

INTRODUCTION

Stonegate Architecture Committee Photovoltaic Systems: Regulations, Guidelines and Process March 2019 – DRAFT

See Somerset Lake (2018/05/03)

Based on a non-binding community vote taken in (date), Stonegate resident respondents in favor of allowing Photovoltaic Systems (hereafter “PV” or “PV Systems” – i.e. “solar cells” or “solar panels”) in the community as shown by a vote of (#) in favor and (#) against. The Architecture Committee is charged with approving exterior changes in a manner that is “consistent with the harmony of the existing architecture.” In order to allow the installation of these systems in such a way as to maintain, wherever possible, the existing aesthetic appeal of our community, this committee recommends the following regulations and process for the installation photovoltaic systems on homes located in Stonegate.

I. PURPOSE

The Architecture Committee recognizes the environmental benefits and general desirability of Photovoltaic Systems in residential communities and wants to allow the use of such systems wherever possible, but also feels it is important to ensure that such equipment is reasonably controlled as to appearance and location of installation, so as to protect neighbors and the community as a whole from unsightly equipment and/or installation. Accordingly, the purpose of these Regulations on solar energy devices and equipment is to reasonably control use and location to protect home values and aesthetics in the community.

II. POLICY

The Guidelines, Rules, Regulations and Restrictions apply to all Photovoltaic Systems (“solar panels”) requested for installation into any home located in Stonegate which, due to installation and use location, are or may become visible from a neighboring property. As of the writing of this document, only solar panels and solar shingles are recommended for installation. Other solar

energy devices (solar tubes, solar skylights, etc.) are not permitted under these regulations.

III. PRINCIPLES

The following principles were considered when developing these regulations:

Regulations must be reasonable such that the majority of requests can be approved for installation

Wherever possible, reasonable exceptions should be granted so that homeowners are able to exercise their property rights in having PV Systems

Installations must maximize safety for homeowners, emergency response personnel, and neighboring homeowners

Installations must maintain neighborhood visual design and appeal. Existing state and local guidelines will be leveraged where possible

IV. REGULATIONS

The regulations are divided into 4 categories: Pre-requisites, Safety Equipment, Location, Appearance.

Pre-requisites

PV Systems will only be approved for installation where the dwelling is furnished with asphalt shingles. Roofs made of cedar shingles will not be approved for solar installations.

Safety Equipment

1. PV Systems must be installed with a “Rapid Shutdown with Optimizer” so that emergency response personnel (firefighters) have the ability to de-energize the panels in a manner that is both safe and permits them to access the roof structure for fire control procedures such as venting, etc.
2. PV Systems must have the shutoff switches labelled appropriately to indicate to emergency response the exact type of shutoff.

Location

1. PV Systems must be located on the roof of the house/structure and must be laid/parallel flat to the existing roofline. PV Systems that extend past the natural roofline will not be approved.
2. PV Systems will not be permitted in the yards or in any way disconnected from the main structure.
3. PV Systems are expected to be installed in a way that presents a contiguous panel without breaks or large gaps between panels.
4. Systems can be approved for either the front or the back of the home, depending on sun exposure needs.

Appearance

1. PV Systems typically have few color options with the cells almost exclusively black, the polymer backing typically available in black or white, and the framing or “rails” available in a few colors. Requests where the cells, backing, and rails are uniformly black are preferred as standard for Stonegate. Recently, companies have started to offer cells in other colors, but these tend to be less efficient and require larger installations to provide the same energy. At this time, alternate colors for the cells will not be approved.
2. PV systems must have contiguous cells – that is, every panel should be adjacent to another panel. Some roofs may not be approved for solar installations based on the limited contiguous space for panel placement. Plumbing, wires, or accessories associated with the PV System installation must not be visible from the street.

GUIDELINES

Written approval from the Architecture Committee must be obtained BEFORE any work is performed.

Any PV System installer must be licensed by the state of Pennsylvania.

PV Systems should be owned by the homeowner.

Homeowner should contact local fire department (Avondale) to inform them of the installation so that fire department records can be updated

Any PV System installation must be maintained to these standards and may be reviewed periodically in order to ensure adherence to the standards.

Any non-functional panels must be removed from the residence and the roof returned to its original state or repaired to meet current architectural visual guidelines at the expense of the current homeowner.

Any PV System installation must submit a decommissioning plan to the Architecture Committee prior to removal.

PROCESS

Prior to processing by the Architectural Committee, the Completed Architectural Request form must be submitted, including:

- Location, size, shape of installation
- Name and contact information of company responsible for installation
- Make, model and location of shutoff system
- Color of cells, backing, and rails
- Any planned exceptions to regulations and guidelines
- Visual representation of installation
- Satellite image showing location of system

The Architecture Committee reserves the right to reject any solar panel request based on any of the above regulations in addition to a subjective review of the aesthetic appeal of any requested installation. In cases where requests are denied, requesters will be informed of specific issues which resulted in the rejection.