



Village of Lake in the Hills

600 Harvest Gate, Lake in the Hills, Illinois 60156

PLANNING AND ZONING

JANUARY 12, 2025

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Roll call was answered by Commissioners Siakel, Walker, Murphy, Swanlund, Bolton, Goldenstein, and Chairman Esposito.

Also present were Director of Community Development John Svalenka, Village President Ray Bogdanowski, and Recording Secretary Laura Carpenter.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion to accept the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting minutes from December 15, 2025 was made by Commissioner Bolton and seconded by Commissioner Walker. On a voice vote, everyone voted Aye, No Nays. The motion to accept passed 7-0.

New Business

A. Zoning Map Amendment, Conditional Use for a Gas Station, Conditional Use for a Planned Development and a Development Plan, and a Tentative Plat for Osho Business Group at 2100 North Lakewood Road.

Chairman Esposito asked for a motion to open the public hearing. Commissioner Siakel made a motion to open the public hearing and Commissioner Walker seconded. On a voice vote, everyone voted Aye, no Nays. Motion to open passed 7-0. The public hearing was opened at 7:31 p.m.

Director Svalenka reviewed the Request for Public Hearing and Continuance dated January 12, 2026. He recommended that the Planning and Zoning Commission continue the public hearing to the next Planning and Zoning meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 7:30 p.m.

Chairman Esposito asked for a motion to continue the public hearing to Tuesday, February 17, 2026. Commissioner Bolton made a motion to continue the public hearing to the next Planning and Zoning Commission meeting on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., and Commissioner Swanlund seconded it. On a voice vote, everyone vote Aye, no Nays. Motion to continue passed 7-0.

B. Zoning Code Text Amendments to Section 11 of the Zoning Code regarding Class 3 Solar Energy Systems.

Chairman Esposito asked for a motion to open the public hearing. Commissioner Siakel made a motion to open the public hearing, and Murphy seconded. On a voice vote, everyone voted Aye, no Nays. Motion to open passed 7-0. Chairman Esposito opened the public hearing at 7:35 p.m. and confirmed with staff that the public was given proper notice.



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Director Svalenka reviewed the Request for Public Hearing and Commission Action dated January 12, 2026.

On April 26, 2018 the Lake in the Hills Board of Trustees passed Ordinance 2018-42 granting amendments to the text of the Zoning Code to regulate solar energy systems, which are systems that convert solar energy into electricity or thermal energy. The current approved regulations set forth standards for three classifications of solar energy systems. Class 1 solar energy systems include building-integrated and roof-mounted solar along with small ground-mounted systems of no more than one acre in size, which are permitted uses in all zoning districts. Class 2 solar energy systems are those that exceed the size limits of a Class 1 system but do not exceed 10 acres in size, and which are only allowed in agricultural, airport, institutional building, and manufacturing zoning districts. Class 3 solar energy systems are all other types of systems that do not meet the definition of a Class 1 or Class 2 system, including all systems greater than 10 acres in size. Class 3 systems are conditional uses in all zoning districts.

Since 2018, the Village has issued building permits for nearly 500 Class 1 solar energy systems, which almost exclusively include residential rooftop-mounted solar systems. There is one Class 2 system in the Village adjacent to Chesak Elementary School at 10910 Reed Road. On April 27, 2023 the Board of Trustees passed an ordinance granting a conditional use permit for the only Class 3 solar energy system in the Village at 6000 Grafton Farm Drive. The 2.75-megawatt community solar facility is being developed on an approximately 14-acre tract of land located just south of the intersection of Grafton Farm Drive and Lucerne Lane, and construction is nearly complete. The Village has not received any complaints about the existing Class 1 systems or the existing Class 2 system. However, the Village has received numerous complaints from residents who live around the Class 3 system off Grafton Farm Road. Primarily, residents have complained that the industrial nature of the system is visually incompatible with the surrounding homes. Therefore, the Village President has directed staff to review the existing code and consider potential revisions.

The 2025 Comprehensive Plan states that Lake in the Hills can serve as an exemplary property owner by deploying context-sensitive solar generating installations, and one of the recommended actions in the plan is to review the existing solar codes for potential revisions to support on-site solar energy production for new and existing buildings. In reviewing the 2018 solar regulations and the history of solar installations in the Village, staff finds that Class 1 systems are context sensitive, and finds that both Class 1 and Class 2 systems provide good options for new and existing buildings to produce solar energy on site. However, while the current Class 3 system in the Village may comply with the current codes, the location may not be context sensitive. Specifically, as noted above the industrial nature of large-scale solar energy systems are visually incompatible with residential development, and staff finds that they would also be visually incompatible with business and retail developments. As such, large-scale solar energy systems may be injurious to property values in these areas. Additionally, while the many small residential rooftop solar installations in the Village do not produce any noticeable noise, the noise from larger inverters installed as part of large-scale solar energy systems may create a public nuisance in residential neighborhoods.



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Further, staff has received significant interest regarding the installation of more Class 3 solar energy systems on the far west side of the Village in the Route 47 subarea, which is near the existing Grafton Farm Road solar facility. Also as noted in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan, the Route 47 subarea is expected to see development pressure in the coming years, and this area constitutes the last major opportunity for greenfield development.

Staff notes that large-scale solar energy systems do not contribute sales tax revenue to support Village operations, and the future development of Class 3 solar energy systems in the subarea would limit the potential for future commercial development. Also, large-scale solar energy systems generate significantly less equalized assessed value than business and residential development, which would reduce the potential property tax revenue to support Village operations. Therefore, staff finds that Class 3 solar energy system should be limited to appropriate areas of the Village, and should not be allowed in residential or business zoning districts based on the analysis above, staff has proposed amendments to the permitted and conditional use chart in Section 11 of the Zoning Code to prohibit Class 3 solar energy systems in the residential and business zoning districts.

As proposed, Class 3 solar energy systems would still be allowed with approval of a conditional use permit in the agricultural, airport, open space, institutional building, and manufacturing zoning districts. The regulations for Class 1 and Class 2 solar energy systems would remain unchanged.

Commissioner Walker inquired about the landscape buffer around the solar farm located south of Haligus Road near the Coventry neighborhood. In response to Commissioner Walker, Director Svalenka indicated that the developer did comply with Village's condition to install plantings as a landscape buffer.

There being no public comments or further discussion, Chairman Esposito asked for a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Siakel made a motion to close the public hearing, and Commissioner Walker seconded. On a voice vote, everyone voted Aye, No Nays. Motion to close passed 7-0. Chairman Esposito closed the public hearing at 7:42 p.m.

Commissioner Goldenstein made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed amendments to Section 11 of the Zoning Code, as noted in the staff report dated January 12, 2026. Commissioner Siakel seconded the motion. On a roll call vote Commissioners Siakel, Walker, Murphy, Bolton, Swanlund, Goldenstein and Chairman Esposito voted Aye. No Nays. Motion to recommend approval passed 7-0.

Old Business

None.

Item for Discussion

None.



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Staff Report

None.

Audience Participation

Resident David McMorris spoke at the podium regarding the proposed development at Miller and Lakewood Roads. He expressed his concern about the existing lights, which are quite bright already, and that there are plenty of gas stations in Lake in the Hills.

Resident Tina DeBartolo spoke at the podium. She is a long-term resident of the area. She spoke about her dismay that Lake in the Hills does not have a downtown area or a centrally located place, like the surrounding towns, to bring people together. She expressed concern about there already are plenty of gas stations in the area. Plus, the intersection at Lakewood and Miller Roads is already busy with cars and pedestrian traffic, and a gas station would make it busier. She does not think another liquor store and gas station is needed in this area.

Resident Artem Tkachenko spoke at the podium. He said he lives near the intersection of Lakewood and Miller Roads, and explained he does not want another car wash, gas station, or liquor store in the area.

Resident Paul Dorjgotov Altangerel spoke at the podium about his concern of the proposed development at Miller and Lakewood Roads. He said he lives along Miller Road, that there is already a lot of road noise, and he feels a gas station would bring in more traffic and road noise that would be detrimental to him and his family. He feels the area should only be zoned residential.

Commissioner Walker spoke about the proposed development at Lakewood and Miller Roads. He indicated that he cannot support the development citing the existing convenience stores, gas stations, medical offices, and unoccupied lots in the area. He feels the development would saturate the market, and there could be a possibly make more vacant businesses in a residential neighborhood. Also, he feels that if the McHenry County Department of Transportation installed a roundabout there, it could make the traffic situation worse.

Trustee Liaison

President Bogdanowski gave an update about the new police station that is nearing completion. The move-in date is currently scheduled for early February. The plan was to demolish the existing police station after the move to the new police station. However, there have been second thoughts, and the Village Board feels that the building can accommodate some Village operational needs. Therefore, money was put in the 2026 budget to do an analysis for the building's future use, which may include using it for expansion of the Parks and Recreation Department. The veteran's memorial installation and relaying of the bricks at the new police station building is complete, which includes a new statute and additional lighting. A dedication is being planned for the future, and readvertising new dedication bricks will start soon.



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President Bogdanowski touched on the topic of the proposed development at Miller and Lakewood Roads that was on tonight's agenda. He indicated that the landowner has a buyer for the property who wants to develop it. He explained that the Village has a process for developments, and the public hearing is the beginning of the process.

Lastly, he feels positive about the Village's direction moving forward based upon the new comprehensive plan that was recently approved by the Village Board. He indicated that development of Route 47 is a priority, and the Village is working with McHenry County on that. One example of that priority is the amendment on tonight's agenda to restrict solar farms.

Director Svalenka responded to Commissioner Siakel's question if the Village could go back to the developer of the solar farm near the Coventry neighborhood and ask for taller trees to be planted, and he indicated that we could not.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Siakel and seconded by Commissioner Walker. On a voice vote, everyone voted Aye, no Nays. Motion to adjourn passed 7-0.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting of the Lake in the Hills Planning & Zoning Commission was adjourned at 8:04 p.m. The next Planning and Zoning Commission meeting is scheduled February 17, 2026.

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laura Carpenter".

Laura Carpenter
Recording Secretary