

Montgomery's Wind, Solar & Photovoltaic Energy Ordinance – An Overview If You Are Planning to Install Solar

In 2011, the Township Committee and Planning Board noted the increasing number of solar panel arrays that were being constructed in the Township as accessory structures under the zoning requirements, and directed the Master Plan Committee to develop an ordinance. The goal of the ordinance is to encourage utilization of renewable energy sources, while controlling their installation and operation to safeguard residents of the Township. The Environmental Commission was awarded a grant by the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) with funding provided by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation to draft an ordinance that will hopefully serve as a model for other communities. The ordinance streamlines the approval process for residents who meet the requirements of the new ordinance, while also protecting the quality of life for neighbors by requiring landscaping and screening, establishing setback requirements and limiting tree cutting.

Here are a few basics, but if you're planning to install a solar panel array, contact the Zoning Officer Joe Palmer at (908) 359-8211 ext. 283 to discuss the specifics of your property and your installation. Please note that commercial properties and farms may have other requirements in some instances.

Roof mounted systems:

Panels are permitted to be installed flat to the roof, no higher than 12" above the existing roof structure, and may be installed on the front or back of the residence. All associated ground-mounted equipment must be located in the side or rear yard and may require screening as determined by the Township's Landscape Architect.

Ground-mounted systems:

Ground-mounted systems are permitted when the applicant can first prove that a roof mounted system is not feasible. Panels may be located in the side or rear yard only on lots of one (1) acre or greater in size. Panels must be located at least 40' from the side and rear property line, and cannot be greater than 12' in height. Size limits on the footprint of the system apply depending on the size of your lot. Ground-mounted systems must be screened with vegetation or fencing in consultation with the Township's Landscape Architect.

The ordinance is published on the Planning Reports page of the Land Use section of the Montgomery Township website at:

<http://www.twp.montgomery.nj.us/depts/landuse/planningreports.asp>