

City of Dearborn
Zoning Board of Appeals
Thursday, May 21, 2026
Minutes

Called to Order: 5:38 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Hassane Fadlallah (Acting Chair), Glen Green (Vice-Chair), Samera Ajami (Secretary), Tim Muflihi, Mona Hammoud.

Technical Advisors: David Breneau, Zoning Administrator; Nolan Kukla, Senior Planner; Yassmen Sobh, City Attorney.

Approval of Minutes. Motion by Commissioner Ajami, supported by Commissioner Green, that the minutes of the previous regular meeting of Thursday, April 30, 2026 are approved as recorded. Motion carried unanimously.

Appeal #26-108

Consideration of a request of Michael Tate for approval of two freestanding solar panels, the property size being 19,506 sq ft, 50 ft x 390.12 ft, 0.45 acre, in the (WD) West Downtown Form Based Code Mixed Residential District:

22144 Morley Street

Breneau summarized the Staff report dated May 21, 2026. Factors to consider on the variance request: Existing on the 0.45-acre property is a 2,356 sq. ft. house with a detached garage. The applicant is proposing two freestanding 196 sq ft solar panels in the rear yard. Section 2.03 D2 states that accessory structures require approval by the Zoning Board of Appeals, except those specifically listed. Freestanding solar panels are not among those specifically listed, so Zoning Board of Appeals approval is required. If the applicant were to place the solar panels on either the garage or the house, instead of having them as a freestanding structure, this Zoning Board of Appeals request would not be required.

Fadlallah asked even with this being a second and third structure he still needs Board approval.

Breneau clarified that the panels are not specifically permitted structures, so if this were a gazebo, he'd be fine, a gazebo is specifically permitted.

Green asked if this was a use variance.

Breneau said this is not a variance, but falls under one of the other powers of the Board, that being allowing an unlisted or unspecified accessory structure.

Hammoud asked if he is required to have a permit.

Breneau said yes, but that is besides Board approval.

Green asked how large are the panels.

Contractor said each panel has a footprint of 11ft x 15ft, the height is 10 to 10½ ft, the panels are 3½ ft off the ground.

Green asked how you maintain the grass underneath under the panels.

Contractor suggested a weedwhacker and not a lawnmower.

Green asked if there would be concerns about contaminants leaching from the panels and how long do they last.

Contractor said no contaminants, and they will produce energy 30-40 years.

Green asked how many kilowatts and how much of the house will that power?

Contractor said 450kw per panel.

Applicant's caretaker said it will power 75% of their usage.

Green asked if DTE has to approve it.

Contractor said yes.

Green said you are groundmounting them due to the juxtaposition of the garage roof.

Contractor said yes, the south facing panels are the most productive.

Green asked how they are kept clean?

Contractor said rain, or you can hose it.

Green asked about wildlife, because there is a lot of deer in the area.

Contractor said they put protective materials around the wiring, which is like a chickenwire.

Ajami asked if he'll get enough sunlight this being Michigan.

Contractor said this time of year from March to October is the peak solar harvesting time, and overflow goes into a battery.

Muflihi said they are behind the garage so no passerby will see them.

Contractor said yes.

Public comment:

Glenn Okray, 7521 Wagner Court, said he is in full support of this request, the project is forward-looking, it will not be an eyesore.

Outside correspondences: None

RESOLUTION. Motion by Commissioner Ajami, supported by Commissioner Green, for the reasons and subject to the facts, representations and stipulations stated on the record during the public hearing, to APPROVE the request detailed below:

2.03 D2 Approval of detached accessory structures. Zoning requirement: Freestanding solar panels require approval of the Zoning Board of Appeals. Proposed: Two freestanding solar panels is APPROVED (DZO 32.05, F.1. G, H, I, J, M).

This motion is conditioned on the petitioner's continuous compliance with all applicable ordinances, codes, laws and statutes; and, the petitioner must perform all work under plans, permits and final inspections approved by the City of Dearborn.

Motion carried unanimously.

Other business

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Chair: Green

Nomination by: Fadlallah Support by: Ajami

Outcome: Motion carried unanimously

Vice-Chair: Fadlallah

Nomination by: Ajami Support by: Green

Outcome: Motion carried unanimously

Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Fadlallah, supported by Commissioner Ajami, to adjourn the hearing. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned: 5:58 p.m.