

TOWN OF YORKTOWN

ADVISORY BOARD ON ARCHITECTURE & COMMUNITY APPEARANCE (ABACA)

Albert A. Capellini Community and Cultural Center, 1974 Commerce Street, Yorktown Heights, New York 10598, Phone (914) 962-6565

To: Town Board
From: ABACA
Date: May 2, 2025
Subject: Town Board Referral - Proposed Local Law Amending Chapter 300 – Solar Law

Documents Received and Reviewed:	Produced By:
Town Board Referral dated April 11, 2025 with associated documents	Town Clerk

The Advisory Board on Architecture and Community Appearance reviewed the above referenced subject during their meeting held on Tuesday, April 15th.

The ABACA has the following comments:

1. Paragraph 'E' requires applicants installing roof mounted small-scale solar energy systems mounted facing front yards or any yard facing the street be referred to the ABACA for review and recommendation. The Board still feels strongly that this requirement (*as mentioned in their 7/27/2020 memo*) is inappropriate, unnecessary, and ineffective. The Board requests for this portion of the law to be removed.

The Board currently does not have any authority over the design and aesthetics for the architecture of existing or proposed one and two-family homes unless in a subdivision and has never had authority over the roof-mounted solar panels on existing one and two-family dwellings in residential areas, so why would the law require our review now? There are so many examples currently in place where front yard or street facing solar panels have already been granted that requiring an approval now for street facing systems would be “capricious and arbitrary” and would ultimately result in a rubber stamp approval. Also, due to the small-scale nature of most of our residential structures and their orientation, it would be impossible for certain south facing homes to be fitted with systems if the front yard roof faces south and, therefore, a denial would eliminate the possibility for these home owners to install solar panels and could potentially be seen as unfair. However, it is the opinion of the Board that installation of such systems on roofs facing the front yard or any street within residential or commercial properties detract from the aesthetic character of our neighborhoods and feels that these types of installations should be limited to the greatest extent possible.

2. Paragraph 'F' prohibits the installation of solar systems or farms in residential districts entirely and prohibits installation in non-residential districts when installed as the primary use. The Board agrees and feels that continuing to allow these systems ultimately affect the character and nature of our suburban rural community which is what makes the Town of Yorktown so appealing and sought after. The nature of our community is essential.
3. The law makes existing systems existing non-conforming and requires the existing systems to meet this current law which is acceptable to the Board. The Board agrees that any such system should be fully screened from view and that height requirements should be maintained
4. The Board agrees that solar systems should be encouraged to be installed on as many flat roofs of commercial buildings throughout the community and new construction. The incorporation of these units should be properly screened with appropriate screening. If applicants do not wish to consider solar roofs then green roofs should be an option.
5. Solar panels should not be permitted to be installed in commercial districts unless on flat roofs. Further, aside from the incentive of decreased energy costs, is there a way the town could incentivize businesses to install systems on large flat roofs as this is ideal since businesses are generally used during daytime when the sun shines.

TOWN OF YORKTOWN

ADVISORY BOARD ON ARCHITECTURE & COMMUNITY APPEARANCE (*ABACA*)

Albert A. Capellini Community and Cultural Center, 1974 Commerce Street, Yorktown Heights, New York 10598, Phone (914) 962-6565

ABACA Memo – Chapter 300 - Solar Law

May 2, 2025

Page 2 of 2

6. The Board agrees that solar systems should be permitted to be installed above the sea of commercial parking areas in the town but feels it should be done in such a way to maintain the character and nature of the town's built environment. Systems that cover parking impervious surfaces should not be considered building areas which would be limiting since it is making better use of existing impervious areas.
7. The Board feels that the stakeholder should always be the property owner and community, so leasing portions of property for the installation of a solar system to an otherwise uninterested party should not be permitted. All approved solar systems installed in and around the town on commercial sites should share a portion of the power generated with the town and its residents.

Christopher Taormina

Christopher Taormina, RA
Chairman

/nc

cc: Town Clerk