City of Atlantic City
Department of Planning & Development

Suite 506 City Hall
Atlantic City, New Jersey 08401

City of Atlantic City
Planning Board Meeting Minutes
July 7, 2026 – Council Chambers, City Hall – Rom 206

Adequate Notice: 10:10 am
Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided as required by law by mailing to *The Press of Atlantic City* a list of the regularly scheduled meetings of the Atlantic City Planning Board, including notice of this scheduled meeting of July 8, 2026. A copy of said notice was sent to the City Clerk for posting. All notice complies with Chapter 231 of the Laws of 1975, known as the Open Public Meetings Act.

Pledge of Allegiance: 10:11am
The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: 10:13am
Vice Chairperson, Brian Ireland
Councilman, Kaleem Shabazz
John Carr
Kyle Gornick
Michelle Y. English

Absent:
Chairperson, Keturah A. Jackson
Mayor Marty Small
Chief James Sarkos

Approval of Minutes: 10:13am
A motion was made to adopt the amendments from April 7th, May 5th, and June 2nd.
Motion: Councilman, Kaleem Shabazz
Second: Mr. Carr
All in favor: Aye

Courtesy Review – HESP Solar LLC, Employee Parking Lots & Herold Law: 10:15am
Mr. Jim Rotella, on behalf of the City of Atlantic City, presented an application for a courtesy review of a city project. An RFP was issued months prior to the development of solar canopies at two locations:
• Public Works Yard on Albany Avenue
• Employee Parking Lot across from City Hall

HESP Solar was selected and provided proposals for both locations. The project is designed to benefit the community by:
• Allowing the City to receive lease-revenue income
• Offering community solar energy to residents, reducing electric bills

The project was reviewed by City professionals, including Engineering, Public Works, and Police Department, to ensure proper design and operational compatibility.

Presentation by HESP Solar – John Kaplan, Herold Law 10:20am
Representatives present:
• John Kaplan, Herold Law, Warren Township, New Jersey
• Rob Mochello, Gladstone Design (Professional Engineer)
• Susan Brody, Chief Operating Officer, HESP Solar

HESP Solar is very experienced in all the municipal, state, and county contracts regarding solar power.

Mr. Kaplan stated the project complies with the City's Master Plan and is an inherently beneficial use. It's universally considered of value to the community, because it fundamentally serves the public good, and promotes general welfare. I have with me Rob Michella from Gladstone Design. He's going to present the visuals and explain everything in detail. I also have here with me Susan Brody, the Chief Operating Officer of HESP Solar, if you have any questions for her as well.

Good morning, everyone. Robert Mochello, I'm from Gladstone Design. My business address, for the record is 265 Main Street, Gladstone, New Jersey. I'm a professional engineer in the state of New Jersey. I've appeared before numerous boards throughout the state. I've been working with HESP Solar now for about 10 years on several of their solar projects throughout the entire state of New Jersey.

Engineering Overview – Rob Mochello (Gladstone Design) -265 Main Street, New Jersey
Employee Parking Lot (Block 319, Lot 2)
• 1.1 acres in size
• Proposed installation of approximately 730 kW in solar canopy configuration
• Minimum 14-foot clearance under canopies
• LED lighting system to improve current lighting conditions
• Foundations will be placed to avoid loss of parking spaces
• Several trees will need removal due to canopy placement

Public Works Facility (Block 831, Lot 5)
• Approximately 17 acres
• Proposed system of over 3 MW
• Removal of approximately 17–18 trees
• Consideration of garage access for large vehicles
• Minimum 14-foot clearance
• Full LED lighting
• Coordination with Public Works regarding security camera needs

Timeline & Utility Coordination – Ms. Susan Brody
• Project is ready to begin pending approvals
• Atlantic City Electric requires approximately 15–18 months for interconnection

• Construction anticipated to take 6 months, starting around month 12
• Estimated total completion: within 18 months of approval

Community Solar Program Details
• Combined systems estimated to supply energy to approximately 650 households
• 51% of capacity reserved for LMI (Low-to-Moderate Income) customers
• Savings estimates:
– LMI customers: approx. 25% off retail rate
– Non-LMI customers: approx. 20% off retail rate
• Enrollment process may follow utility opt-out model (pending final program rules)
• HESP Solar will hold public meetings to educate residents

Public Portion. No one from public wanted to speak.

Motion to Close public portion by Shabazz and 2nd by Gornick. 10:37am.

No members of the public were present in person or via Zoom.

Board Discussion
Board members inquired about:
• Customer selection process for LMI households
• Inclusion of residents with existing private solar (possible if they retain an electric bill)
• What is the Construction phase to avoid full lot closures
• Tree replacement (not feasible due to solar shading requirements)
• Parking lot resurfacing (city responsibility)
• Number of panels: approx. 1,300 (employee lot) and approx. 5,400 (public works)

Board Questions & Discussion:

1. What is your timeline? - Councilman Kaleem Shabazz

Ms. Brody, Chief Operating Officer, HESP Solar Response – "We are ready to start as soon as possible the limitation is with the utility Atlantic City Electric. Atlantic City Electric has given us a timeline for 15 to 18 months. As soon as we get approval here, and the resolution, we'll initiate that 15 to 18 months, and we have a timed construction to be complete by the time the utility's ready to tie in. I would say it would be completed in 18 months. Construction will likely take about 6 months; we'll probably start in 12 months and be completed within 18 months."

Board Discussion

Councilman Kaleem Shabazz – "Let me ask you a couple questions, since you're standing. Mr. Rutala mentioned community solar, but how would the community solar work and how does it impact people's utility costs?

Ms. Brody "we are predicting that the two systems combined will be able to supply about 650 households with community solar power. The Community Solar Program was that this project would benefit 51% LMI (Low to

Moderate Income) customers, and 49% regular customers, so we're estimating that would be about 350 LMI customers, and about 300 regular customers would benefit Community Solar 25% off of the retail rate, which we're estimating is almost 7 cents. Their savings would be almost 7 cents per kilowatt hour. Okay. 25% off their total bill, and the savings to a non-LMI customer would be 20%. which would be, probably about 6 cents or 5 and a half cents.

Councilman Kaleem Shabazz: "For the record, what is LMI? I know what it is, but just for the record.

Ms. Brody Low to moderate income. Low to moderate income customers

Councilman Kaleem Shabazz: I'm an elected official, and I know people are going to ask, how will the LMI and the regular customers be selected?

Ms. Brody: "I believe that we'd have to see exactly where the program is at in a year from now, which is when they'll be signing up... But right now, the utility has an opt-out. Meaning that the customer would have to opt out of the community solar program in order not to be automatically placed into it, but that's no on the

record here, so I'm not committing that that's what it will be when this program goes, you know, when this project goes into effect. But certainly, we would work with the city to make sure that the customers in Atlantic City are educated and have done an open meeting where we answer questions and tell them how to sign up and get acquainted with what the program is and what the savings would be. We're very interested in this being the benefit to the Atlantic City residents who would work with you.

Vice Chairperson, Brian Ireland: "I have one other question. You estimated 6 months of build-out phase, would that shut down the entire employee parking lot, and would it be shut down that entire time, or is it going to be done in phases? For instance, I was late today because there were no spots available."

Ms. Brody: "We always work with the facilities manager to map out, and phase-out zones where we'll build in sections. We try very hard to get in and out, so that even when we're building a section, we wouldn't close it off for a long period of time. We kind of get the foundations in, and then reopen the spots, and only keep the sections closed as we have, people working on that actual section of canopy.

Mea Solomon: Are you taking the trees down?

Mr. Kaplan: "So usually the trees that come down, usually, they come down, usually we don't replace them, because you can't block the panels when they grow with shade.

Board member: "Will the lot be resurfaced? Or is that a city thing?"

Ms. Brody: "That's a city thing. I don't think that's in our scope of work"

Michelle English: "How many panels do you think it will be? "

Mr. Kaplan: "For the, for the employee lot over here, we're anticipating about 1,300 panels. Public works lot, that is going to be about 5,400 panels. And that number's approximate because it does change slightly once HESP is ready to purchase the panels, and with the way the technology's been going in solar, every 6 months, the panels get more powerful, sizes change slightly, so they typically buy the panels that they need for the

project in bulk at that time, because then we have to make sure everything fits with the structural components of canopies and other things."

Michelle English: "One last question, I'm very chatty today." So, the benefit of LMI and regular customers, is that specific to this area, or is it going to be opened to the entire city?"

Ms. Brody: "Our boundary line would be the city, and then if we couldn't fill the capacity, we would go out to the entire Atlantic City elective territory, but certainly Atlantic City would have

Mea Solomon: Are residents included that have solar

Ms. Brody: They could be included if they still have an electric bill, it depends how efficient their solar system is. If they don't have a bill anymore, then they wouldn't have anything to buy from Atlantic City Electric, meaning this would only benefit their actual Atlantic City Electric bill.

Vice Chairperson, Brian Ireland – Any more questions or comments from the board? I'm not super familiar with these courtesy reviews, I don't know if we…

Attorney Rachel Goloff: So, it's a matter of making a recommendation. So, the project is already approved, but it's a matter of the board recommending that it's consistent with the master plan.

Ms. Brody: And then we would need a resolution to bring into the building department for our final look.

Recommendation and Motion
A motion was made stating the project is consistent with the Master Plan and recommending approval of the proposal as presented.
Motion: Councilman Kaleem Shabazz
Second: Mr. Gornick
All in favor: Aye

A resolution or letter to Council will be prepared with in the month.

Correspondence
An email was read by Shameeka M. Cottman, Board Secretary on behalf of Mr Brian Kemp, newly appointed Director of Planning & Development, extending greetings to Board Members and noting his absence due to relocation from Brooklyn, NY. He looks forward to working with the Board.

Adjournment
Motion to adjourn was presented and approved.
Meeting adjourned

Public Portion. No one from public wanted to speak.

Motion to Adjourn by Ireland and 2nd by English.

Meeting ended at 11:03am.