

3-1-82 SPECIAL USE PERMITS REQUIRED--WIND ENERGY SYSTEMS.

- (a) **APPROVAL REQUIRED.** No owner shall, within the City, build, construct, use or place any type or kind of wind energy system without holding the appropriate conditional use permit for said system.
- (b) **SEPARATE PERMIT REQUIRED FOR EACH SYSTEM.** A separate conditional use permit shall be required for each system. Said permit shall be applicable solely to the systems, structures, use and property described in the permit.
- (c) **BASIS OF APPROVAL.** The Plan Commission shall base its determination on general considerations as to the effect of such grant on the health, general welfare, safety and economic prosperity of the City and, specifically, of the immediate neighborhood in which such use would be located, including such considerations as the effect on the established character and quality of the area, its physical attractiveness, the movement of traffic, the demand for related services, the possible hazardous, harmful, noxious, offensive or nuisance effect as a result of noise, dust, smoke or odor and such other factors as would be appropriate to carry out the intent of the Zoning Code.
- (d) **FEES.** The Common Council shall, by resolution, establish fees for the processing and issuance of wind energy special use permits under this Article.
- (e) **DEFINITIONS.** "Wind energy systems" shall mean "windmills" which are used to produce electrical or mechanical power.

SEC. 13-1-83 PERMIT PROCEDURE--WIND ENERGY SYSTEMS.

- (a) **APPLICATION.** The permit application for a wind energy system shall be made to the Zoning Administrator on forms provided by the City. The application shall include the following information:
 - (1) The name and address of the applicant.
 - (2) The address of the property on which the system will be located.
 - (3) Applications for the erection of a wind energy conversion system shall be accompanied by a plat or survey for the property to be served showing the location of the generating facility and the means by which the facility will provide power to structures. If the system is intended to provide power to more than one (1) premises, the plat or survey shall show all properties to be served and the means of connection to the wind energy conversion system. A copy of all agreements with system users off the premises shall accompany the application. The application shall further indicate the level of noise to be generated by the system and provide assurances as to the safety features of the system. Energy easements shall accompany the application.
 - (4) An accurate and complete written description of the use for which special grant is being requested, including pertinent statistics and operational characteristics.
 - (5) Plans and other drawings showing proposed development of the site and buildings, including landscape plans, location of parking and service areas, driveways, exterior lighting, type of building material, etc., if applicable.
 - (6) Any other information which the Zoning Administrator may deem to be necessary to the proper review of the application.
 - (7) The Zoning Administrator shall review the application and, if the application is complete and contains all required information, shall refer it to the Plan Commission.
- (b) **HEARING.** Upon referral of the application, the Plan Commission shall schedule a public hearing thereof as soon as practical and the Plan Commission shall notice said hearing as deemed appropriate.
- (c) **DETERMINATION.** Following public hearing and necessary study and investigation, the Plan Commission shall, as soon as practical, render its decision in writing and a copy made a permanent part of the Commission's minutes. Such decision shall include an accurate description of the special use permitted, of the property on which permitted, and any and all conditions made applicable thereto, or, if disapproved, shall indicate the reasons for disapproval. The Plan Commission may impose any conditions or exemptions necessary to minimize any burden on the persons affected by granting the special use permit.

- (d) **TERMINATION.** When a special use does not continue in conformity with the conditions of the original approval, or where a change in the character of the surrounding area or of the use itself cause it to be no longer compatible with surrounding areas, or for similar cause based upon consideration for the public welfare, the special grant may be terminated by action of the Plan Commission following a public hearing thereon.
- (e) **CHANGES.** Subsequent change or addition to the approved plans or use shall first be submitted for approval to the Plan Commission and if, in the opinion of the Board, such change or addition constitutes a substantial alteration, a public hearing before the Plan Commission shall be required and notice thereof be given.
- (f) **APPROVAL DOES NOT WAIVE PERMIT REQUIREMENTS.** The approval of a permit under this Article shall not be construed to waive the requirement to obtain electrical, building or plumbing permits prior to installation of any system.

3-1-84 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS REGARDING WIND ENERGY SYSTEMS.

(a) **ADDITIONAL STANDARDS.** Wind energy conversion systems, commonly referred to as "windmills," which are used to produce electrical power, shall also satisfy the requirements of this Section in addition to those found elsewhere in this Article.

(b) **APPLICATION.** Applications for the erection of a wind energy conversion system shall be accompanied by a plat of survey for the property to be served showing the location of the generating facility and the means by which the facility will provide power to structures. If 113094
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the system is intended to provide power to more than one (1) premises, the plat of survey shall show all properties to be served and the means of connection to the wind energy conversion system. A copy of all agreements with system users off the premises shall accompany the application. The application shall further indicate the level of noise to be generated by the system and provide assurances as to the safety features of the system. Energy easements shall accompany the application.

(c) **CONSTRUCTION.** Wind energy conversion systems shall be constructed and anchored in such a manner to withstand wind pressure of not less than forty (40) pounds per square foot in area.

(d) **NOISE.** The maximum level of noise permitted to be generated by a wind energy conversion system shall be fifty (50) decibels, as measured on a dB(A) scale, measured at the lot line.

(e) **ELECTROMAGNETIC INTERFERENCE.** Wind energy conversion system generators and alternators shall be filtered and/or shielded so as to prevent the emission of radio-frequency energy that would cause any harmful interference with radio and/or television broadcasting or reception. In the event that harmful interference is cause subsequent to the granting of a conditional use permit, the operator of the wind energy conversion system shall promptly take steps to eliminate the harmful interference in accordance with Federal Communications Commission regulations.

(f) **LOCATION AND HEIGHT.** Wind energy conversion systems shall be located in the rear yard only and shall meet all setback and yard requirements for the district in which they are located and, in addition, shall be located not closer to a property boundary than a distance equal to their height. Wind energy conversion systems are exempt from the height requirements of this Chapter; however, all such systems over seventy-five (75) feet in height shall submit plans to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to determine whether the system is to be considered an object affecting navigable air space and subject to FAA restrictions. A copy of any FAA restrictions imposed shall be included as a part of the wind energy conversion system conditional use permit application.

(g) **FENCE REQUIRED.** All wind energy conversion systems shall be surrounded by a security fence not less than six (6) feet in height. A sign shall be posted on the fence warning of high voltages.

(h) **UTILITY COMPANY NOTIFICATION.** The appropriate electric power company shall be notified, in writing, of any proposed interface with that company's grid prior to installing said interface. Copies of comments by the appropriate utility company shall accompany and be part of the application for a conditional use permit.

cal subdivision with which the council is affiliated on its own or after receiving any of the following:

1. A written suggestion regarding delegating a governmental service to a private person.
2. A written complaint that a governmental service provided by the political subdivision is competing with the same or a similar service provided by a private person.
3. A written suggestion by a political subdivision employee or political subdivision employee labor organization to review a governmental service delegated to a private person.

(b) After receiving a suggestion or complaint under par. (a), the council shall meet to decide whether an analysis of the governmental service indicated in the suggestion or complaint is necessary. The council may hold hearings, conduct inquiries, and gather data to make its decision. If the council decides to analyze a governmental service under this paragraph, the council shall do all of the following:

1. Determine the costs of providing the governmental service, including the cost of personnel and capital assets used in providing the service.
2. Determine how often and to what extent the governmental service is provided and the quality of the governmental service provided.
3. Make a cost–benefit determination based on the findings under subs. 1. and 2.
4. Determine whether a private person can provide the governmental service at a cost savings to the political subdivision providing the service and at a quality at least equal to the quality of the service provided by the political subdivision.
5. If the council decides that a governmental service is not suitable for delegating to a private person, determine whether the governmental service should be retained in its present form, modified, or eliminated.

(c) After completing an analysis under par. (b), the council shall make a recommendation to the political subdivision providing the governmental service analyzed under par. (b) and publish the council's recommendation. The recommendation shall specify the recommendation's impact on the political subdivision and the political subdivision's employees.

(6) TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE. The board of regents of the University of Wisconsin System shall direct the extension to assist councils created under this section in performing their duties under subs. (4) and (5). The board of regents shall ensure that council members are trained in how to do all of the following:

- (a) Conduct an analysis of a governmental service.
- (b) Determine ways to improve the efficiency of delivering a governmental service.
- (c) Establish, quantify, and monitor performance standards.
- (d) Prepare the reports required under sub. (7) (a) and (b).

(7) REPORTS. (a) On or before June 30, 2002, each council shall submit a report to the department describing the council's activities.

(b) On or before June 30, 2003, each council shall submit a final report to the department describing the council's activities and recommendations and the extent to which its recommendations have been adopted by the political subdivision with which the council is affiliated. A report submitted under this paragraph shall provide a detailed explanation of all analyses conducted under subs. (4) and (5).

(c) On or before July 31, 2003, the department shall submit a report concerning the activities and recommendations described in the reports submitted under pars. (a) and (b) to the legislature under s. 13.172 (2) and to the governor. The department's report shall describe ways to implement such recommendations statewide.

History: 2001 a. 16.

66.0317 Cooperation region. (1) DEFINITIONS. In this section:

(a) "Cooperation region" means a federal standard metropolitan statistical area. For purposes of this section, if only a part of a county is located in a federal standard metropolitan statistical area the entire county is considered to be located in the federal standard metropolitan statistical area.

(b) "Governmental service" has the meaning given in s. 66.0316 (1) (e).

(c) "Metropolitan service delivery" means any governmental service provided to a city that is provided by the city or by another city or by a town, village, or county and provided on a multijurisdictional basis.

(d) "Municipality" means any city, village, or town.

(2) AREA COOPERATION COMPACTS. (a) 1. Except as provided in subd. 3., beginning in 2003, a municipality shall enter into an area cooperation compact with at least 2 municipalities or counties located in the same cooperation region as the municipality, or with any combination of at least 2 such entities, to perform at least 2 governmental services.

3. A municipality that is not adjacent to at least 2 other municipalities located in the same cooperation region as the municipality may enter into a cooperation compact with any adjacent municipality or with the county in which the municipality is located to perform the number of governmental services as specified under subd. 1.

(b) An area cooperation compact shall provide a plan for any municipalities or counties that enter into the compact to collaborate to provide governmental services. The compact shall provide benchmarks to measure the plan's progress and provide outcome-based performance measures to evaluate the plan's success. Municipalities and counties that enter into the compact shall structure the compact in a way that results in significant tax savings to taxpayers within those municipalities and counties.

History: 2001 a. 16, 106; 2005 a. 164.

SUBCHAPTER IV

REGULATION

66.0401 Regulation relating to solar and wind energy systems. (1e) DEFINITIONS. In this section:

(a) "Application for approval" means an application for approval of a wind energy system under rules promulgated by the commission under s. 196.378 (4g) (c) 1.

(b) "Commission" means the public service commission.

(c) "Political subdivision" means a city, village, town, or county.

(d) "Wind energy system" has the meaning given in s. 66.0403 (1) (m).

(1m) AUTHORITY TO RESTRICT SYSTEMS LIMITED. No political subdivision may place any restriction, either directly or in effect, on the installation or use of a wind energy system that is more restrictive than the rules promulgated by the commission under s. 196.378 (4g) (b). No political subdivision may place any restriction, either directly or in effect, on the installation or use of a solar energy system, as defined in s. 13.48 (2) (h) 1. g., or a wind energy system, unless the restriction satisfies one of the following conditions:

(a) Serves to preserve or protect the public health or safety.

(b) Does not significantly increase the cost of the system or significantly decrease its efficiency.

(c) Allows for an alternative system of comparable cost and efficiency.

(2) AUTHORITY TO REQUIRE TRIMMING OF BLOCKING VEGETATION. Subject to sub. (6) (a), a political subdivision may enact an ordinance relating to the trimming of vegetation that blocks solar

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energy, as defined in s. 66.0403 (1) (k), from a collector surface, as defined under s. 700.41 (2) (b), or that blocks wind from a wind energy system. The ordinance may include a designation of responsibility for the costs of the trimming. The ordinance may not require the trimming of vegetation that was planted by the owner or occupant of the property on which the vegetation is located before the installation of the solar or wind energy system.

(3) **TESTING ACTIVITIES.** A political subdivision may not prohibit or restrict any person from conducting testing activities to determine the suitability of a site for the placement of a wind energy system. A political subdivision objecting to such testing may petition the commission to impose reasonable restrictions on the testing activity.

(4) **LOCAL PROCEDURE.** (a) 1. Subject to subd. 2., a political subdivision that receives an application for approval shall determine whether it is complete and, no later than 45 days after the application is filed, notify the applicant about the determination. As soon as possible after receiving the application for approval, the political subdivision shall publish a class 1 notice, under ch. 985, stating that an application for approval has been filed with the political subdivision. If the political subdivision determines that the application is incomplete, the notice shall state the reason for the determination. An applicant may supplement and refile an application that the political subdivision has determined to be incomplete. There is no limit on the number of times that an applicant may refile an application for approval. If the political subdivision fails to determine whether an application for approval is complete within 45 days after the application is filed, the application shall be considered to be complete.

2. If a political subdivision that receives an application for approval under subd. 1. does not have in effect an ordinance described under par. (g), the 45–day time period for determining whether an application is complete, as described in subd. 1., does not begin until the first day of the 4th month beginning after the political subdivision receives the application. A political subdivision may notify an applicant at any time, after receipt of the application and before the first day of the 4th month after its receipt, that it does not intend to enact an ordinance described under par. (g).

3. On the same day that an applicant makes an application for approval under subd. 1. for a wind energy system, the applicant shall mail or deliver written notice of the application to the owners of land adjoining the site of the wind energy system.

4. A political subdivision may not consider an applicant's minor modification to the application to constitute a new application for the purposes of this subsection.

(b) A political subdivision shall make a record of its decision making on an application for approval, including a recording of any public hearing, copies of documents submitted at any public hearing, and copies of any other documents provided to the political subdivision in connection with the application for approval. The political subdivision's record shall conform to the commission's rules promulgated under s. 196.378 (4g) (c) 2.

(c) A political subdivision shall base its decision on an application for approval on written findings of fact that are supported by the evidence in the record under par. (b). A political subdivision's procedure for reviewing the application for approval shall conform to the commission's rules promulgated under s. 196.378 (4g) (c) 3.

(d) Except as provided in par. (e), a political subdivision shall approve or disapprove an application for approval no later than 90 days after the day on which it notifies the applicant that the application for approval is complete. If a political subdivision fails to act within the 90 days, or within any extended time period established under par. (e), the application is considered approved.

(e) A political subdivision may extend the time period in par. (d) if, within that 90–day period, the political subdivision authorizes the extension in writing. Any combination of the following extensions may be granted, except that the total amount of time for

all extensions granted under this paragraph may not exceed 90 days:

1. An extension of up to 45 days if the political subdivision needs additional information to determine whether to approve or deny the application for approval.

2. An extension of up to 90 days if the applicant makes a material modification to the application for approval.

3. An extension of up to 90 days for other good cause specified in writing by the political subdivision.

(f) 1. Except as provided in subd. 2., a political subdivision may not deny or impose a restriction on an application for approval unless the political subdivision enacts an ordinance that is no more restrictive than the rules the commission promulgates under s. 196.378 (4g) (b).

2. A political subdivision may deny an application for approval if the proposed site of the wind energy system is in an area primarily designated for future residential or commercial development, as shown in a map that is adopted, as part of a comprehensive plan, under s. 66.1001 (2) (b) and (f), before June 2, 2009, or as shown in such maps after December 31, 2015, as part of a comprehensive plan that is updated as required under s. 66.1001 (2) (i). This subdivision applies to a wind energy system that has a nominal capacity of at least one megawatt.

(g) A political subdivision that chooses to regulate wind energy systems shall enact an ordinance, subject to sub. (6) (b), that is no more restrictive than the applicable standards established by the commission in rules promulgated under s. 196.378 (4g).

(5) **PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION REVIEW.** (a) A decision of a political subdivision to determine that an application is incomplete under sub. (4) (a) 1., or to approve, disapprove, or impose a restriction upon a wind energy system, or an action of a political subdivision to enforce a restriction on a wind energy system, may be appealed only as provided in this subsection.

(b) 1. Any aggrieved person seeking to appeal a decision or enforcement action specified in par. (a) may begin the political subdivision's administrative review process. If the person is still aggrieved after the administrative review is completed, the person may file an appeal with the commission. No appeal to the commission under this subdivision may be filed later than 30 days after the political subdivision has completed its administrative review process. For purposes of this subdivision, if a political subdivision fails to complete its administrative review process within 90 days after an aggrieved person begins the review process, the political subdivision is considered to have completed the process on the 90th day after the person began the process.

2. Rather than beginning an administrative review under subd. 1., an aggrieved person seeking to appeal a decision or enforcement action of a political subdivision specified in par. (a) may file an appeal directly with the commission. No appeal to the commission under this subdivision may be filed later than 30 days after the decision or initiation of the enforcement action.

3. An applicant whose application for approval is denied under sub. (4) (f) 2. may appeal the denial to the commission. The commission may grant the appeal notwithstanding the inconsistency of the application for approval with the political subdivision's planned residential or commercial development if the commission determines that granting the appeal is consistent with the public interest.

(c) Upon receiving an appeal under par. (b), the commission shall notify the political subdivision. The political subdivision shall provide a certified copy of the record upon which it based its decision or enforcement action within 30 days after receiving notice. The commission may request of the political subdivision any other relevant governmental records and, if requested, the political subdivision shall provide such records within 30 days after receiving the request.

(d) The commission may confine its review to the records it receives from the political subdivision or, if it finds that additional

information would be relevant to its decision, expand the records it reviews. The commission shall issue a decision within 90 days after the date on which it receives all of the records it requests under par. (c), unless for good cause the commission extends this time period in writing. If the commission determines that the political subdivision's decision or enforcement action does not comply with the rules it promulgates under s. 196.378 (4g) or is otherwise unreasonable, the political subdivision's decision shall be superseded by the commission's decision and the commission may order an appropriate remedy.

(e) In conducting a review under par. (d), the commission may treat a political subdivision's determination that an application under sub. (4) (a) 1. is incomplete as a decision to disapprove the application if the commission determines that a political subdivision has unreasonably withheld its determination that an application is complete.

(f) Judicial review is not available until the commission issues its decision or order under par. (d). Judicial review shall be of the commission's decision or order, not of the political subdivision's decision or enforcement action. The commission's decision or order is subject to judicial review under ch. 227. Injunctive relief is available only as provided in s. 196.43.

(6) APPLICABILITY OF A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OR COUNTY ORDINANCE. (a) 1. A county ordinance enacted under sub. (2) applies only to the towns in the county that have not enacted an ordinance under sub. (2).

2. If a town enacts an ordinance under sub. (2) after a county has enacted an ordinance under sub. (2), the county ordinance does not apply, and may not be enforced, in the town, except that if the town later repeals its ordinance, the county ordinance applies in that town.

(b) 1. Subject to subd. 2., a county ordinance enacted under sub. (4) applies only in the unincorporated parts of the county.

2. If a town enacts an ordinance under sub. (4), either before or after a county enacts an ordinance under sub. (4), the more restrictive terms of the 2 ordinances apply to the town, except that if the town later repeals its ordinance, the county ordinance applies in that town.

(c) If a political subdivision enacts an ordinance under sub. (4) (g) after the commission's rules promulgated under s. 196.378 (4g) take effect, the political subdivision may not apply that ordinance to, or require approvals under that ordinance for, a wind energy system approved by the political subdivision under a previous ordinance or under a development agreement.

History: 1981 c. 354; 1981 c. 391 s. 210; 1993 a. 414; 1999 a. 150 ss. 78, 79, 84; Stats. 1999 s. 66.0401; 2001 a. 30; 2009 a. 40.

This section is a legislative restriction on the ability of municipalities to regulate solar and wind energy systems. The statute is not superceded by s. 66.0403 or municipal zoning or conditional use powers. A municipality's consideration of an application for a conditional use permit for a system under this section must be in light of the restrictions placed on local regulation by this section. *State ex rel. Numrich v. City of Mequon Board of Zoning Appeals*, 2001 WI App 88, 242 Wis. 2d 677, 626 N.W.2d 366, 00–1643.

Sub. (1) requires a case-by-case approach, such as a conditional use permit procedure, and does not allow political subdivisions to find legislative facts or make policy. The local governing arm must hear the specifics of the particular system and then decide whether a restriction is warranted. It may not promulgate an ordinance in which it arbitrarily sets a "one size fits all" scheme of requirements for any system. The conditions listed in sub. (1) (a) to (c) are the standards circumscribing the power of political subdivisions, not openings for them to make policy that is contrary to the state's expressed policy. *Ecker Brothers v. Calumet County*, 2009 WI App 112, ___ Wis. 2d ___, 772 N.W.2d 240, 07–2109.

66.0403 Solar and wind access permits. (1) DEFINITIONS. In this section:

(a) "Agency" means the governing body of a municipality which has provided for granting a permit or the agency which the governing body of a municipality creates or designates under sub. (2). "Agency" includes an officer or employee of the municipality.

(b) "Applicant" means an owner applying for a permit under this section.

(c) "Application" means an application for a permit under this section.

(d) "Collector surface" means any part of a solar collector that absorbs solar energy for use in the collector's energy transformation process. "Collector surface" does not include frames, supports and mounting hardware.

(e) "Collector use period" means 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. standard time daily.

(f) "Impermissible interference" means the blockage of wind from a wind energy system or solar energy from a collector surface or proposed collector surface for which a permit has been granted under this section during a collector use period if such blockage is by any structure or vegetation on property, an owner of which was notified under sub. (3) (b). "Impermissible interference" does not include:

1. Blockage by a narrow protrusion, including but not limited to a pole or wire, which does not substantially interfere with absorption of solar energy by a solar collector or does not substantially block wind from a wind energy system.

2. Blockage by any structure constructed, under construction or for which a building permit has been applied for before the date the last notice is mailed or delivered under sub. (3) (b).

3. Blockage by any vegetation planted before the date the last notice is mailed or delivered under sub. (3) (b) unless a municipality by ordinance under sub. (2) defines impermissible interference to include such vegetation.

(g) "Municipality" means any county with a zoning ordinance under s. 59.69, any town with a zoning ordinance under s. 60.61, any city with a zoning ordinance under s. 62.23 (7), any 1st class city or any village with a zoning ordinance under s. 61.35.

(h) "Owner" means at least one owner, as defined under s. 66.0217 (1) (d), of a property or the personal representative of at least one owner.

(i) "Permit" means a solar access permit or a wind access permit issued under this section.

(j) "Solar collector" means a device, structure or a part of a device or structure a substantial purpose of which is to transform solar energy into thermal, mechanical, chemical or electrical energy.

(k) "Solar energy" means direct radiant energy received from the sun.

(L) "Standard time" means the solar time of the ninetieth meridian west of Greenwich.

(m) "Wind energy system" means equipment and associated facilities that convert and then store or transfer energy from the wind into usable forms of energy.

(2) PERMIT PROCEDURE. The governing body of every municipality may provide for granting a permit. A permit may not affect any land except land which, at the time the permit is granted, is within the territorial limits of the municipality or is subject to an extraterritorial zoning ordinance adopted under s. 62.23 (7a), except that a permit issued by a city or village may not affect extraterritorial land subject to a zoning ordinance adopted by a county or a town. The governing body may appoint itself as the agency to process applications or may create or designate another agency to grant permits. The governing body may provide by ordinance that a fee be charged to cover the costs of processing applications. The governing body may adopt an ordinance with any provision it deems necessary for granting a permit under this section, including but not limited to:

(a) Specifying standards for agency determinations under sub. (5) (a).

(b) Defining an impermissible interference to include vegetation planted before the date the last notice is mailed or delivered under sub. (3) (b), provided that the permit holder shall be responsible for the cost of trimming such vegetation.

(3) PERMIT APPLICATIONS. (a) In a municipality which provides for granting a permit under this section, an owner who has installed or intends to install a solar collector or wind energy system may apply to an agency for a permit.

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(b) An agency shall determine if an application is satisfactorily completed and shall notify the applicant of its determination. If an applicant receives notice that an application has been satisfactorily completed, the applicant shall deliver by certified mail or by hand a notice to the owner of any property which the applicant proposes to be restricted by the permit under sub. (7). The applicant shall submit to the agency a copy of a signed receipt for every notice delivered under this paragraph. The agency shall supply the notice form. The information on the form may include, without limitation because of enumeration:

1. The name and address of the applicant, and the address of the land upon which the solar collector or wind energy system is or will be located.
2. That an application has been filed by the applicant.
3. That the permit, if granted, may affect the rights of the notified owner to develop his or her property and to plant vegetation.
4. The telephone number, address and office hours of the agency.
5. That any person may request a hearing under sub. (4) within 30 days after receipt of the notice, and the address and procedure for filing the request.

(4) HEARING. Within 30 days after receipt of the notice under sub. (3) (b), any person who has received a notice may file a request for a hearing on the granting of a permit or the agency may determine that a hearing is necessary even if no such request is filed. If a request is filed or if the agency determines that a hearing is necessary, the agency shall conduct a hearing on the application within 90 days after the last notice is delivered. At least 30 days prior to the hearing date, the agency shall notify the applicant, all owners notified under sub. (3) (b) and any other person filing a request of the time and place of the hearing.

(5) PERMIT GRANT. (a) The agency shall grant a permit if the agency determines that:

1. The granting of a permit will not unreasonably interfere with the orderly land use and development plans of the municipality;
2. No person has demonstrated that she or he has present plans to build a structure that would create an impermissible interference by showing that she or he has applied for a building permit prior to receipt of a notice under sub. (3) (b), has expended at least \$500 on planning or designing such a structure or by submitting any other credible evidence that she or he has made substantial progress toward planning or constructing a structure that would create an impermissible interference; and
3. The benefits to the applicant and the public will exceed any burdens.

(b) An agency may grant a permit subject to any condition or exemption the agency deems necessary to minimize the possibility that the future development of nearby property will create an impermissible interference or to minimize any other burden on any person affected by granting the permit. Such conditions or exemptions may include but are not limited to restrictions on the location of the solar collector or wind energy system and requirements for the compensation of persons affected by the granting of the permit.

(6) RECORD OF PERMIT. If an agency grants a permit:

(a) The agency shall specify the property restricted by the permit under sub. (7) and shall prepare notice of the granting of the permit. The notice shall include the identification required under s. 706.05 (2) (c) for the owner and the property upon which the solar collector or wind energy system is or will be located and for any owner and property restricted by the permit under sub. (7), and shall indicate that the property may not be developed and vegetation may not be planted on the property so as to create an impermissible interference with the solar collector or wind energy system which is the subject of the permit unless the permit affecting the property is terminated under sub. (9) or unless an agreement affecting the property is filed under sub. (10).

(b) The applicant shall record with the register of deeds of the county in which the property is located the notice under par. (a) for each property specified under par. (a) and for the property upon which the solar collector or wind energy system is or will be located.

(7) REMEDIES FOR IMPERMISSIBLE INTERFERENCE. (a) Any person who uses property which he or she owns or permits any other person to use the property in a way which creates an impermissible interference under a permit which has been granted or which is the subject of an application shall be liable to the permit holder or applicant for damages, except as provided under par. (b), for any loss due to the impermissible interference, court costs and reasonable attorney fees unless:

1. The building permit was applied for prior to receipt of a notice under sub. (3) (b) or the agency determines not to grant a permit after a hearing under sub. (4).
2. A permit affecting the property is terminated under sub. (9).
3. An agreement affecting the property is filed under sub. (10).

(b) A permit holder is entitled to an injunction to require the trimming of any vegetation which creates or would create an impermissible interference as defined under sub. (1) (f). If the court finds on behalf of the permit holder, the permit holder shall be entitled to a permanent injunction, damages, court costs and reasonable attorney fees.

(8) APPEALS. Any person aggrieved by a determination by a municipality under this section may appeal the determination to the circuit court for a review.

(9) TERMINATION OF SOLAR OR WIND ACCESS RIGHTS. (a) Any right protected by a permit under this section shall terminate if the agency determines that the solar collector or wind energy system which is the subject of the permit is:

1. Permanently removed or is not used for 2 consecutive years, excluding time spent on repairs or improvements.
2. Not installed and functioning within 2 years after the date of issuance of the permit.

(b) The agency shall give the permit holder written notice and an opportunity for a hearing on a proposed termination under par. (a).

(c) If the agency terminates a permit, the agency may charge the permit holder for the cost of recording and record a notice of termination with the register of deeds, who shall record the notice with the notice recorded under sub. (6) (b) or indicate on any notice recorded under sub. (6) (b) that the permit has been terminated.

(10) WAIVER. A permit holder by written agreement may waive all or part of any right protected by a permit. A copy of such agreement shall be recorded with the register of deeds, who shall record such copy with the notice recorded under sub. (6) (b).

(11) PRESERVATION OF RIGHTS. The transfer of title to any property shall not change the rights and duties under this section or under an ordinance adopted under sub. (2).

(12) CONSTRUCTION. (a) This section may not be construed to require that an owner obtain a permit prior to installing a solar collector or wind energy system.

(b) This section may not be construed to mean that acquisition of a renewable energy resource easement under s. 700.35 is in any way contingent upon the granting of a permit under this section.

History: 1981 c. 354; 1983 a. 189 s. 329 (14); 1983 a. 532 s. 36; 1993 a. 414; 1995 a. 201; 1999 a. 150 s. 82; Stats. 1999 s. 66.0403; 2007 a. 97; 2009 a. 40.

The common law right to solar access is discussed. *Prah v. Maretti*, 108 Wis. 2d 223, 321 N.W.2d 182 (1982).

The owner of an energy system does not need a permit under this section. Barring enforceable municipal restrictions, an owner may construct a system without prior municipal approval. This section benefits and protects the owner of the system by restricting the use of nearby property to prevent an interference with the system. *State ex rel. Numrich v. City of Mequon Board of Zoning Appeals*, 2001 WI App 88, 242 Wis. 2d 677, 626 N.W.2d 366, 00–1643.

Wisconsin recognizes the power of the sun: *Prah v. Maretti* and the solar access act. 1983 WLR 1263.