

**TOWNSHIP OF LIGONIER  
ORDINANCE NO. 2025-OR-04**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LIGONIER AMENDING THE  
TOWNSHIP ZONING CODE AT CHAPTER 120-43: SOLAR ENERGY  
SYSTEMS**

**WHEREAS**, at the regularly scheduled Board of Supervisors meeting of October 14, 2025, the Board of Supervisors of Ligonier Township requested suggestions from the Planning Commissioner regarding wording for a change to the Zoning Ordinance with regard to solar farms; and,

**WHEREAS**, at the regularly scheduled Planning Commission of November 20, 2025, the Planning Commission recommended the following changes by a vote of 4-0-1

**NOW THEREFORE, the Board of Supervisors of Ligonier Township hereby enacts as follows:**

**Section 1.** The Code of Ordinances of the Township of Ligonier is hereby amended at Part III: Zoning and Land Use, Chapter 120: Zoning Code, Section 120-43: Solar Energy Systems, as follows:

**§ 120-43. Solar Energy Systems<sup>1</sup>**

A. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Section is to provide for the construction, operation, and decommissioning of Solar Energy Systems in Ligonier Township., subject to reasonable conditions that will protect public health, safety and welfare.

**B. APPLICABILITY**

1. This Section applies to only Principal Solar Energy systems proposed to be constructed after the effective date of this Section, except this Section is not intended to apply to Accessory Solar Energy Systems constructed primarily for residential or accessory use.

**C. PERMITTED USES**

1. Principal Solar Energy systems shall be considered a conditional use for the following Zones (A-1) Agriculture and (I-1) Industry.
2. Accessory Solar Energy systems shall be allowed in all Zones and may be installed with the necessary construction, electrical and/or mechanical permit(s).

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<sup>1</sup> Solar Energy Systems added 7-9-2024 by Ord. No. 2024-OR-01

#### D. PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

1. No Principal Solar Energy system, or addition to an existing Principal Solar Energy system, shall be constructed or located within Ligonier Township, unless a Zoning Permit has been issued to the Facility Owner or Operator approving construction of the facility under this Section.
2. ~~Prior to issuance of a Zoning Permit the Applicant will insure that all government permits required by State and Federal Law have been obtained.~~ Issuance of any township permits or authorization does not supersede or otherwise relieve the applicant, of the sole responsibility of insuring that all applicable regulations state and federal are followed.
3. Any physical modification to an existing and permitted Principal Solar Energy system that materially alters the size, type and number of Solar Cells or other equipment shall require additional permitting under this Section. Like-kind replacements shall not require a permit modification.
4. Prior to the issuance of a zoning permit, PSES applicants must acknowledge in writing that the issuing of said permit shall not and does not create in the property owner, its, his, her or their successors and assigns in title or, create in the property itself : (a) the right to remain free of shadows and/or obstructions to solar energy caused by development of adjoining or other property or the growth of any trees or vegetation on such property; or (b) the right to prohibit the development on or growth of any trees or vegetation on such property.
5. The applicant shall submit a Stormwater Management Plan that demonstrates compliance with the Ligonier Township stormwater management regulations.
6. PSES owners are encouraged to use low maintenance and low growing vegetative surfaces under the system as a best management practice for storm water management.
7. A building permit is required for construction of any Accessory Solar Energy system within the Township.

#### E. PERMIT APPLICATION

1. The permit application shall demonstrate that the proposed Principal Solar Energy system will comply with this Section.
2. Among other things, the application shall contain the following:
  - a) A narrative describing the proposed Principal Solar Energy system, including an overview of the project; the project location; the approximate generating capacity of the Principal Solar Energy system; the approximate number, representative types and height or range of heights of Solar components to be constructed, including their generating capacity, dimensions and respective manufacturers, and a description of ancillary facilities.
  - b) An affidavit or similar evidence of agreement between the property owner and the System Owner or Operator demonstrating that the System Owner or Operator has the permission of the property owner to apply for necessary permits for construction and operation of the Principal Solar Energy system.
  - c) Identification of the properties on which the proposed Principal Solar Energy system will be located, and the properties adjacent to where the Principal Solar Energy system will be located.

- d) A site plan showing the planned location of each Solar Component, property lines, setback lines, access road and turnout locations, substation(s), electrical cabling from the Principal Solar Energy system to the substation(s), ancillary equipment, buildings, and structures, including permanent meteorological towers, associated transmission lines, and layout of all structures within the geographical boundaries of any applicable setback.
  - e) Documents related to decommissioning including a schedule for decommissioning.
  - f) Other relevant studies, reports, certifications and approvals as may be reasonably requested by Ligonier Township to ensure compliance with this Section.
3. Throughout the permit process, the Applicant shall promptly notify Ligonier Township of any changes to the information contained in the permit application.
  4. Changes to the pending application that do not materially alter the initial site plan may be adopted without a renewed public hearing.

#### F. SETBACKS AND HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS

1. *Lot Size:* A PSES shall require a lot size of not less than thirty-five (35) acres.<sup>2</sup>
2. *Setbacks:* A PSES shall be setback distance of not less than 100 feet to any property line
3. *Height:*
  - a) Ground mounted PSES shall not exceed 20 feet in height.
  - b) A Solar Energy system mounted on a roof shall conform to the height of the Zone where the Solar Energy system is installed.
4. *Lot Coverage:* The surface area of the arrays of a ground mounted PSES, regardless of the mounted angle of any solar panels, shall be considered impervious and calculated in the lot coverage of the lot on which the system is located. The PSES shall not exceed the maximum lot coverage requirements of the underlying zoning district.

#### G. DESIGN AND INSTALLATION

1. *Compliance with Industry Standards:* The PSES layout, design and installation shall conform to applicable industry standards, such as those of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), Underwriters Laboratories (UL), the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), ), Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), Solar Rating and Certification Corporation (SRCC), Electrical Testing Laboratory (ETL), Florida Solar Energy Center (FSEC) or other similar certifying organizations, and shall comply with the PA Uniform Construction Code, regulations adopted by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, and with all other applicable fire and life safety requirements. The manufacturer specifications for the key components of the system shall be submitted as part of the permit application.
2. *Maintain in Good Working Order:* Upon completion of installation, the PSES shall be maintained in good working order in accordance with manufacturer's standards of and any other codes under which the PSES was constructed. Failure of the owner to maintain the PSES in good working order is grounds for appropriate enforcement actions by Ligonier Township in accordance with applicable ordinances.
3. *Local Emergency Services:* The owner/operator will ensure that there is proper access to the entire property as necessary for EMS services and utilities services. **An Emergency**

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<sup>2</sup> Amended by Ordinance No. 2025-OR-02, effective July 8, 2025

**Management plan approved by the Township shall be submitted and training shall be provided to local first responders in the best practices for responding to emergencies related to the PSES at least every five years or as needed.**

4. *Underground Requirements:* All on-site transmission and plumbing lines shall be placed underground to the extent feasible.
5. *Utility Notification:* The owner of a PSES shall provide Ligonier Township with written confirmation that the public utility company to which the PSES will be connected has been informed of the customer's intent to install a grid connected system and approved of such connection.
6. *Signage:* No portion of the PSES shall contain or be used to display advertising. The manufacturer's name and equipment information or indication of ownership shall be allowed on any equipment of the PSES provided they comply with the prevailing sign regulations.
7. *Glare:*
  - a) All PSES shall be placed such that concentrated solar radiation or glare does not project onto any structures or roadways.
  - b) The applicant has the burden of proving that any glare produced does not have a significant adverse impact on neighboring or adjacent uses either through siting or mitigation.
8. *Noise Study:* A noise study shall be performed and included in the zoning/building permit application. The noise study shall be performed by an independent noise study expert and paid for by the applicant. Noise from a PSES shall not exceed 50dBA, as measured at the property line.
9. **Viewshed Analysis: A viewshed analysis shall be undertaken, a report from the analysis shall be provided to Township, and along with a screening plan to mitigate the visual impact of the PSES will need approved by the Township.**
10. *Tree and Landscaping Removal:* No trees or other landscaping otherwise required by the Township ordinances or attached as a condition of approval of any plan, application, or permit may be removed for the installation or operation of a PSES.
11. *Contact Information:* The PSES owner and/or operator shall provide current contact information to the Township which includes at minimum a phone number and identifies a responsible person for the Township or public to contact regarding emergencies, inquiries and complaints throughout the life of the project. The PSES owner and/or operator shall the Board of Supervisors a written plan outlining procedures on how complaints will be addressed. For the life of the project, the current contact information shall be conspicuously posted upon locations throughout the property.
12. *Solar Easements:* Where a subdivision or land development proposes a PSES, solar easements may be provided. If a solar easement, intended to guarantee unobstructed solar access, is desired by the applicant and/or property owner for an ASSES, such matter shall be carried out as a civil agreement between or among all applicable parties. Ligonier Township shall not be a party to any agreement designed to provide a solar easement, nor shall Ligonier Township be responsible for ensuring the maintenance of any solar easement. Said easements shall be in writing, and shall be subject to the same conveyance and instrument recording requirements as other easements. Any such easements shall be appurtenant; shall run with the land benefited and burdened; and shall be defined and limited by conditions stated in the instrument of conveyance.

13. *Decommissioning:*

- a) The PSES owner is required to notify Ligonier Township immediately upon cessation or abandonment of the operation. The PSES shall be presumed to be discontinued or abandoned if no electricity is generated by such system for a period of twelve (12) continuous months.
- b) The PSES owner shall then have twelve (12) months in which to dismantle and remove the PSES including all solar related equipment or appurtenances related thereto, including but not limited to buildings, cabling, electrical components, roads, foundations and other associated facilities from the property. The owner shall also restore the land to its original condition, including forestry plantings of the same type/variety and density as the original. If the owner fails to dismantle and/or remove the PSES and restore the land within the established time frames, Ligonier Township may complete the decommissioning and land restoration at the owner's expense.
- c) At the time of issuance of the permit for the construction of the PSES, the owner shall provide financial security in the form and amount acceptable to Ligonier Township to secure the expense of dismantling and removing said PSES and restoration of the land to its original condition, including forestry plantings of the same type/variety and density as the original. **The amount of the security shall be reevaluated every five years, with updated decommissioning cost estimates provided in writing with certification by a licensed professional engineer, to ensure that the bond is an adequate amount to cover the cost of decommissioning. If the bond in place is in an inadequate amount the operator of the PSES will provide a surety bond in the increase amount or increase the amount of the bond in place to cover the updated cost.**