



Town of Miami Lakes Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor & Councilmembers

From: Town Manager, Edward Pidermann

Subject: Solar Energy Systems

Date: October 8, 2019

Recommendations:

Staff recommends approval of the ordinance creating Section 13-1702 as it relates to solar energy systems within the Town.

Background:

On July 17, 2018, Town Council directed the Town Manager to explore the possibility of an ordinance to provide for regulations that address solar energy systems and could potentially result in a SolSmart designation for the Town. SolSmart is a national designation program created to recognize communities that have taken key steps to address local barriers to solar energy and foster the growth of mature local solar markets. SolSmart is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO). It provides no-cost technical assistance from a team of national experts to evaluate local government programs and practices that impact solar markets and to find opportunities for improvement. It also seeks to increase installed solar capacity by reducing the "soft costs" of solar such as permitting, financing, and installation, thus making it easier for local residents and businesses to acquire solar.

SolSmart provides a three-tiered designation system based the number of points accumulated through improvements to the code and permitting procedures:

- Bronze designation requires that a community meet the overall program requirements, earn 20 points each in the permitting, planning, zoning, and development regulation categories, and achieve an additional 20 points across all remaining categories.
- Silver designation requires that a community must first achieve the requirements for SolSmart Bronze, then meet additional requirements in planning, zoning and development regulations and inspection procedures, and earn 100 points total across all categories.
- Gold designation requires that a community must first achieve the requirements for SolSmart Silver, then meet one additional requirement in permitting and achieve 200 points total across all categories.

On March 19, 2019 at a duly advertised workshop, the Town Council directed staff to take the steps necessary to achieve Gold Designation.

On July 24, 2019 the Planning and Zoning Board, acting in its capacity as the Local Planning Agency voted to recommend approval of the ordinance, with the recommendation to remove pole mounted systems from the list of solar energy devices that are allowed as of right, or consider further limiting their height.

On August 20, 2019, Staff was contacted by Solmart staff with the announcement that the Town had accumulated 155 points, enough to obtain Bronze designation, as well as a Special Recognition Award for earning over 60% of the available points in the Inspection criteria category. On July 24, 2019 The Planning Board heard the ordinance in its current form and recommended approval.

On September 10, 2019 The Town Council voted to approve the ordinance on first reading.

Attachments:

Ordinance
Staff report
Attachment 1 Presentation
Attachment 2 Solsmart review
Attachment 3 Prerequisite Summary
Attachment 4 Credit Summary