If a request is made less than 72 hours before the event the City of Wausau will make a good faith effort to accommodate your request.

Questions regarding this agenda may be directed to the Community Development Department at (715) 261-6680.

**This Notice was posted at City Hall and emailed to the Media on 09/25/2025**

Any person wishing to offer public comment may email City Clerk Kaitlyn Bernarde at [clerk@wausauwi.gov](mailto:clerk@wausauwi.gov) with "SEEC comment" in the subject line prior to the meeting start. All public comment, either by email or in person, will be limited to items on the agenda at this time. The messages related to agenda items received prior to the start of the meeting will be provided to the Chair.

Other Distribution: Media, Alderpersons, Mayor, City Departments

MINUTES  
September 4, 2025

Members Present: Jean Abreu (C), Alder Carol Lukens, Christine Daniels, Jesse Kearns, and Lauren Leitner

Others Present: Carrie Edmondson

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the Wausau Daily Herald in the proper manner.

---

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

Chair Abreu called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. The group went around with introductions and discussed details of communication about agendas and packets.

---

**2. Public Comment**

No public comment was received.

---

**3. Approval of the Minutes of the August 7, 2025, Meeting**

*Carol/Christine motion/second to approve the minutes – approved 5-0.*

---

**4. Discussion and Possible Action: Work Plan reports**

---

- Sustainability Manager – Carrie –
  - Carrie provided an update on the City solar array, Alder Lukens recommended that citizens in support of the City solar array attend the City Council meeting on September 23 and express support of the project.
  - The City has begun the process of seeking SolSmart certification and is currently only five points from SolSmart Bronze status.
  - Wausau Sustainability Awards – Christine provided results of her meeting with Britnie including a draft press release, changes to the application, and recommended process for review.
  - Work plan update – SEEC will undergo a new work plan in January 2026. In December SEEC will review projects completed to date.

*Jesse/Christine motion/second to approve the Wausau Sustainability Awards application and procedure with suggested modifications – approved 5-0.*

- Media and Public Education – Christine/Jean –
    - Future radio spots (third Tuesday) –
      - September – Carol (Leave the Leaves)
      - October – Christine/Britnie (Wausau Sustainability Awards)
    - Newsletter – one full page in one of the newsletters (1/2 page infographic and 1-2 paragraphs).
-

- 
- Elected Official Education – Jesse
    - Tuesday, September 2 – Wausau Water Works Commission 11:00 a.m.
    - Tuesday, September 23 – Common Council 6:30 p.m.
  - Working w/Departments – Carrie
    - This item may transition to business engagement and will be determined with the work plan.
  - Policy and framework to guide decisions, etc. –
    - Carrie is continuing to monitor the OEI Energy Innovation Grant Program (EIGP) energy planning grant this fall for fund availability. In addition, we will be receiving technical assistance from the Great Plains Institute who will assist with the pathway for future development of a clean energy/climate action plan.
  - Sustainable Food Systems

---

**5. Next meeting date: October 2, 2025, 5:00 p.m.**

---

**6. Adjourn**

---

*Carol/Jesse motion/second - approved 5-0. Adjourned at 6:10 p.m.*



---

Office of the Mayor  
Doug Diny

---

TEL: (715) 261-6800  
FAX: (715) 261-6808

August 27, 2025

Debra Perry

Brandy O'Quinn

International City/County Management

Association Interstate Renewable Energy Council

777 North Capitol St. NE, Ste. 500

125 Wolf Road, Suite 100

Washington, DC 20002

Albany, NY 12205

Dear Debra Perry and Brandy O'Quinn,

On behalf of the City of Wausau, I am proud to announce our commitment to becoming a SolSmart-designated community. In partnership with the SolSmart team, dedicated City of Wausau staff members will work to improve solar market conditions, making it faster, easier, and more affordable for our residents to install solar energy systems. These efforts will also increase the efficiency of local processes related to solar development, which may save our local government time and money.

The City is seeking designation with the support of the Wausau Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee. Additionally, designation aligns with the Resolution passed in 2023, Supporting Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy Security, with the goal of 100 percent clean energy by 2050.

The City of Wausau will leverage SolSmart to achieve the following goals:

- Education and encouragement of residents and businesses to explore solar opportunities
- Education of staff on solar options, process, and streamlined permitting and inspections
- Advance the City of Wausau's sustainability and clean energy goals

These goals demonstrate the City's commitment to continual improvement in the areas of solar support, solar education, and the installation of solar systems.

For more information about the City of Wausau SolSmart designation application, contact Carrie Edmondson, AICP, at [carrie.edmondson@wausauwi.gov](mailto:carrie.edmondson@wausauwi.gov) or 715-261-6009.

Sincerely,

Doug Diny, Mayor



## **STAFF REPORT**

TO: City of Wausau Plan Commission

FROM: Carrie Edmondson, AICP, Assistant City Planner

DATE: September 16, 2025

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

PURPOSE: Informational presentation to the Plan Commission to summarize the Zoning Review completed by SolSmart

### **ANALYSIS**

The City has recently begun the process of seeking SolSmart designation at the recommendation of the Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee (SEEC). The SolSmart designation criteria encourages the growth of solar energy at the local level using established best practices.

The SolSmart Criteria pathway is organized into five categories:

- Permitting and Inspection
- Planning and Zoning
- Government Operations
- Community Engagement
- Market Development

SolSmart recently completed a review of the City of Wausau's zoning and land use regulations to analyze the use of best practices, possible barriers (height restrictions, setback requirements, etc.) and gaps related to solar development. In summary, the conclusion was that the City of Wausau Zoning Code is overwhelmingly favorable for solar development. In the vast majority of categories including definitions, roof-mounted solar, ground-mounted accessory use solar, and ground mounted primary use solar, the conclusion was that the current Zoning Code aligns with SolSmart recommendations.

The only item identified that needed improvement was inclusion of a solar purpose statement. This statement would provide an opportunity to include goals related to solar to link solar energy development to specific community goals and plans. After staff review,

we agree that this idea has merit. However, we think this would be better suited and more impactful within the City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan. The City's Comprehensive Plan is due to be updated in 2027, with plan development throughout 2026. We anticipate sustainability goals being a focused objective during the plan revision.

In summary, we are pleased to find that the City of Wausau Zoning Code is aligned with SolSmart recommendations and feel the goals of a purpose statement can be integrated into the City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan revision.

# PZ-1 Zoning Review

Community: Wausau, WI



**PZ-1: Review zoning requirements and identify restrictions that intentionally or unintentionally prohibit solar PV development. Compile findings in a memo. (Required for Bronze)**

To assist your local government, the national solar experts at SolSmart have conducted a review of your community's zoning and land use regulations to assess the use of best practices, possible barriers (i.e. height restrictions, set-back requirements, etc.) and gaps related to solar PV development. The Wausau [Zoning Code](#) was accessed and reviewed during August 2025. The code was accessed via the [Wausau website](#) (with a redirect to the [Municode Library](#) website).

Below, please find the outcome of the review.

As the SolSmart expert reviewed your community's zoning and land use regulations, they have provided recommendations for improvements and additional language that can support growth of the solar market in your community. Zoning codes should provide clear and transparent regulations on the development and use of solar energy within the jurisdiction. Recognizing that zoning codes must be specific to each community to address unique needs and local factors, SolSmart recommended language may need additional local context. Incorporating clear and transparent solar PV guidelines and regulations into zoning codes can help streamline development processes and reduce costs related to new solar PV installations.

By reading the narrative and signing the statement at the bottom of the page, your community will satisfy the PZ-1 pre-requisite and be one step closer to achieving SolSmart designation.

## **Summary**

---

- A search for "photovoltaic" yielded 0 results.
- A search for "solar" yielded 33 results.
- A search for "renewable energy" yielded 0 results.
- A search for "clean energy" yielded 0 results.

## **Next Steps**

---

We recommend the following steps to best utilize the zoning review.

- 1) This zoning review can be presented to the Planning & Zoning Commission or relevant zoning body to achieve credit PZ-2.
- 2) Based on the zoning review and the dialogue from the Planning Commission meeting, staff can draft proposed language for changes to the zoning code to achieve credit PZ-3.
- 3) SolSmart staff are available to help present the zoning review and/or provide guidance and feedback on draft language.

## **Best Practice Review & Recommendations**

---

The code was reviewed to determine if it incorporates best practice regulations for solar energy. Incorporating best practices improves transparency of processes and clarity of development standards and can enhance the growth of the local solar market in an organized and efficient manner. The review

is split into four sections: **Solar Purpose and Definition, Roof-mounted Solar, Ground-mounted Solar Accessory Use, and Ground-mounted Solar Primary Use.** Each section reviews code language applicable to that topic area or type of solar PV. Where needed, the review will include suggested language that the community could adopt to align the code with SolSmart recommendations. Codifying zoning code best practices for solar development can help prevent misinterpretation, changes in how the code is read, or future challenges to solar installations.

## Solar Purpose and Definitions

<b>Purpose or Intent</b>		
The code does NOT contain a purpose or intent for including solar energy regulations in the code.		
<b>Code Language</b>	Section:	
<b>Reviewer Comments</b>	Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations: <input type="checkbox"/>	Needs Improvement: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The purpose section of the zoning code provides an opportunity to include goals related to solar to link solar energy development to specific community goals and plans. Referencing specific goals and plans in the purpose section can create a stronger foundation for future solar projects.		
<b>Suggested Language</b>		
<p><i>Below are examples of how solar energy could be included in the zoning purpose.</i></p> <p>Wausau has adopted the following regulations to encourage the efficient and effective development and use of solar energy systems while protecting the public health, safety, and welfare of its residents.</p> <p>Solar energy is a renewable energy resource and valuable economic resource that can be utilized throughout the city of Wausau for the following purposes (<i>the following bullet points are optional depending on community goals and plans</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To implement the following objectives of the Comprehensive Plan:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Encourage the use of local renewable energy resources.</li> <li>b) Promote sustainable building design and practices.</li> <li>c) Encourage economic development while preserving the community’s historic resources and character.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2) To meet the goals of the Climate Action Plan, Sustainability Plan, Clean Energy Resolution.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) [REFERENCE GOALS OR TARGETS]</li> </ol> </li> <li>3) To decrease the community’s reliance on fossil fuel power sources and reduce greenhouse gas emission/achieve carbon reduction goals.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) [REFERENCE SPECIFIC GOALS OR TARGETS]</li> </ol> </li> <li>4) To enhance the reliability and resiliency of the local power grid and make more efficient use of the local electric distribution infrastructure.</li> <li>5) To promote consumer choice and allow residents and businesses to use local, renewable energy while displacing fossil fuel generation.</li> <li>6) To improve air quality and protect public health.</li> </ol>		

Definitions		
The code contains definitions for solar energy.		
Code Language	Section: 23.03.28 - Accessory land uses and structures.	
<p>(22) <i>Small solar energy system</i>: Equipment and associated facilities that directly convert and then transfer or store solar energy into usable forms of thermal or electrical energy. Small solar energy systems are accessory to a principal land use on a property and are designed primarily to generate energy for said principal land use.</p> <p>23.03.24 - Energy production land uses and structures.</p> <p>(2) <i>Large Solar Energy System</i>: Equipment and associated facilities that directly convert and then transfer or store solar energy into usable forms of thermal or electrical energy. Large Solar Energy Systems generate energy for commercial sale off-site.</p>		
Reviewer Comments	Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Needs Improvement: <input type="checkbox"/>
Definitions form the basis of understanding for the terms used throughout the solar energy section of the code and reduce the chance for misinterpretation. At a minimum, a local government should include definitions that distinguish between solar energy system type (roof-mounted vs ground-mounted) and use (accessory vs primary) to provide clarity and a foundation on which to specify permissible uses in specific zoning districts and provide development standards. Additional definitions that may be beneficial for communities to include in their zoning codes are provided.		
Suggested Language		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <i>Solar energy system</i>: A device, array of devices, or structural design feature, the purpose of which is to provide for generation or storage of electricity from sunlight, or the collection, storage, and distribution of solar energy for space heating or cooling, daylight for interior lighting, or water heating.</li> <li>2) <i>Solar photovoltaic system</i>: A solar energy system that converts solar energy directly into electricity, the primary components of which are solar panels, mounting devices, inverters, and wiring.</li> <li>3) <i>Grid-connected solar energy system</i>: A solar photovoltaic system that is connected to an electric circuit served by an electric utility company.</li> <li>4) <i>Roof-mounted solar energy system</i>: A solar photovoltaic system mounted on a rack that is ballasted on, or is attached to, the roof of a building or structure. Roof-mount systems are accessory to the primary use.</li> <li>5) <i>Ground-mounted solar energy system (Accessory Use)</i>: A solar photovoltaic system mounted on a rack or pole that is ballasted on, or is attached to, the ground and the system is accessory to the primary use.</li> <li>6) <i>Ground-mounted solar energy system (Primary Use)</i>: A solar photovoltaic system mounted on a rack or pole that is ballasted on, or is attached to, the ground and is the primary land use for the parcel(s) on which it is located. Primary use systems are permitted through a discretionary approval process.</li> <li>7) <i>Community-scale solar energy system</i>: A solar photovoltaic system that qualifies for the [STATE COMMUNITY SOLAR PROGRAM NAME – if applicable].</li> </ol>		

## Roof-Mounted Solar

### Roof-mounted Accessory Use Solar

The code explicitly permits accessory use roof-mounted solar PV systems as a by-right or allowed use.

<b>Code Language</b>	Section: 23.03.28 - Accessory land uses and structures.
----------------------	---

(22) Small solar energy system:  
(a) Solar energy systems (rooftop, building-mounted, and freestanding) are permitted uses in all zoning districts as accessory structures.

<b>Reviewer Comments</b>	Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--	--

**Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations**  
This aligns with SolSmart best practices. Codifying roof-mounted accessory use solar as a permitted use provides clarity and transparency. This action will allow the local government to submit for PZ-5, the Planning and Zoning pre-requisite for Gold designation.

**Applicable SolSmart Credit: PZ-5, Codify in the zoning ordinance that accessory use rooftop solar PV is explicitly allowed by-right in all major zones.**

**Suggested Language**

**Roof-mounted solar energy** systems are a permitted accessory use within **all zoning districts**, subject to the following development standards.

**Roof-mounted Solar Height**

The code allows roof-mounted solar PV to exceed height restrictions by a defined number

<b>Code Language</b>	Section: 23.03.28 - Accessory land uses and structures.
----------------------	---

(22) Small solar energy system:  
(c) Rooftop and building-mounted solar energy systems shall comply with the height limits and setbacks for primary structures.  
1. Any small solar energy system attached to a sloped roof may exceed the maximum height limits of the structure by up to five feet, but in no instance shall the panel be taller than the peak of the roof.  
2. Any small solar energy system attached to a flat roof may exceed the maximum height limit of the structure by up to ten feet, but the panel must be setback from the edge of the roof a minimum height equal to or greater than the height of the panel.

<b>Reviewer Comments</b>	Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--	--

**In Line with SolSmart Recommendations**  
This aligns with SolSmart best practices. Either exempting solar energy systems from height limits or permitting solar energy systems to exceed the maximum building height in all applicable districts can improve system design and performance.

**Applicable SolSmart Credit: PZ-6, Ensure the zoning ordinance language does not include intentional or unintentional barriers to accessory use rooftop solar PV.**

**Suggested Language**

**Sloped Roof**  
On a pitched/sloped roof, solar energy systems shall be installed parallel to the roof surface and may not extend beyond the edge of the roof peak.

**Flat Roof**

*For flat roofs, local governments can select from one of the following two options depending on how the zoning ordinance addresses the height of rooftop appurtenances, chimneys, antennas, and/or rooftop mechanical equipment.*

- 1. If the ordinance exempts certain features/structures from height limits, then it is recommended that roof-mounted solar energy systems also be exempted from height limits.*

On a flat roof, solar energy systems are exempt from zoning district height limits.

- 2. If the ordinance does not include any exemptions, then it is recommended to allow roof-mounted solar energy systems to exceed a districts height limit.*

On a flat roof, solar energy systems are permitted to exceed the zoning district height limits by up to 10 feet.

## **Ground-mounted Accessory Use Solar**

<b>Ground-mounted Accessory Use Solar</b>		
The code explicitly permits accessory use ground-mounted solar PV systems as a by-right or allowed use in at least 1 zoning district.		
<b>Code Language</b>	Section: 23.03.28 - Accessory land uses and structures.	
(22) Small solar energy system: (a) Solar energy systems (rooftop, building-mounted, and freestanding) are permitted uses in all zoning districts as accessory structures.		
<b>Reviewer Comments</b>	Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>In Line with SolSmart Recommendations</b>		
This aligns with SolSmart best practices. Sometimes a property is not suitable for a roof-mounted solar system because the building has structural limitations, or the rooftop is shaded. In these instances, a small ground-mounted solar PV system can still allow the property owner to install solar and enjoy the benefits.		
<b>Applicable SolSmart Credit: PZ-7, Ensure the zoning ordinance permits small ground-mounted solar PV as an accessory use in at least one zoning district.</b>		
<b>Suggested Language</b>		
Ground-mounted solar energy systems are a permitted accessory use within all zoning districts, when incidental to one or more permitted primary and/or accessory structure(s), subject to the following development standards.		

<b>Ground-mounted Solar Setbacks and Placement</b>		
The code contains setback or placement standards for accessory use ground-mounted solar PV.		
<b>Code Language</b>	Section: 23.03.28 - Accessory land uses and structures.	
Table: Minor Accessory Structures Permitted in Required Yard Setbacks		

Small Solar Energy System permitted in side and rear setbacks.		
<b>Reviewer Comments</b>	Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Needs Improvement: <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Setback standards or placement requirements should not hinder the efficiency and effectiveness of accessory use ground-mounted solar. Accessory use ground-mounted solar energy systems should have similar setback requirements to other residential accessory use structures. These setbacks generally allow accessory structures to be built closer to a property line than primary structures. Applying less restrictive setback requirements allow a ground-mounted solar PV system to operate efficiently through appropriate sizing, optimal siting, and ensuring access to adequate sunlight. Depending on the character and typical lot size of the community, it may be appropriate to encourage the siting of accessory use ground-mounted PV systems in the side or rear yard of a property. Rural communities or those with large lots can be less restrictive and allow solar energy systems to encroach into established residential accessory use setbacks. <b>Zoning codes should be clear on the standards and placement requirements that apply to accessory use ground-mount solar.</b></p>		
<p><b>Applicable SolSmart Credit: PZ-8, Ensure the zoning ordinance exempts small ground-mounted solar PV from certain restrictions on accessory uses (e.g. setbacks, coverage or impervious surface calculations, or other restrictions).</b></p>		
<b>Suggested Language</b>		
Ground-mounted solar energy systems shall comply with the accessory structure setback requirements of the zoning district in which it will be installed.		

<b>Ground-mounted Solar Lot Coverage/Impervious Surface</b>		
The code exempts accessory use ground-mounted solar PV from lot coverage and/or impervious surface standards.		
<b>Code Language</b>	Section: 23.03.28 - Accessory land uses and structures.	
(22) Small solar energy system:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. They shall not be considered an impervious surface in the measurement of the maximum impervious surface ratio if the surface under the panels is pervious.</li> </ol>		
<b>Reviewer Comments</b>	Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>In Line with SolSmart Recommendations</b>		
This aligns with SolSmart best practices. It is a best practice to exempt ground-mounted solar energy systems from lot coverage and impervious surface requirements as long as the area beneath the system is pervious (e.g. grass).		
<p><b>Applicable SolSmart Credit: PZ-8, Ensure the zoning ordinance exempts small ground-mounted solar PV from certain restrictions on accessory uses (e.g. setbacks, coverage or impervious surface calculations, or other restrictions).</b></p>		
<b>Suggested Language</b>		
Ground-mounted solar energy systems are exempt from lot coverage and impervious surface requirements if the area under the system contains vegetative ground cover.		

## Ground-mounted Solar Primary Use

<b>Ground-mounted Solar Primary Use</b>		
The code includes standards for primary use ground-mounted solar PV.		

Code Language	Section:	
<p>(2) Large Solar Energy System: Equipment and associated facilities that directly convert and then transfer or store solar energy into usable forms of thermal or electrical energy. Large Solar Energy Systems generate energy for commercial sale off-site.</p> <p>(a) Rooftop, ground-mounted, and building-mounted large solar energy systems shall comply with the height limits and minimum required yards for principal structures.</p> <p>(b) Large solar system structures shall be finished in a rust-resistant, non-obtrusive finish, and color that is non-reflective.</p> <p>(c) All electrical connections shall be located underground or within a building.</p> <p>(d) No large solar energy system shall be lighted unless required by the Federal Aviation Administration.</p> <p>(e) Clearing of natural vegetation for the purposes of installing a large solar energy system shall be limited to that which is necessary for the construction, operation and maintenance of the large solar energy system and as otherwise prescribed by applicable laws, regulations, and ordinances.</p> <p>(f) All access doors or access ways and electrical equipment shall be lockable.</p> <p>(g) A large solar energy system shall require a building permit before installation. Building permit applications shall include the following information in addition to that required by the Building Code:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A site plan drawn to scale showing the location of the proposed large solar energy system and per the requirements of section <a href="#">23.10.42</a>.</li> <li>2. Elevations of the site drawn to scale showing the height, design, and configuration of the large solar energy system and the heights of all existing structures, buildings and electrical lines in relation to property lines and their distance from the small solar energy system.</li> <li>3. A standard foundation design along with specifications for the soil conditions at the site.</li> <li>4. Specific information on the type, size, rated power output, performance, and safety characteristics of the system, including the name and address of the manufacturer, model, and serial number.</li> <li>5. A description of emergency and normal shutdown procedures.</li> <li>6. A line drawing of the electrical components of the system in sufficient detail to establish that the installation conforms to all applicable electrical codes and this subsection.</li> <li>7. Evidence that the provider of electrical service to the property has been notified of the intent to install an interconnected electricity generator, except in cases where the system will not be connected to the electricity grid.</li> <li>8. Evidence of compliance with Federal Aviation Administration requirements.</li> </ol> <p>(h) The requirements of Wisconsin Statutes, including but not limited to Wis. Stats. §§ 66.0401 and 66.0403, shall apply to all solar energy systems.</p> <p>(i) Solar energy systems are a conditional use. The City will apply Wis. Stats. §§ 66.0401 and 66.0403 of the Wis. Admin. Code as amended, in the evaluation of such requests.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No restriction shall be placed, either directly or in effect, on the installation or use of a solar energy system, unless the restriction satisfies one of the following conditions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Serves to preserve or protect the public health or safety.</li> <li>b. Does not significantly increase the cost of the system or significantly decrease its efficiency.</li> <li>c. Allows for an alternative system of comparable cost and efficiency.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>		
<b>Reviewer Comments</b>	Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>In Line with SolSmart Recommendations</b>		

This aligns with SolSmart best practices. This section provides helpful details about the standards for primary use solar systems and the review process. Key information provided includes the need for a [e.g. conditional use permit] and standards that should be followed for [setbacks, decommissioning plans, height restrictions, screening requirements, security, and mitigation of construction impacts.]

**Applicable SolSmart Credits: PZ-9, Ensure the zoning ordinance establishes a clear regulatory pathway for large-scale solar PV (e.g. through a special use permit or through inclusion among allowed conditional uses).**

**Suggested Language**

See pages 12 -13 in SolSmart’s [Best Practice Guidance for Solar and Zoning](#) for a list of state model solar ordinances that contain template language for primary use solar energy systems.

**Barrier Review**

Solar energy standards should serve to guide and enable solar development, not create ambiguity, or restrict solar development. Certain design and performance standards can create significant barriers to solar PV. The inclusion of any of the following standards are not best practices and will likely impact the local government’s ability to achieve SolSmart Gold designation. The statements containing NOT align with best practices. In addition to removing existing barriers, this review can help ensure that barriers are not introduced if the community updates their zoning code to include additional solar language.

Roof-mounted Solar Screening		
The code does NOT require screening for roof-mounted solar PV systems.		
<b>Code Language</b>	Section:	
<b>Reviewer Comments</b>	Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Barrier: <input type="checkbox"/>
It is not best practice to require screening for roof-mounted solar energy systems. Screening requirements may increase installation costs and decrease system efficiency. Solar PV performance depends on optimal siting of the system and clear access to solar radiation. Screening requirements could negatively impact system performance if the screening results in shading. Screening requirements could also hide the location of important system components that are necessary to shut off a system in case of a fire or other type of emergency.		

Limits to System Visibility		
The code does NOT include standards to limit system visibility (e.g. not visible from public rights of way).		
<b>Code Language</b>	Section:	
<b>Reviewer Comments</b>	Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Barrier: <input type="checkbox"/>
It is not a best practice to suggest the placement of solar panels should be done to reduce their visibility. In fact, it could severely limit where solar energy systems are installed. Solar PV performance depends on panel location with the best performance occurring when panels are located on a southerly exposure. Less than optimal siting for solar panels can decrease the amount of sunlight a system receives and thereby negatively impact performance.		

Aesthetic Standards		
The code does NOT include aesthetic standards for solar PV systems.		
Code Language	Section:	
Reviewer Comments	Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Barrier: <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>It is not a best practice to require systems to blend into the architecture of the structure, be camouflaged from public view, be constructed of dull or dark colors, or be non-reflective. Aesthetic requirements can increase installation costs but would most likely prohibit a solar energy system from being installed since key system components like solar panels cannot be altered or painted to blend into the architecture or color scheme of a building. Aesthetic requirements could also hide the location of important system components that are necessary to shut off a system in case of a fire or other type of emergency.</p>		

Glare, Glint, and/or Noise Standards		
The code does NOT include glare, glint, and/or noise standards for solar PV systems.		
Code Language	Section:	
Reviewer Comments	Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Barrier: <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>It is not a best practice to require a glare study prior to the installation of a solar energy system. Solar PV panels are designed to absorb incoming solar radiation and limit the amount of reflected light. Solar panels are designed with anti-reflective glass. A glare study will increase installation costs.</p> <p>It is not a best practice to suggest the placement of solar panels should be done to minimize glare. In fact, it could severely limit where solar energy systems are installed. Solar PV performance depends on panel location with the best performance occurring when panels are located on a southerly exposure. Less than optimal siting for solar panels can decrease the amount of sunlight a system receives and thereby negatively impact performance. Additionally, solar PV panels are designed to absorb incoming solar radiation and limit the amount of reflected light. Solar panels are designed with anti-reflective glass.</p> <p><a href="#">The glare from a solar panel is similar to that of smooth water.</a> A glare study is recommended if solar panels will be sited close to an airport but otherwise the analysis is usually unnecessary, adding time and cost to a project.</p> <p>It is not a best practice to require an acoustic study or have maximum level of noise the system can produce. Roof-mounted solar energy systems produce very minimal noise. An acoustic study will increase installation costs.</p>		

Roof Space Coverage Limit		
The code does NOT limit solar PV system coverage to a percentage/part of the available roof space.		
Code Language	Section:	
Reviewer Comments	Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Barrier: <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>It is not a best practice to limit the coverage of a roof-mounted solar energy system. All buildings should have the opportunity to install a roof-mounted solar energy system to the maximum extent possible, so long as the roof is structurally capable of holding the load and applicable emergency access requirements are maintained. Maximizing a solar PV systems roof coverage is important goal</p>		

since buildings are transitioning to electric appliances and systems and incorporating electric vehicle charging equipment.

### Prohibition on Flat or Low Sloped Roofs

The code does NOT prohibit solar PV systems on flat or low sloped roofs.

**Code Language** | Section:

**Reviewer Comments** | Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations:  | Barrier:

It is not a best practice to prohibit solar energy systems on flat or low sloped roofs. All buildings should have the opportunity to install a roof-mounted solar energy system regardless of roof slope, so long as the roof is structurally capable of having a solar energy system. Many buildings with flat roofs like warehouses, data centers, distribution centers, and big box retail stores are excellent candidates for roof-mounted solar energy systems.

### Limits on Electricity Production

The code does NOT include limits on how much electricity a solar PV system can produce.

**Code Language** | Section:

**Reviewer Comments** | Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations:  | Barrier:

It is not a best practice to include limits on the amount of electricity a solar energy system can produce. Regulations and policies like this are normally set by a state entity (Public Utility Commission/Public Service Commission) and/or local electric utility and are not appropriate for zoning codes.

### Limits on Electricity Consumption

The code does NOT include limits on where a solar PV system's energy is consumed.

**Code Language** | Section:

**Reviewer Comments** | Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations:  | Barrier:

It is not a best practice to include limits on where a solar energy system's electricity can be consumed. Regulations and policies like this are normally set by a state entity (Public Utility Commission/Public Service Commission) and/or local electric utility and are not appropriate for zoning codes.

### Discretionary Review Process

The code does NOT identify a discretionary review process for accessory use solar PV.

**Code Language** | Section:

**Reviewer Comments** | Aligned with SolSmart Recommendations:  | Barrier:

It is not a best practice to have a discretionary review process for accessory use solar PV. This has the potential to be an onerous and/or subjective process for accessory-use solar energy systems and could increase a project's timeline and costs. Roof-mounted systems should be an allowed or by-right use and only need to go through the building permit process to ensure compliance with applicable building and electrical codes. Depending on the complexity of a conditional use permit process, the time it takes to permit a small, accessory-use solar energy system may increase the cost of the project and therefore decrease the ability of all residents and business to be able to access and afford solar.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusions**

The Wausau Zoning Code provides comprehensive standards for the development of solar energy. The code could be enhanced by explaining the purpose of including solar systems in the zoning ordinance.

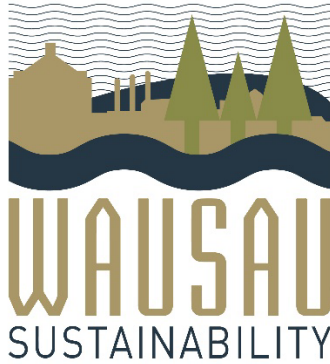
Please see [Best Practice Guidance for Solar and Zoning - Accessory Use](#) for additional recommendations.

I, [full name] as [title] of [community], [state] have received the zoning review and read its findings.

Signature: Carrie Feldner Date: 9/17/25

Please note that this review is not an endorsement or recommendation for changing and/or updating the zoning code. This is an informational review only.

If the local government has clarifying comments, please provide them in a memo to the SolSmart team.



## 2025 Wausau Sustainability Awards Application

*The Wausau Sustainability Awards recognize individuals, businesses, and organizations that are committed to creating a more sustainable and energy-smart Wausau. These awards are also meant to share examples of sustainability initiatives and projects with residents, businesses, community groups, and nonprofits and encourage similar projects.*

*Application window opens on **Monday, September 22**, and application deadline is **Sunday, October 19**.*

### 1. Your contact information:

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street/City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail : \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility (circle one):      Self-nominating      Nominating another

### 2. Nominee's contact information:

Name of individual, business or organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Website of nominee (if available): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person's e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Street/City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. How would you best describe the nominee (check all that apply):

- Energy: Renewables, Efficiency or Conservation** – Efforts to reduce energy consumption or increase the use of renewables, including transportation demand management. Consideration is given to the level of investment, documented reduction/generation of energy, reach of the effort and/or greenhouse gas emissions.

If you have questions about Wausau Sustainability Awards contact Carrie Edmondson at [carrie.edmondson@wausauwi.gov](mailto:carrie.edmondson@wausauwi.gov) or 715-261-6009.

- **Environmental Education** – Programs and projects that effectively teach both children and adults how to learn about their environment and to make intelligent, informed decisions about how to take care of it.
- **Resource Conservation, Preservation or Stewardship** – Individuals, businesses, and organizations that demonstrate their commitment to the improvement of the Wausau community by conserving, preserving, replanting or restoring the natural environment, improving water quality or reclaiming the urban environment either directly through programs and actions or indirectly through innovative products or practices. This also could include innovations in waste management, recycling or composting.
- **Green Site and/or Building Design** – The design, development, construction, or renovation of buildings and sites in ways that set an example and/or exceed standard energy efficiency, incorporate low impact design, preserve natural site features and resources, use of green infrastructure stormwater management BMPs, create healthy indoor conditions, etc.
- **Health, Food and Agriculture** – Individuals, businesses, and organizations that demonstrate commitment to producing, using, or promoting local, sustainable, healthy food, or increasing access to healthy food for underserved populations.
- **Student Leadership** – An individual student, school group or community youth group that demonstrates excellence in a sustainability effort.
- **City Staff** - Staff that goes beyond job duties to improve sustainability for City policies, programs, or operations.
- **Other** – If you have a sustainable project that doesn't fit one of the above categories, please suggest another category: \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Describe the nomination in 150 words or less. Be sure to include if the project/initiative served an underserved population and any partnerships formed as a result of the project/initiative.**

---



---



---



---



2025

# CITY OF WAUSAU SUSTAINABILITY AWARDS

The purpose of the Sustainability Awards is to highlight innovative initiatives and successful projects that contribute to a more sustainable Wausau.

Nominate someone or fill out an application today! More information and applications can be found at the link above and are due October 19, 2025.



## **SEEC Topics: City Council Meeting 09/23/2025**

SEEC Members: Jean Abreu (Chair), Christine Daniels (CM), Britnie Rember (CM), Carol Lukens (Alder Representative)

### **Overview: Sustainability, Energy, and Environment Committee**

- The Sustainability Energy, and Environment Committee (SEEC) acts as an advisory body to the Common Council in the development of policies, programs, and decisions that affect the relationship between the City and the environment.

#### **1.) *Greenhouse Gas Emissions Resolution***

- a. The City of Wausau is committed to leading the way to a more sustainable future. In 2023, the City Council passed a Greenhouse Gas Resolution, a commitment to move City operations to clean energy by 2050. This caps a long history of action and initiatives that City has taken to help educate it's residents and combat the effects of Climate Change.
  - i. These efforts are done with the goals of:
    1. reducing greenhouse gas emissions from City operations
    2. reducing the burden of City operations on the tax levy
    3. provide resources to residents and businesses
- b. The SEEC Committee has discussed meeting with city leaders to discuss our progress on this resolution and offers any assistance the City might need in identifying opportunities to ensure our community can make good on the promise of 2050 that was outlined in the resolution.

#### **2.) *SOLSMART Designation***

- The City of Wausau is working to become a [SolSmart](#) designated community by implementing best practices to make it easier for residents and businesses to install and access solar energy. SolSmart is a national program funded by the U.S. Department of Energy that has helped hundreds of local governments become "open for solar business". Learn more about the program [here](#).
  - i. Designations of this kind are an establishment of credibility that acknowledge the cities commitment to sustainability and equity.
  - ii. These designations can be merited when it comes to seeking funding or future designations of the city's willingness to commit to it's environmental and sustainability goals.



### 3.) Community Outreach

- a. We currently run a page of updates to information for the community in each of the quarterly news letters with programs such as “Slow your Mow” and the previous attempt to foster pollinators in the “No Mow May.”
  - b. Members of the SEEC have been invited to speak on a local radio station interested in local environmental and sustainability issues in an effort to educate the public and to better our understanding of the current opportunities found in our community.
- Slow Your Mow



### 4.) Meeting with Department Heads

- a. Recently, members of our committee reached out to the heads of various city department heads and got together with them better understand their goals and frustrations when it comes to equity and sustainability for each of their individual department’s perspectives.
- b. Future collaborations could lead to informing the SEEC committee on opportunities to assist them in their efforts and to bring attention to previously unknown issues/solutions these departments have first hand experience with.

### 5.) Annual Sustainability Award/Recognition for Local Organization

- a. Previously awarded to *Good News Project* and *Aspirus Inc*, honoring their efforts on a local level when it comes to their contributions to sustainable practices and commitment to environmentally sustainable operations.
  - b. This designation not only foists a local organization for doing what they can to be environmentally sustainable, it is also acts as badge of honor for these organizations with the hope that future applicants will strive to be more environmentally conscious.
- **Sustainability Awards**
    - The Wausau **Sustainability Award** recognizes individuals, businesses, and organizations that are committed to creating a more sustainable and energy-smart Wausau. These awards are also meant to share examples of sustainability initiatives and projects with residents, businesses, community groups, and

nonprofits and encourage similar projects. To apply or nominate a recipient for this award, please fill out the application [here](#).

- Past Award Winners:
  - Good News Project [Application Award](#)
  - Aspirus Inc [Application Award](#)

## **6.) Solar Array**

- a. A huge opportunity for the city to show it's dedication to the future community members, both in a financial sense by offsetting increasing energy costs, as well as investing in an avenue of energy independence that will make the community less reliant on external investments and infrastructure.
- b. Tax credits are currently available, but are not guaranteed for the future, so it is the position of the committee that the city should strongly consider acting on this while the funds are potentially available.
- **Solar Energy Resources**
  - The City of Wausau is working to become a SolSmart designated community by implementing best practices to make it easier for residents and businesses to install and access solar energy. SolSmart is a national program funded by the U.S. Department of Energy that has helped hundreds of local governments become "open for solar business". Learn more about the program [here](#).
- **The Benefits of Going Solar**
  - Solar energy uses a renewable energy source (the sun!) and provides many benefits for individuals and the community. It improves environmental quality by reducing carbon emissions and air pollution, supports local solar companies in [Wisconsin](#), creates local jobs, saves money on energy costs, and improves electric grid resilience during peak demand and other stresses to the system.
- **Solar Maps and Potential**
  - Investigate your property's solar potential by [clicking here](#). You can also estimate the performance of potential PV projects using the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's [PVWatts Calculator](#).