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# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Historic Resources Commission

**F-1**

**From:** Jennifer Pruitt, Principal Planner

**Date:** July 08, 2010

**Subject:** HRC-10-020  
Renewable Energy Discussion

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### DISCUSSION:

This is a discussion only item, to evaluate the possibility of the Historic Resources Commission creating standards associated with Renewable Energy Projects in the Historic District. Staff has assembled a packet of information that includes information related to solar panel installation and historic districts.

Dennis and Leslie Medeiros, owners of the Solar Store in Carson City, will address the commission and provide information related to the solar panel industry. The Solar Store's mission is to develop sustainable resources that future generations can rely on without creating long term damage to the environment, climate and living habitats.

**FrederickNewsPost.com****How to go green in the historic district****Possibilities abound in city's downtown area**

Originally published February 19, 2008

By **Adam Behsudi**

An overhanging roof, thick stone walls, wood-framed windows and log construction.

The original builders of Frederick's historic district buildings never knew the features of their houses would become part of a new design trend.

However, enhancing a home in the historic district with modern "green" or environmental features takes some innovation when facing approval from the city's Historic Preservation Commission.

Despite Frederick's historic buildings never being intended as green structures, many of their most common features already increase efficiency, city historic planner Emily Paulus said.

Adding green features to the exterior of a historic house is subject to approval by the preservation commission, but is encouraged so long as the features don't detract from the historical character of the building, Paulus said.

"I don't know (if) it can be argued that a modern building is going to be more energy efficient than a historic building," she said.

With most structures in the historic district built before air conditioning and heating, they were made to maximize heat and light, Paulus said.

Thick masonry walls and natural building materials retain heat and cold more efficiently, she said.

The city must approve any major changes on the exterior of a building in the designated historic district. That includes the type of materials used.

Many property owners look at vinyl-framed windows as an efficient alternative to wood-framed windows. Paulus said those newer windows are discouraged since original windows are an important part of a building's historic character and usually are not the biggest culprit in heat loss.

"Most heat loss occurs through the attic," Paulus said. That can be fixed with insulation.

Solar panels, what many think of first when envisioning environmental technologies, are allowed on historic buildings.

Paulus said the installation of solar panels likely would be approved by the commission if the panels are proposed for a section of roof not visible from a street.

She said she did not know of any historic district property owners who have installed solar panels.

"The commission is very accommodating in retrofitting or adding those technologies to the buildings as long as they don't cause any damage or remove any original features," she said.



*Photo by Doug Koontz*

Architect Gary Baker looks over the Cannon Hill office building he designed to be green, reusing items like stone found on the lot.

Some state lawmakers are working to guarantee the rights of homeowners to install such panels in historic districts and other neighborhoods.

Delegate Karen Montgomery introduced a bill that would prohibit policies banning them from historic buildings and condominiums.

"It is my firm belief that with sensitivity and good placement, almost every property can accommodate solar panels," said the Montgomery County Democrat who lives in a historic home in Brookeville.

Montgomery's house Bill 71 would allow a local preservation board to regulate size, color and location of a solar panel but not prohibit its installation.

Frederick Delegate Sue Hecht has introduced a energy bill prohibiting homeowners associations from restricting solar panel installation.

Her bill did not apply to historic properties, but Hecht, a Democrat, said she wasn't "for or against" addressing the installation of solar panels on historic buildings.

"We want to encourage renewable energy," she said. "These systems are not ugly."

### **Creative reuse**

Ken Anderer, a member of the historic preservation commission, said most "green" practices can be applied to a historic property.

"Sometimes it takes some innovation to incorporate those factors," said Anderer, an engineer accredited under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System.

The LEED certification system rates buildings on their energy and environmental efficiency and impact.

Anderer said he doesn't know of a LEED certified building in Frederick's historic district, but didn't say it could not be done.

"It would take a good bit of imagination and effort to fulfill enough of the criteria," he said.

The interior of any house in the historic district does not fall under the scrutiny of the preservation commission. Owners would be allowed to install water-saving fixtures, highly efficient heating and cooling systems or sustainable flooring.

Reuse and restoration of a building, if done right, is an inherent green practice, he said.

"One of the criteria in the LEED certification is the reuse of buildings," Anderer said. "That certainly is a basic tenet off the LEED program."

### **Green equals good design**

When designing the Cannon Hill Office Building on East South Street, architect Gary D. Baker used recycled materials and built-in features that would add efficiency.

The building is new but could easily be passed over as an existing structure that had been renovated.

Stones from the site and a local abandoned house were used to build a base wall. Brick was brought in from Hagerstown.

Inside, floors and support beams were crafted from lumber taken from an old warehouse in Woodsboro, Pa.

Using local and recycled material, Baker said, was cheaper and more efficient.

The building and its features were welcomed by the city's preservation commission, he said.

"The good thing about the historic district is they like you to use as much real material as possible," Baker said.

A clear story or portion of the roof that juts up from the rest of the building draws hot air upward and naturally vents the structure. Large windows on the east and west side allow the sun to naturally warm the inside throughout the day.

"That is part of sustainable architecture, using less energy to maintain a building," Baker said.

Green architecture in a historic district for Baker is synonymous with good practical design.

"In today's design market it's a new buzzword," he said. "For us who have been around, it's old news."

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The Ypsilanti Savings Bank building, on the corner of Huron and Michigan Avenue, was erected in 1887 at a cost of about \$20,000. The bank was previously known as Hemphill and Batchelder, but the name was changed upon moving into the new building. The building has been the Ypsilanti City Hall since 1974.

CITY OF YPSILANTI  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES of MARCH 7, 2006

HDC invited to Ypsilanti Food Cooperative presentation on Solar Project on  
3-11-06.

**CITY OF YPSILANTI  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES of MARCH 20, 2007  
STUDY ITEMS**

312 N. River, Study Item

Applicant: Corinne Sikorski and Dave Strenski, Ypsilanti Food Co-op (Present)  
Discussion: Applicants would like to install additional solar panels on the roof to increase their power generating capacity. They had previously installed four panels and are currently in the process of applying for a grant to install fifty more. Applicants are seeking a strong letter of support from the HDC to include with their grant proposal so that the funder will be confident of the HDC's approval of the project if funds are granted. Applicant demonstrates various placements of the fifty new panels with a model and Commissioners agree on an arrangement that would be acceptable. Commissioner Rigdon agrees to draft a letter by the end of the month.

**CITY OF YPSILANTI  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES of May 1, 2007  
STUDY ITEMS**

One South Huron, Study Item

Applicant: Dave Strenski, Ypsilanti Solar Project (Present)  
Bill Bohlen, City of Ypsilanti Department of Public Works (Present)  
Discussion: The applicant has submitted a plan to equip Ypsilanti City Hall with solar power. The proposal calls for a row of twelve solar panels to be attached to the south wall of City Hall above the fourth story windows, as well as a sign. The applicant had noticed that the south wall of the building was bare and has no shade, so recognized it as an excellent location for solar panels. In addition, as the wall faces inbound traffic to the city, the prominent and visible placement of solar panels could serve as a demonstration project, which would also involve adding a meter to the City's website showing the amount of power generated from the panels. Mr. Bohlen adds that this project would dovetail with a recent project to improve the City's energy efficiency undertaken by his department in partnership with Honeywell. In conjunction with other efforts, such as improving insulation, Honeywell has offered to help fund the solar panel installation, since its visibility would have a greater impact on public awareness than insulation. Commissioner Rigdon asks if any of the available photovoltaic skin products have been considered instead of panels. These would have a minimal effect on the building's appearance. Applicant states that since the skins are mounted onto a building 6 flat, they would reduce power generation. The ideal setup for maximum efficiency is to have a 38 degree angle, or perpendicular to the sun's rays.  
Commissioners ask how the panels would be attached to the building. Applicant states that aluminum brackets would be bolted to the masonry and the panels would be mounted on the brackets. Commissioners express concerns with this approach since it would involve damage to the bricks and suggest the applicant investigate the possibility of attaching panels to brackets that would hang from the parapet wall. This would minimize the need for drilling into the masonry, as only a few bolts would be needed to stabilize the brackets. Commissioners ask whether the applicant has considered installing the panels in other locations on the building such as on the roof or lower on the south wall. The applicant explains that he has considered all of the options and while they are possible each has its own drawbacks. A roof installation could result in damage to the

roof membrane, would reduce efficiency of power generation due to shadows created by existing objects and, since counter weights would need to be used, the structural load would be greater. Mounting the panels lower on the south wall creates the potential for vandalism and again would reduce efficiency due to afternoon shadows.

Commissioner Schmiedeke states that she supports the installation of solar panels in the District in locations where they are not visible. This project as proposed is both very prominent and on a public building, so Commissioners agree that it must be considered very carefully. It will likely be seen as a precedent and would therefore influence public perception, possibly causing property owners in the Historic District to believe they could receive approval to install solar panels on visible areas of their buildings. Commissioner Rigdon notes that in the past, when the HDC has approved a project with special circumstances, an explicit statement was included in the motion indicating the approval is unique to that particular project. In this case, some consideration could be made for the public nature of the building and education value of the project. As this is a relatively new issue that is likely to become increasingly common, the Commission would like to thoroughly look into all of the various issues, including structural issues relative to installation of panels and concerns about the intentional visibility for demonstration purposes and how this will affect the decision as a precedent. Commissioners express the need for a greater understanding of alternative energy developments and how they might be applied to buildings in the future as well as an exploration of how this issue has been handled in other historic districts. Commissioner Rigdon offers to contact the State Historic Preservation Office to learn their approach to these issues and to do more general research so that the HDC can work to create guidelines and a Fact Sheet for future situations. Commissioner Overland would like this project to become an example of how solar panels can be handled appropriately, in order to create a standard that can be applied in the future.

**CITY OF YPSILANTI  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES of May 15, 2007**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Report on alternative energy in Historic Buildings and Districts  
Commissioner Rigdon reports her findings relating to possible applications of alternative energy in the Ypsilanti Historic District. She describes possible applications and where they may cause problems. She has prepared a four page draft of a manual for consideration. The Michigan State Historic Preservation Office has been consulted regarding the proposed solar panel installation on the south wall of City Hall. The project would not be supported as a permanent fixture, but possibly as a demonstration project of limited duration.

**CITY OF YPSILANTI  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES of JUNE 5, 2007**

**STUDY ITEMS**

One South Huron, Study Item

Applicant: Dave Strenski, Ypsilanti Solar Project (Present)

Discussion: The applicant is following up on his previous presentation to the Commission in which the possibility of mounting solar panels to the south side of City Hall was discussed. At that time, Commissioners expressed concerns with how the panel installation would affect the masonry wall. Applicant has revised

his mounting structure. Instead of mounting the panels onto seven triangular frames that would be attached to two longitudinal rails, the panels would be on thirteen triangular frames mounted to the brick wall. The applicant presents his preliminary structural analysis, which shows that maximum loads could be handled by the proposed hardware. A structural engineer will be engaged to complete a detailed review prior to actual installation, if the applicant receives approval to proceed. Commissioner Rigdon notes that the particular materials involved, relative to rated hardware, would need to be considered in the formal structural engineering review. Applicant explains how the anchors and bolts would be imbedded into the brick with epoxy. Due to this, the bolts would not be removable. If the panels were removed, the bolts would have to be sheared off. Commissioner Rupert asks about how the building's surface will be treated when the demonstration project is over. Applicant states he assumes it will be at least a 30 to 40 year project since that is the life span of the panels and removal has not been planned. Applicant would like a letter of support from the HDC in order to proceed with getting the detailed structural analysis and approval from City Council. Commissioners explain that they are in the process of developing a set of standards for this type of work, and will make a decision on this project when the standards have been formally adopted.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Report on alternative energy in Historic Buildings and Districts

Discussion: Commissioners discuss the report prepared by Commissioner Rigdon on types of alternative energy installations for which the Commission is likely to receive applications. The research found that many historic districts allow photovoltaic panels on sides of the building other than the front façade. But the Ypsilanti Commission does not apply the concept of "non-character defining" elevations and treats all elevations equally. Although there may be some flexibility on this issue with non-visible sides, such as is applied to roof vents, no side of a building is unimportant. One of the key conclusions and recommendations of the report is the need for a policy that prevents any character-defining elements of buildings, such as architectural materials, windows, trim or any other elements, from being obscured, removed or damaged by an alternative energy installation.

Commissioner Schultz suggests requiring solar panels to be mounted flat to the surface, although this may need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis since flat panels may not necessarily be less visible and would significantly reduce efficiency. The overall impact on building massing may also be an important consideration on a proposal for non-flat panels. Commissioners discuss whether issues such as cost-benefit ratio, payoff period and upgradeability should be part of the policy. Whether or not those considerations fall with the HDC purview, familiarity with them will help Commissioners while discussing projects with applicants, to ensure that applicants are well informed and their projects are well planned. Commissioner Schultz points out that applicants may have interests and concerns other than financial when proposing one of these projects. Commissioner Rupert expresses concerns with mounting systems and how they will affect historic material, particularly if mounting hardware would not be removable. Commissioners generally express concern that solar panel installations will tend to be permanent and left in place even after they become obsolete.

Commissioner Schmiedeke will prepare a draft of the proposed new Alternate Energy Systems Fact Sheet and distribute it via email for consideration and further discussion.

**CITY OF YPSILANTI**



**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES of JUNE 19, 2007  
OTHER BUSINESS**

Alternative Energy Fact Sheet

Discussion: Commissioners continue previous discussions of alternative energy installations and the proposed Alternate Energy Systems Fact Sheet. Commissioners further refine the goals and purpose of this particular policy. Commissioner Schultz discusses the idea that administrative decisions are not precedent setting, but that administrative bodies need to avoid making decisions arbitrarily. Commissioner Schmiedeke agrees that the Commission will not use one decision as a rule to follow in other cases. Commissioners agree on the importance of dealing with each application as an individual case and in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards. Commissioner Schmiedeke notes that the resources in the District are each unique and individual. Discussion turns to the idea of balancing historic preservation issues with alternative energy concerns. Commissioners indicate that their obligation is to focus on preserving buildings. Applicants should bear the burden of balancing and integrating solar panels with the restrictions necessary for preservation of architectural character and materials. Commissioner Overland comments that the proposed City Hall solar panel installation seems to be a one-sided demonstration project that only demonstrates solar panels, without regard to their context. Commissioners agree that it would be much better to demonstrate how solar panels can be integrated into the landscape in an appropriate way. This could move the idea forward in a constructive manner with an installation project that inspires people rather than demonstrate something for which they would likely never receive approval.

**CITY OF YPSILANTI  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES of July 3, 2007  
OTHER BUSINESS**

Alternative Energy Fact Sheet

Discussion: Dave Strenski, founder of the Ypsilanti Solar Project, asks when the Commission will make a decision regarding the proposed solar panels on City Hall. Commissioner Schmiedeke states that an Alternative Energy Fact Sheet is being prepared and the Commission is waiting until general guidelines have been determined and this fact sheet created before deciding on the specific application. Mr. Strenski asks if Commissioners have any questions. No questions are posed.

**CITY OF YPSILANTI  
COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
ONE SOUTH HURON, YPSILANTI, MI 48197  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2007**

**PRESENTATIONS -**

A. Solar Panel Presentation - Dave Strenski

**RESOLUTIONS/MOTIONS/DISCUSSIONS -**

Resolution No. 2007-175, authorizing the City Manager to submit a work permit application as an Action Item to the Ypsilanti Historic District Commission requesting

permission to install photovoltaic panels on the south face of City Hall.

**CITY OF YPSILANTI  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES of AUGUST 21, 2007  
NEW BUSINESS**

301 W. Michigan and One South Huron, Action Item

Applicant: Steven Farat, Washtenaw County (Present)

Discussion: Application is for installation of two 5.8 GHz Directional Flat Panel antennas on the roofs of both buildings. At 301 W. Michigan (Key Bank Building), the equipment will include the one-by-one foot square antenna installed on a five foot tripod mast. At One South Huron (Ypsilanti City Hall), the one-by-one foot antenna will be attached to the existing radio tower mast, ten feet above the base. These antennae will provide wireless data connections from Washtenaw County's Towner Building to new offices at the Key Bank Building, relaying through an existing connection from the Towner Building to Ypsilanti City Hall.

Motion: Prebys (Second: Penet) moves to approve the application for 301 W. Michigan and One South Huron to include installation of a tripod mast and antenna on the roof at 301 W. Michigan and installation of an antenna on the existing mast located on the roof at One South Huron. Materials and installation shall match those proposed in drawings prepared by Rohn Industries (Drawing Number D980022) and additional documentation from Winncom Technologies Corporation, as submitted with the application.

The following Secretary of the Interior Standards were used in making this decision: #10 - New work shall be removable.

Approval: Unanimous. Action carried.

**CITY OF YPSILANTI  
COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
ONE SOUTH HURON, YPSILANTI, MI 48197  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2007**

**PRESENTATIONS**

Solar Panel Presentation - Dave Strenski (DVD of presentation on file in City Clerk's Office)

**Resolution No. 2007-175**, authorizing the City Manager to submit a work permit application as an Action Item to the Ypsilanti Historic District Commission requesting permission to install photovoltaic panels on the south face of City Hall.

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YPSILANTI:

Whereas, there is community support for solar power in the City of Ypsilanti; and,

Whereas, City Council seeks to increase public awareness, and provide educational opportunities, that clean energy technology is a vibrant growth industry that will create thousands of jobs in Michigan in the future; and,

Whereas, both Senator Liz Brater and Representative Alma Smith have sponsored bills calling for Michigan to adopt a renewable energy standard of 20% by the year 2020; and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the City Manager or his designee is authorized to submit a work permit application as an Action Item to the Ypsilanti Historic District Commission requesting permission to install photovoltaic panels on the south face of City Hall.

OFFERED BY: Council Member Robb  
SUPPORTED BY: Council Member Filipiak  
VOTE: Yes: 7 No: 0 Absent: 0 Vote: Carried

**Resolution No. 2007-176, approving Solar Energy Grant Applications.**

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YPSILANTI:

Whereas, The City of Ypsilanti is committed both to environmental stewardship and also to pursuing cost savings in City operations;

Whereas, Funding for solar energy projects is available through the Michigan Energy Office's Community Energy Project Grant and Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Outreach Grant;

Whereas, this funding would allow for solar energy installations that would reduce the City's energy expenses, educate citizens on the potential of solar energy, and demonstrate the City's interest in environmental initiatives;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Ypsilanti City Council hereby authorize staff to develop solar energy projects and pursue these funding opportunities.

OFFERED BY: Council Member Robb  
SUPPORTED BY: Council Member Filipiak  
VOTE: Yes: 7 No: 0 Absent: 0 Vote: Carried

**CITY OF YPSILANTI  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES of SEPTEMBER 4, 2007  
OLD BUSINESS**

One South Huron, Action Item

Applicant: Bill Bohlen, Director, Ypsilanti Department of Public Works (Present)  
Dave Strenski, Ypsilanti Solar Initiative (Present)

Discussion: Application is for the installation of twelve solar panels on the south wall of City Hall, just below the parapet wall. The applicant has not yet had a structural engineer analyze the proposed installation method, but will proceed with that step when/if approval is granted. Commissioners would like the analysis completed before they approve the installation since they are primarily concerned with how it will impact the historic materials and structure. Mr. Strenski explains that the brackets could be attached using quarter inch fasteners rather than the larger ones previously proposed. This approach would require more of the fasteners, but the smaller fasteners could be used in the mortar joints and would avoid damaging the bricks. Mr. Bohlen notes that repairs to the masonry wall are planned within the next five years, as well as re-roofing. When these projects are undertaken, the panels could be moved to the

roof, and the masonry wall repaired and repainted so that the installation would be reversible and would have no lasting affect on the wall.

Commissioner Prebys states that he is concerned with the "sail effect" of the panels mounted at the proposed angle. Mr. Strenski reviews his own wind load analysis, as illustrated in the application materials. He states that he believes it will not be a problem due to the positioning of the panels slightly away from the wall to allow wind to pass behind the panels. He notes that the loads will also be evaluated by a structural engineer. Commissioners emphasize the need for a structural engineer who understands historic materials.

Applicants indicate that they hope to use Fitzpatrick Structural Engineers in Ann Arbor. Commissioner Rigdon states that she knows the firm and would be comfortable with its familiarity with historic materials.

Commissioner Prebys asks about the educational value of a project that has a thirty year payback. Mr. Strenski states that the calculation for this time frame assumes that the cost of electricity will remain the same. If the cost increases, the payback time would shorten. Mr. Bohlen notes that the cost part of the equation is less applicable in this project because the installation and material will be paid for by grants and donations.

Commissioner Overland asks if there is any way this demonstration project can be made more relevant to residential property owners for use on a house.

Commissioner Penet agrees that this project seems specific to the downtown area and wonders about the value for residential neighborhood applications, although he feels it would work well as a billboard for solar energy in general.

Applicants agree that residential applications have different issues, but that since the currently proposed installation would be on a public building, this project could focus on public education in ways a private project could not.

Commissioners ask about the sign illustrated on the application materials, reading "Ypsilanti Solar Project" above the panels. Mr. Strenski states that he thought of printing the sign on vinyl and attaching with small fasteners.

Commissioners suggest that if the project and sign are approved, a rigid sign material or painting it on the side of the building would be preferable to vinyl.

Commissioner Rigdon notes that all Commissioners present appear to be in agreement on the appropriateness of the project as long as the structural engineering analysis supports the proposal. But the Commission cannot give partial or conditional approval so any approval will be granted only after a professional structural analysis is completed.

Motion: Rigdon (Second: Prebys) moves to table the application for work at One South Huron pending analysis of the proposed installation by a licensed, professional structural engineer to determine how the installation will affect the existing historic material.

Approval: Unanimous. Action carried.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

312 N. River, Action Item

Applicant: Dave Strenski, Ypsilanti Food Coop (Present)

Discussion: Application is for the installation of one solar panel to the roof to add to the existing array of four panels. The center parapet wall, to which the existing panels are attached, does not have enough space for the fifth panel due to a chimney obstructing the sun exposure. The applicant would like to remove the non-functioning chimney and level it off to the same height as the parapet wall, so that the fifth panel could be added to the row without obstruction. Or, if that is not possible, the installation would be carried out as proposed in the application, which would involve removing the existing solar panels from the wall and installing all five panels using a clamp system attached to the chimney. The row of panels would sit out in front of the west side of the wall and chimney with feet that rest on the roof. Commissioners

agree that the chimney should not be removed if it is not necessary for the installation.

Motion: Rigdon (Second: Penet) moves to approve the application for work at 312 N. River to include the addition of a fifth solar panel to the existing four panel array on the roof. Existing panels shall be moved and all five panels shall be installed two feet southeast of the existing placement, on the south side of the chimney using attachment system described in application materials. The following Secretary of the Interior Standards were used in making this decision: #10 - New work shall be removable.

Approval: Unanimous. Action carried.

**CITY OF YPSILANTI  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES of SEPTEMBER 18, 2007  
OTHER BUSINESS**

One South Huron (Ypsilanti City Hall) Solar Panel Project

Discussion: Commissioners continue the ongoing discussion of the proposed City Hall solar panel project. Commissioner Overland brings to the attention of the board some additional concerns he has with this project as it has been proposed. Commissioner Overland comments that after more consideration he would like to see a different proposal for City Hall that would demonstrate the real possibilities for alternative energy in the Historic District. The City Hall project, as proposed, has benefits in how it demonstrates the use of alternative energy, but is not beneficial or sympathetic to its setting in the Historic District or to the HDC's purpose. While he supports alternative energy, Commissioner Overland would like to see how the City might incorporate it into the HDC in a more appropriate way. He believes that there are much better ways of demonstrating how solar panels can be used. The City Hall proposal is counterintuitive to HDC goals and seems regressive to the restoration of City Hall. The City chose to restore the building by removing the metal "cheese grater" siding, but now this project would alter a significant portion of the façade streetside view by allowing a new incompatible addition to it. The project could be more progressive if the panels were installed in a different location, such as on the roof of the building.

Commissioner Overland states that the HDC is a steward of the Historic District and acts on behalf of the City and allowing this project seems counterintuitive to the expectations and values under which any project would be considered. Commissioners believe that there are likely better, more appropriate alternatives for the installation of solar panels, options that would demonstrate to the public how this new technology might be utilized. But this application is focused solely on the back wall, which is fully visible and exposed to Huron Street, and most likely would not be allowed on any other building. Commissioners feel that a better choice for the project, such as a roof installation, could become an opportunity to demonstrate how other property owners might overcome various obstacles and issues by installing panels in locations where they would actually be permitted. Commissioner Penet believes an interesting idea might be to install the panels on the roof and have a meter on the south wall of the building to demonstrate their capabilities.

Commissioner Schmiedeke notes that since the HDC has not made a decision on this application yet, the discussion can continue and it may be useful to ask the applicant for additional information on some alternative installations. As the applicant is awaiting the structurally engineering analysis, the applicant can investigate different locations, such as the roof, or another building. Staff is asked to communicate with the applicant to request the information

**CITY OF YPSILANTI  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 9, 2007  
STUDY ITEMS**

414 N. River, study item

Applicant: Irmgard Gelletly, Owner

Discussion: Homeowner asks if solar installations similar to the proposed installation on City Hall will be possible elsewhere in the district.

Commissioner Prebys answers yes and informs Gelletly about the alternative energy fact sheet, of which she receives a copy. She states that she and her husband own the house next to the Thompson Block. Gelletly states that they are trying to "tighten up" the building (energy). The foundation is a problem because the crawl space is inaccessible. She asks if it would be possible to install insulation on the outside of the foundation. Commissioner Rigdon answers that it is technically possible, though may not be feasible for this particular building. She asks if it would be a spray on application. Prebys asks about the material of the foundation. Gelletly answers that it is many different types of stone covered in mortar. Rigdon states that the foundation is a nominal source of heat loss. The owner has had infrared studies done on her properties which show that the foundation has the insulation properties of a single glazed window. Siding on the building is currently asphalt which hangs over the clapboard, leaving a space underneath. Prebys agrees that it is something the Commission would be willing to discuss. Commissioner Rigdon will visit the property to get a better assessment of the situation and report back to the Commission on the 23 of October, and the Commission will report to the owner by letter. The homeowner then asks about the possibility of having skylights in the Historic District.

**CITY OF YPSILANTI  
COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
ONE SOUTH HURON, YPSILANTI, MI 48197  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2008**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

Quarterly Report to City Council

20/20 Task Force Activity List

B. Spurring business development, especially downtown

11. Continue to promote solar panel use on City Hall and elsewhere in the City: Several members of the 20/20 Task Force believe that Ypsilanti has an opportunity to redefine itself by going green. Toward that end, they are working on ways in which the city can reach out to sustainable/green companies, and make it known that our town is green friendly. One opportunity being pursued is taking our City Hall off the grid. Currently, members of the 20/20 Task Force, with others in the community, are attempting to raise the money necessary to have solar panels placed on City Hall.

**CITY OF YPSILANTI  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF MAY 13, 2008**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

City Hall Solar Panels - A grant has been received for the structural engineering report requested by the Commission.

**CITY OF YPSILANTI**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF JUNE 10, 2008**

**NEW BUSINESS**

312 N. River, Action Item

Applicant: Dave Strenski, representative, Ypsilanti Food Co-op (present)

Discussion: In 2005, four solar panels were installed on the roof of the building. In 2007, a fifth panel was added. The current application is for the addition of 7 more panels. The proposed design includes adding one set of two panels to the left of the existing panels and a row of additional panels to the bottom of each of the existing panels. None of the changes will be visible from the street.

Also included in the application is the re-roofing of the building. The style of new vents will be similar to the current vents. Commissioner Rigdon informs Mr. Strenski that no torches may be used in the installation of the roof.

Motion: Prebys (Second: Penet) moves approval of the application for the addition of solar panels and replacement of the roof at 312 N. River with the stipulation that no flame shall be used during the installation of the roof.

Secretary of Interior Standards cited: #10 - New work shall be removable

Approval: Unanimous. Action carried.

**HOUSEKEEPING BUSINESS**

Solar Panels - The commissioners discuss the adhesive thin-film solar panels recently installed at the Ann Arbor Farmer's Market in Kerrytown. More information is needed.

**CITY OF YPSILANTI**

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**MINUTES OF AUGUST 12, 2008**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Solar Panel Discussion

Planner II contacted the interested party, Dave Strenski, for information on the progress of this project. An email was returned, stating that Mr. Strenski would like to know if the HDC would approve the project without the stamped design.

Mr. Strenski has performed the pull test on the back of the building, which incurred no damage. He would like to know if this information would allow the HDC to approve this application.

Commissioner Schmiedeke states that the Commission should review its guidelines on alternative energy installations before making a statement.

Commissioner Rupert states that the "back" of the building is not actually the back because, as S. Huron is a one-way street, the back is the first part of the building that people see when passing by. Commissioner Schmiedeke asks who in the city administration would be the actual applicant. Commissioner Overland discusses alternative energies that are being explored and developed worldwide. He states that he would like to see a local alternative energy demonstration, but one that meets the Secretary of Interior Standards that guide the HDC in its decisions. He feels that the solar panel installation, as proposed, is not as forward thinking or progressive as it could be. Commissioner Prebys inquires about thin-film solar. Commissioner Schmiedeke expresses concern regarding