

**DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
JANUARY 17, 2023**

Minutes

Mayor Fox called the Tuesday, January 17, 2023 work session to order at 6:00 p.m.

Council members present: Ms. Alutto, Ms. Amorose Groomes, Vice Mayor De Rosa, Mayor Fox, Mr. Keeler, Ms. Kramb, and Mr. Reiner.

Staff present: Ms. O'Callaghan, Ms. Readler, Mr. Ranc, Ms. Rauch, Mr. Earman, Ms. Gee, Ms. Steiner, Ms. Noble, Ms. Wigram, Chief Paez, Ms. Rigano, Mr. Anderson, Ms. Gishel, Mr. Ament, Mr. Stiffler, Mr. Rogers, Ms. Weisenauer, Ms. Goliver.

Also present were: Leon Younger, President, Philip Parnin, Associate Principal, from PROS Consulting and Rick Fay and Aaron Domini from OHM Advisors.

Mr. Keeler led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Renewable Energy Equipment for Solar

Ms. Noble stated that this discussion will provide information responding to Council's questions during the first reading of Ordinance 70-22 regarding solar panels and the code process. She stated that she would also be sharing some of the results of the survey and public input meeting on this topic. There is been an increased interest in solar energy over the past two years due to financial incentives available until 2035.

The purpose of reviewing the regulations is to:

- clarify how renewable energy, specifically solar panels, are reviewed in commercial and residential districts within the City in alignment with Council's goal to be "Most Sustainable."
- Commit to sustainable practice including efforts with the Dublin Sustainability Framework while balancing community character, aesthetics, community values and environmental stewardship.
- Establish regulations that best represent public interest in solar.

Ms. Noble summarized the first reading and the Ordinance that was proposed. Draft Code language was added to Section 153.074 – Accessory Structures. There was a differentiation between ground-mounted and building-mounted equipment in proposed amendment. She stated the general purpose statement was to "promote sustainable environmental practices and environmental stewardship while balancing the high-quality standards that defines the character of community."

General provisions of the code amendment included:

- Conceal frames, flashing, fasteners, hardware, etc.;
- Review materials that have dual function as building materials (such as a window or shingles);
- Equipment shall remain in working order or be removed; and
- These provisions are intended to be regularly updated as this technology advances.

The draft code language addresses ground-mounted equipment as: located to the side or rear of the principal building, only in non-residential districts and accessory use only. Building or Roof-mounted equipment is proposed to be allowed to be located on the side or rear of the principal building. Council's feedback at the first reading of the Ordinance, was support for ground-mounted solar energy only in non-residential districts and over hardscape. They also requested additional information about the five foot separation requirement between equipment and buildings. Ms. Noble

explained that the five feet was intended to be a "fall zone" to ensure proper spacing if equipment would become dismantled and fall. The Planning Department is considering an increase to this spacing from five feet to six feet to be consistent with height permitted for ground-mounted equipment. Council requested additional information about: adding language prohibiting the panels extending beyond the roofline, minimizing color differences and avoiding complex configurations. There was also some discussion regarding how the front façade of a house was determined or defined. Ms. Noble stated that staff's proposed definition is, "any building face generally oriented along a front property line either within the front building zone or behind the front setback."

Ms. Noble stated that Council requested that the Planning Department work with the legal staff to discuss the approval process and potentially requiring periodic reapplying of permits. She stated that a building permit is required and property owners are "vested" upon approval. Other considerations mentioned were how installation of solar panels affect the integrity of the roof and that it is a considerable financial commitment. The draft code language includes a requirement that the equipment remain in working order. Staff can enforce this requirement by requiring documentation of working status.

Ms. Noble provided illustrations of some solar panels installed on residential properties in Dublin.

Ms. Noble stated that a postcard was mailed to all property owners asking them to participate in a survey. The survey was posted on our website and is available until January 22. The survey was gathering feedback on:

- General attitude toward solar energy, specifically in Dublin and residential areas;
- Whether or not they have considered solar energy and what factors might impact their decision;
- General attitude toward solar energy in commercial areas and what limitations should be considered; and
- Other considerations regarding appearance, location, maintenance, etc.

Survey results were largely very positive toward solar energy. The City hosted a public input meeting on January 11 to provide an overview of our research to date and draft regulations. Attended by 35 people including Council members, HOA representatives, industry representatives and general public. She reviewed some of the in-room survey results received that evening showing a large support for solar among the participants.

Staff asked Council the following questions to facilitate discussion and provide direction:

1. What additional information is needed to address City Council's concerns prior to the amendment moving forward?
2. What additional clarifications are needed in the draft Code to address City Council's request for additional information about dual-functioning materials?
3. Does City Council propose any modifications to the permitted location of solar energy equipment in residential districts?
4. Are there additional restrictions that should be included such as requiring only black panels with black frames to provide a more streamlined appearance, only permitting conduits and wiring to be installed beneath the roof?
5. If additional modifications are proposed, would Council recommend the draft language be sent back to the Planning and Zoning Commission?

Mr. Reiner stated that integrated design is very important to protect the neighbors and the value of properties in the area. We cannot detract from the neighbor's home. He advocated for putting the responsibility of regulating solar panels on the homeowners associations (HOA) and neighborhoods. Also, he stated that the HOA's should have to put those regulations in writing to help residents

adhere to them. He liked the idea of color matching the materials to lessen the visual impact. He stated that ground-mounted equipment should have to be screened. In response to Mayor Fox, Mr. Reiner stated that he would like more clarity on the meaning of integrated design.

Vice Mayor De Rosa asked how the "front of the house" is determined. Is it where the mailbox is located? Ms. Noble reread the description as proposed and stated that on a corner lot, for example, there would be two front facades. Ms. Noble stated that the front is usually considered to be along the public right of way.

Ms. Kramb suggested the following wording, "no panels on any roof surface that slopes toward a front property line." The term "Front property line" is defined in Code.

Vice Mayor De Rosa stated that if the goal is to not allow solar panels in the front of the house, then there needs to be clarity of where specifically that is. She needs additional clarity on what is front, what is front view and what is not front view? She stated she is also struggling with understanding why it is okay to see solar panels in someone's back yard, but not the front. If there are coverage limitations for other things in the City, are there reasonable coverage standards for solar panels that still allow them to work. She asked which HOAs permit solar panels and which do not? She requested a map that shows which HOAs have restrictions and which do not. Ms. Rauch stated that a map can be provided to show the HOAs and civic associations, but staff does not have what the restrictions are for each of the HOAs. Vice Mayor De Rosa stated that there are areas of the City not covered by an HOA.

Ms. Amorose Groomes stated that if our goal is to let people have solar panels, that is one conversation, but if our goal is to be green, then the conversation should be different. She would like Dublin to lead in how we think about being a green community. The built environment is extremely important. She advocated for using solar on black top and flat rooftops. She stated that if green is what we want to be, then we need to do it the right way. She stated her belief that just being solar panel friendly in this community was not the goal of Council. She would like to know if there is a better way to get the desired effectiveness and efficiency. If the answer is no, then she would feel better about allowing solar panels to be placed on several individual homes. She stated that without taking a more comprehensive look at green initiatives we will not know the best options to be green.

Vice Mayor De Rosa stated that she agreed, but there is a short term dilemma that needs resolved about solar panels and their use. Ms. Amorose Groomes stated she wasn't sure about what dilemma exists because people are already navigating the existing Code. She also noted that the survey questions only addressed solar panels and not being a green community. If people truly want to be green, then this needs to be approached from a holistic viewpoint.

Mr. Keeler agreed with Vice Mayor De Rosa and Ms. Amorose Groomes. He stated that the return on investment (ROI) is not great on solar panels. If people would be willing to be a little more patient, technology will improve and costs will come down.

Ms. Alutto agreed with Ms. Amorose Groomes' comments that larger questions need answered, but there is still a short-term issue that needs resolved regarding our Code. Do we leave the Code the way it is or amend it? In response to Mr. Keeler's comments, Ms. Alutto stated that ROI is something that each homeowner needs to evaluate for themselves. She still has questions about what constitutes the front of the home. She would like to make sure that whatever definition is used, that it can be applied to homes that are uniquely situated on their lots. She suggested putting solar technology on some of our own buildings to learn more about what is available.

She asked Vice Mayor De Rosa if her questions regarding the roof coverage was relating to the size of the home. Vice Mayor De Rosa stated that she noticed on a recent trip to Colorado, she witnessed solar panel coverage on homes seemed to have less coverage. She stated she would like to know

what is feasible. Ms. Alutto agreed and stated that the age of the home could matter as well. How much square footage on a roof is needed to make a solar panel installation feasible is the question. Mr. Reiner asked about any legal issue with blocking access to solar. Ms. Readler stated that the City would be in a very defensible position even if we were limiting solar in certain areas and not others.

Mayor Fox stated that the question of solar panels and their placement is much more than residential. There are levels of solar panel use in communities. The Great Plains Institute has a model of solar municipal code for states that are using solar. She would like to see more about what other states are doing. She would like to learn more about the architectural elements that can be incorporated into a home that are not solar panels, such as windows, etc. She would like more information about putting a requirement into the development code that solar energy would have to be considered by developers. Finally, she would like to see more about the "Right to Solar Access" that she has seen in other Code language.

Ms. Kramb stated that solar panels are being put on roofs now, so it does need addressed. She expressed her belief that it should be more restrictive until additional technologies unfold. She stated that solar panels should only be allowed on roofs that slope toward the back property line, match the roof color and be placed in a square or rectangular formation. She suggested that we should have solar panels on commercial buildings, black top and service buildings. Regarding dual use, she stated that she agrees if the solar energy product is treated like a building material, then you must follow the material requirements.

Ms. Alutto agrees with the dual use requirement. She reiterated that if Council does not wish to do a more comprehensive sustainability/green study, then we do need to something because people are trying to make decisions about this for their homes.

Ms. O'Callaghan stated that following Council's adoption of the Strategic Framework last summer, funds were included in the 2023 operating budget to do a sustainability City wide study. Management Analyst Emily Goliver is leading that project and is currently looking at consultants that may be hired to assist. Ms. O'Callaghan stated that she cannot say how long the study will take, but right now is the time to ensure that the scope of the study is what we want it to be.

Ms. Kramb stated that we do have to look at the bigger picture.

Mayor Fox asked staff to explain, as the Code is now, how it would work if someone wanted to put solar on their home. Ms. Noble stated that currently, solar panels are allowed on the side and back of the home.

Mr. Reiner stated that it has to span the entire roof in order to make it look right.

Ms. O'Callaghan stated that second reading was scheduled for February 13 and sought Council's feedback on whether that should remain as a second reading or if Council would like to table the Ordinance to get additional information.

Mr. Reiner stated he is supportive of tabling the Ordinance.

Vice Mayor De Rosa asked how many applications exist right now. Ms. Noble stated the number of permits the City has issued is 74 total. Vice Mayor De Rosa asked, how many do we have in cue? She suggested that we need to learn a bit along the way and we need to have clarity. She would like more information before having to entertain the thought of how restrictive it should be.

Mayor Fox stated that it sounds like the consensus is that more information is needed. Ms. O'Callaghan confirmed that another work session would be scheduled for discussion.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Mr. Earman introduced consultants Leon Younger and Phil Parnin from PROS Consulting and Rick Fay and Aaron Domini from OHM Advisors who are present to assist the dialogue on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update.

Mr. Earman outlined the presentation this evening as follows:

- Project/Process Overview
- Technical Analysis
- Public Engagement
- Key Focus Areas
- Discussion

This master plan has taken the approach to connect other studies occurring at this time, one of which is the 2035 Framework.

Project/Process Overview

Multiple public forums and stakeholder interviews have been conducted as well as the online survey and the statistically valid survey. Staff and consultants will present these findings and obtain direction from Council. A tremendous amount of work has been completed thus far. Next steps are to refine the plan and bring that forward to Council for consideration.

Mr. Younger stated that there was a good effort on public engagement. People love the park system, they just want more of it. There is a lot of data-driven analysis of Dublin's park system.

Technical Analysis

Mr. Fay stated that the technical analysis began with a park/facility assessment. They visited 20 community parks with a wide variety of amenities as opposed to the many neighborhood parks with a more limited focus. There were strengths, challenges, and opportunities found. Park signage and wayfinding was a strength. Walkability coverage is fantastic in Dublin. System-wide there is a wide variety of scenery, amenities, and activities. Some challenges found were older parks with some features showing age, a lack of turf sports fields and managing the aesthetic versus maintenance of parks. They see opportunities of a next-level active sports facility, expanding styles of furnishings and individual park upgrades.

Mr. Fay continued by stating that they also reviewed climate resiliency which is important to the community. Climate change impacts Dublin with increasing average temperatures for longer periods of time and higher frequency of larger precipitation events. They see a three-prong approach to the parks system playing a role in helping manage the impacts of climate change: adapting to, fighting, and providing relief from climate change. Some strategies for adapting to climate change include using native plantings, reducing irrigation, reducing resource intensive lawn areas, explain park areas that can absorb flood events. To directly fight climate change, Dublin could reduce impervious surfaces, using parks and woodlands for carbon capture, incorporating renewable energy and executing City's sustainability framework plan. Relief from climate change comes in the form of utilizing park space to counter urban heat and improving City-wide stormwater. He shared a graphic of the walkshed analysis. The coverage map based on ESRI data appears that over 90% of the City is within a 10-minute walkshed. The walkshed map led to the consideration of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). There are opportunities for Diversity and Equity with culturally-appropriate

programming, closing walkshed gaps and preventing communities from being underserved. Access to non-motorized active transportation and park amenity and programming proximity to age groups can be considered for Inclusion. There was no bias observed based on diversity or income with regards to maintenance of or amenities in the parks. Several maps were displayed showing demographic information about the parts of the community served by those parks.

Mr. Ranc added that the purpose of studying the DEI assessment was to look at it from a lot of different standpoints and ensure that there were no deficiencies. There were no glaring deficiencies upon this consideration.

Mr. Younger stated that they also reviewed level of service. The park system serves 90% of the population within a 10-minute walk. In order to serve everyone within a 10-minute walk, would require an additional 9 acres in neighborhood parks and an additional 26 acres in community parks. He has never seen a park system serve 100%. Dublin is about double the State of Ohio's level of service. In order to achieve 100%, it would really come down to location. Dublin has done a tremendous job of providing amenities, amount of park space, and trails. When making recommendations, the lifecycle and maintenance of existing amenities. Mr. Younger shared results of benchmarking with other municipalities.

Mr. Fay stated that they also reviewed program offerings. It is easy to say there is a wide and broad distribution of programs serving the community. There were eight core program areas reviewed. Department does a great job utilizing feedback and marketing methods. Department does a good job promoting and ensuring cost recovery. There is a good distribution of funding strategies utilized. Mr. Fay shared some funding sources that could be explored and possibly expanded. Grants are a funding source to consider. They are a great source as part of a broader strategy.

Public Engagement

Mr. Fay stated that they hosted a project website specifically for this plan where they received comments, shared documents/information, and served as a gateway to the survey.

Mr. Younger shared that there was a public forum, statistical survey, online survey as well as stakeholder and focus group interviews. The goal of the statistically valid survey was to obtain 375 completed surveys and there were 521 actually completed. Results mirror Dublin demographics. Mr. Younger shared graphics comparing the respondents of the statistically valid survey, the online survey and the U.S. Census. The intent is to match the needs of the community with the priorities of the community. Mr. Keeler confirmed that the priority investment rating information is from the statistically valid survey. Mr. Younger answered in the affirmative. He stated that results show that pools had the highest priority investment rating for recreation facilities followed by botanical/formal gardens. The online survey showed pool facilities had the highest rating as well. In both the statistically valid survey and the online survey, adult sports had the highest priority investment rating for recreation programs. Aquatics needs to be considered in five different realms; competitive, fitness, play, program and therapeutic.

Preliminary Recommendations – Key Focus Areas

Mr. Younger shared the following Vision, "Provide every resident of the City of Dublin an exceptional parks and recreation experience to elevate Dublin to a global city of choice." This is one of the major elements of the Comp Plan and we want to tie this plan with that.

Mr. Younger shared the following Key Focus Areas:

Park Land: Acquire and develop new parkland, and maximize the value of each park type currently in the system to reach the full recreation value associated with its design. They see the Rapid 5 program as a key program here. All-weather fields will help serve the community. Activation of and access to the river is a consideration. Mr. Ranc added that we are focusing on the key focus areas and staff is looking for Council's reaction to ideas presented.

Recreation Facilities: Continue to be the leader in indoor and outdoor community-based facilities for people of all ages and interests. They recognize the need to update the current facility. An arts and cultural center, E-gaming, outdoor climbing apparatus are all things to consider.

Program Services: Enhance parks and recreation facilities through new or improved program services to maximize the community's investment in its facilities and enhance their impact on the quality of life for Dublin residents. There is a combination of skill-set programs, cultural-based programs, and competition.

Parks & Recreation Operations: Provide industry-leading and innovative services for parks and recreation operations to deliver an exciting and high-quality experience for Dublin residents. Wi-Fi in parks is something continually ask for. Different skateboarding and mountain bike experiences are ideas to include. The system without land is \$105 million. That is a lot to maintain. That requires capital and operating dollars.

Financing: Expand the funding options available to the Parks and Recreation Department to fund the community's desire for a world-class parks and recreation system that meets or exceeds the community's vision for Dublin. We are hoping to introduce different ways of financing at the next conversation.

Mr. Earman closed the presentation by asking Council for feedback by posing the following questions:

1. What are Council's thoughts of the initial findings and data for the Master Plan?
2. Is Council supportive of the key focus areas to guide the creation of future parks and recreation projects and strategies?
3. What opportunities and challenges would Council recommend staff focus on while finalizing the proposed projects and strategies to address the community's parks and recreation needs?
4. Other considerations of City Council.

Mayor Fox thanked those that came before that created such beautiful park system.

Ms. Kramb noted that nowhere in the focus areas is the word "safety". We need to make sure what we have and what we add is safe. Washington Township could be included in the conversation. Mr. Younger stated that there was some conversation about incorporating safety into design principles.

Ms. Alutto stated that she is particularly interested in the Financing Focus Area. There has been a lot of feedback in regards to aquatics lately. One of the biggest areas of need is one of the schools, which takes up a much larger geographic area, and not the City. She would be interested in what type of relationships could be out there to support that need. There were some interesting thoughts on financing in general that she would be interested in exploring.

Vice Mayor De Rosa asked for more detail on the report and summary of findings statement that older parks are showing their age. Mr. Fay stated that some of the structures like picnic pavilions

have soffits that are coming apart and shingles that are coming off. You can see there is maintenance happening to some of the structures but some just have not been addressed yet. Pavement was another area that is breaking up. Vice Mayor De Rosa stated that she is excited about the new things but it is important to understand the maintenance efforts as well. She is supportive of encouraging Council to advance and do innovative things. She is grateful that comparisons were not just with neighbors. She asked if there is enough data to look at the survey by age. Mr. Younger stated that they can provide cross tabs. There are usually 12-15 cross tabs that people are interested in. Vice Mayor De Rosa stated that she is particularly interested in what the upcoming generation of users had to say.

Ms. Amorose Groomes stated that she is also interested in maintenance. It may not be prudent to start building and acquiring new things if current parks facilities can not be maintained. She stated that all of Council is interested in providing as much as possible to as many residents as possible. She asked for data on the breakdown of cost per user. She wants to serve as many as possible in the highest fashion possible. Mr. Younger stated that there is a lot of data on different density cities on cost per trail mile, field, etc. costs should be tied to efficiency and effectiveness. They can add the cost on a national level on these types of amenities. Mr. Younger stated to get a cost per user, it is typically on a specific user basis like a yoga class. Mr. Earman asked for clarification on cost per resident or user. Ms. Amorose Groomes referenced the Olympic-style kayaking and the number of residents that would use that amenity, and stated that she would like to know the cost per resident on such an amenity. If we make wise choices in offerings, the need for cost recovery is less. Mr. Younger stated that pricing is broken down into levels and the benefit and cost can be directly related to the user. To make good decisions, we need good data.

Mr. Keeler agreed that maintenance needs to be elevated. Waterway maintenance needs to be addressed. There is a good bit of synergy between the feasibility study done by Visit Dublin and this plan. Any items that can be achieved by looking seriously at that would accomplish a lot. It is interesting that the statistically valid survey shows a desire for an aquatic facility. He agrees with Ms. Alutto about working with the schools on that issue.

Mr. Reiner stated that there is some low-hanging fruit. For instance, we have a quarry that would be perfect for climbing as well as the east side wall on Bridge Street. Shawnee Hills is considering spending \$15 million on addressing handicap needs. We also use the metro parks. He found this report very helpful in providing clarity. He asked if there is something exciting that could be brought into the community that would draw young people into the community. Mr. Younger stated that there are a lot of things. A really effective amphitheater that seats up to 4,000 is very powerful. Darree Fields has the potential to be one of the premier sports complexes in the country. He stated that the decision needs to be made as to whether this is being done for local people or local and regional. A lot of these could provide regional amenities that serve a larger audience. He recommends bringing in mergers. It would bring in and support all types of people in the community. Design for safety also has to be in anything you do. Dublin has the space to have one of the best mountain biking park in the country. Boulder, CO created one like a ski resort and it draws people from all over. Mr. Reiner stated that survey respondents don't always think of big, out-of-the-box ideas.

Mayor Fox sought consensus on whether Council is supportive of the key focus areas in general. Consensus was yes, Council is supportive of the key focus areas.

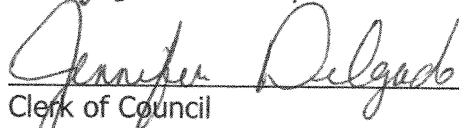
Mayor Fox agreed on maintenance. She wants to be sure that wellness in recreation programming covers any capabilities/abilities. It might be important to do a focus group with underserved communities like teens and special needs groups. She would like to narrow down priorities in each key focus area.

Ms. Alutto agreed that there is a need for adaptive equipment and programming. There was a private gym with such equipment that has closed leaving a gap. Mr. Earman stated that the City is currently in the process of licensing staff to provide the same programming that they provided.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.



Presiding Officer - Mayor



Clerk of Council