



Agenda Date: 07/14/2015
Agenda Item: 3.7

MEMORANDUM

Date: June 24, 2015

To: Bryan H. Montgomery, City Manager

From: Dean Hurney, Building Permit Manager

Subject: Waive the First Reading and Introduce an Ordinance Adding Section 7.2.116 to Chapter 2 of Title 7 of the Oakley Municipal Code Relating to Expedited Permitting Procedures for Small Residential Rooftop Solar Systems

Approved and Forwarded to
City Council


Bryan H. Montgomery, City Manager

FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD JULY 14, 2015

Summary and Recommendation

Section 65850.5(g)(1) of the California Government Code requires that, on or before September 30, 2015, every city, county, or city and county must adopt an ordinance that creates an expedited, streamlined permitting process for small residential rooftop solar energy systems. Staff recommends that City Council waive the first reading and introduce the proposed ordinance regarding expedited permitting procedures for small residential rooftop solar systems.

Fiscal Impact

There is no anticipated fiscal impact as the costs for printing or copying any electronic documents would be recovered through existing fees. The Building Division is currently providing expedited review and electronic submittal of applications for small residential rooftop solar systems. Staff does not foresee that the adoption of this ordinance will substantially increase the number of applications and staff time reviewing applications as most applications currently received already meet the qualifications of the ordinance requirements.

Background and Analysis

Section 65850.5(a) of the California Government Code provides that it is the policy of the State to promote and encourage the installation and use of solar energy systems by limiting obstacles to their use and by minimizing the permitting costs of such systems. In furtherance of that objective, Section 65850.5(g)(1) of the California Government Code requires that, on or before September 30, 2015, every city, county, or city and county must adopt an ordinance that creates an expedited, streamlined permitting process for small residential rooftop solar energy systems.

The City, by its current process, already expedites the review of such applications by reviewing and processing applications received either in person or electronically. The City, however, needs to adopt the ordinance mandated by Section 65850.5(g)(1). The attached ordinance is intended to satisfy that requirement.

The ordinance codifies the requirements of Section 65850.5(g)(1), such as accepting and approving applications electronically, directing the City's Building Official to develop a checklist of all requirements with which small rooftop solar energy systems shall comply to be eligible for expedited review, and authorizing the Building Official to administratively approve such applications.

Conclusion

Staff recommends the City Council waive the first reading and introduce the proposed ordinance to comply Section 65850.5(g)(1) of the California Government Code.

Attachment

1. Proposed Ordinance

ORDINANCE NO. _____

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OAKLEY ADDING
SECTION 7.2.116 TO THE OAKLEY MUNICIPAL CODE, RELATING TO
EXPEDITED PERMITTING PROCEDURES FOR SMALL RESIDENTIAL ROOFTOP
SOLAR SYSTEMS**

The City Council of the City of Oakley does ordain as follows:

Section 1. Section 7.2.116 is hereby added to Chapter 2 of Title 7 of the Oakley Municipal Code, to read as follows:

Section 7.2.116 Amendments to the California Building Code Dealing with Small Residential Rooftop Solar Systems.

A. The following words and phrases as used in this section are defined as follows:

“Electronic submittal” means the utilization of one or more of the following:

1. e-mail,
2. the internet,
3. facsimile.

“Small residential rooftop solar energy system” means all of the following:

1. A solar energy system that is no larger than 10 kilowatts alternating current nameplate rating or 30 kilowatts thermal.
2. A solar energy system that conforms to all applicable state fire, structural, electrical, and other building codes as adopted or amended by the City and paragraph (iii) of subdivision (c) of Section 714 of the Civil Code, as such section or subdivision may be amended, renumbered, or redesignated from time to time.
3. A solar energy system that is installed on a single or duplex family dwelling.
4. A solar panel or module array that does not exceed the maximum legal building height as defined by the authority having jurisdiction.

“Solar energy system” has the same meaning set forth in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 801.5 of the Civil Code, as such section or subdivision may be amended, renumbered, or redesignated from time to time.

B. Section 65850.5 of the California Government Code provides that in developing an expedited permitting process, the city, county, or city and county shall adopt a checklist of all requirements with which small rooftop solar energy systems shall comply to be eligible for expedited review. The building official is hereby authorized and directed to develop and adopt such checklist.

C. The checklist shall be published on the city's internet website. The applicant may submit the permit application and associated documentation to the City's building division by personal, mailed, or electronic submittal together with any required permit processing and inspection fees. In the case of electronic submittal, the electronic signature of the applicant on all forms, applications and other documentation may be used in lieu of a wet signature.

D. Prior to submitting an application, the applicant shall:

1. Verify to the applicant's reasonable satisfaction through the use of standard engineering evaluation techniques that the support structure for the small residential rooftop solar energy system is stable and adequate to transfer all wind, seismic, and dead and live loads associated with the system to the building foundation; and

2. At the applicant's cost, verify to the applicant's reasonable satisfaction using standard electrical inspection techniques that the existing electrical system including existing line, load, ground and bonding wiring as well as main panel and subpanel sizes are adequately sized, based on the existing electrical system's current use, to carry all new photovoltaic electrical loads.

E. For a small residential rooftop solar energy system eligible for expedited review, only one inspection shall be required, which shall be done in a timely manner and may include a consolidated inspection by the building official and fire chief. If the system fails inspection, a subsequent inspection is authorized.

F. An application that satisfies the information requirements in the checklist, as determined by the building official, shall be deemed complete. Upon receipt of an incomplete application, the building official shall issue a written correction notice detailing all deficiencies in the application and any additional information required to be eligible for expedited permit issuance. The determination of incompleteness may be appealed to the City Council.

G. Upon confirmation by the building official of the application and supporting documentation being complete and meeting the requirements of the checklist, the building official shall administratively approve the application and issue all required permits or authorizations. Such approval does not authorize an applicant to connect the small residential rooftop energy system to the local utility provider's electricity grid. The applicant is responsible for obtaining such approval or permission from the local utility provider.

H. Fees for permitting small rooftop residential energy systems shall comply with Government Code Sections 65850.55, 66015, 66016 and Health & Safety Code Section 17951.

Section 2. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Finding.

This ordinance is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), Review for Exemption, because it can be seen with certainty that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment; therefore the project is not subject to CEQA.

Section 3. Severability.

In the event any section or portion of this ordinance shall be determined to be invalid or unconstitutional, such section or portions shall be deemed severable and all other sections or portions hereof shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 4. Effective Date and Publication.

This ordinance shall take effect and be in force thirty (30) days from and after the date of its passage. The City Clerk shall cause the ordinance to be published within fifteen (15) days after its passage in a newspaper of general circulation, or by publishing a summary of the proposed ordinance, posting a certified copy of the proposed ordinance in the City Clerk's Office at least five (5) days prior to the City Council meeting at which the ordinance is to be adopted, and within fifteen (15) days after its adoption, publishing a summary of the ordinance with the names of the Council Members voting for and against the ordinance.

The foregoing ordinance was adopted with the reading waived at a regular meeting of the Oakley City Council on _____, 2015 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENT:

APPROVED:

Doug Hardcastle, Mayor

ATTEST:

Libby Vreonis, City Clerk

Date