



Minutes | Monday, August 17th, 2026 | 6 PM Village Hall VNB Planning Commission

1. Call to order: President Mellem called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
2. Roll Call: President Roger Mellem, Trustee Paul Schroeder, Constable Tom LaFave.
Resident Planning Commission Members: Bill Cosban, Mark Hyde and Mark Murphy.
Village Administrators: Treasurer Robert E. O'Brien and Clerk Dori A. Panthofer.
Trustee Rick Cermak arrived at 6:10 PM.

Public Attendees: Diane & Jay Homan - 440 Cross Creek Road
Craig LaPlant - Owner, Independent Power Grid LLC
Neil Polzin - 312 N Vincennes Circle
3. Approval of the August 10, 2026 Planning Commission meeting minutes.
Bill Cosban motioned to approve and Constable LaFave seconded a motion to approve August 10, 2026 meeting minutes. The motion was carried unanimously.
4. Planning Commission Application #PCRA2026-3
Site: 440 Cross Creek Road
Owner(s): Diane & John Homan
Project: Ground Solar Installation
5. Applicant Statement: Mr. Homan stated the primary goal of the solar installation is to take advantage of clean energy, which we ought to promote. Although there are initial costs, solar power represents the future. Unlike wind turbines that pose risks to bird populations, solar energy is fixed and offers long-term reliability. We carefully selected a location that maximizes discretion, ensuring the system remains hidden from street view. Given our current capability, moving forward with this installation is a sensible and forward-thinking choice.

Mr. LaPlant stated the system is a sell-back system. During the day, power is sold back to WE Energies and at night, power is supplied by WE Energies. An electrical bill will never be fully eliminated and the bill is significantly reduced. This system does not use any batteries. During power outages, the home will be without power.
6. Discussion:
 - **Energy Coverage & System Operations:** President Mellem inquired if the system would fulfill all energy requirements. Craig La Plant explained that it will cover the majority of power needs. The system is hardwired without battery storage; consequently, power outages from WE Energies will still result in an outage at the property.
 - **Inspections & Connections:** In response to Mr. Cosban' question regarding WE Energies inspections, Mr. La Plant noted that WE Energies inspects the interconnection point, while the local Electrical Inspector conducts the full system inspection. Mr. Hyde questioned whether an electrician handles the installation. Mr. La Plant clarified that an external shut-off switch is included for emergency power cutoff during a fire. Trustee

Schroeder recommended notifying the Caledonia Fire Department of the installation and the location of the external shut-off switch.

• **Ground Installation Specifications & Wind Resistance:** Mr. La Plant explained that a ground mount is preferable to a roof mount due to improved tilt angles and reduced snow accumulation issues. Additionally, a solar installation cannot be installed on a cedar shake roof. The panels measure 90 inches in length, sit 2 feet off the ground, and reach an overall height of about 10 feet. Lower placement creates winter snow clearance issues. Existing fencing and trees help obscure the panels. Addressing Mr. Hyde's comment regarding missing wind uplift specifications, Mr. La Plant stated the structure is guaranteed to withstand 120 MPH winds.

• **Setbacks & Site Plan:** Mr. Hyde inquired about the setback alignment with the rear garage, noting the drawing reflects a 4.5-foot setback, and asked if sufficient clearance remains for lawn maintenance. John Homan confirmed discussions with his neighbor, John Daniels and verified that adequate maintenance space exists. He noted additional property updates: the pool lifted due to lack of water pressure after being drained. Rather than repair the pool, a portable spa was installed in July 2026 and the pool area will be replaced with a putting green.

• **Structure Limits & Legal Review:** President Mellem noted a conflict with local ordinances, which limit properties to two structures. As an independent installation from the house and carport, the proposed ground solar array constitutes a third structure. Although the plans appear sound, the matter may require legal review and may also require a variance by the Board of Appeals.

• **Carport Mounting Alternative:** In response to Mr. Homan's inquiry about mounting panels on the existing carport, President Mellem and Mr. Cosban confirmed this would be acceptable provided it meets engineering standards. Mr. La Plant noted that the limited surface area would accommodate too few panels to make that option worthwhile.

• **Setback Consistency & Precedent:** Trustee Schroeder and Mr. Cosban emphasized that setback requirements must be enforced consistently for all residents. Constable La Fave shared an example where a requested greenhouse was abandoned due to setback constraints and heating fuel concerns, reinforcing that formal procedures must be fully completed whenever a proposal falls outside standard regulations.

7. Planning Commission recommendation: A decision on the recommendation has been postponed until the September Planning Commission meeting to allow the Village attorney time to complete a legal review and advise the Commission on how to proceed lawfully.
8. Next Planning Commission meeting: 6PM Monday, September 14th, 2026
9. Motion to Adjourn. Trustee Schroeder moved to adjourn the meeting, with Mr. Cosban seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:31 PM.