



PLANNING & ZONING REPORT

Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting of February 18, 2026

File # 002-26

APPLICANT: Greenlink Solar Solutions for the Boys and Girls Club of Rockford

LOCATION: 609 Kilburn Avenue

REQUESTED ACTION: A Special Use Permit for a Planned Use Development consisting of a ground mount solar array within the existing parking lot, Variation to allow a chain-link fence within the front yard along Acorn Street and a Variation to increase the fence height from four (4) feet to six (6) feet within the front yard along Acorn Street in an R-2, Two-family Residential Zoning District.

EXISTING USE: Social/Charitable community facility with associated parking and recreational areas

PROPOSED USE: Social/Charitable community facility with associated parking and recreational areas with ground mount solar array

DIMENSIONS: Irregular shape **SQUARE FOOTAGE:** 1.79 acres

ADJACENT ZONING AND LAND USES:

NORTH:	R-2	Lifescape Community Kitchen, residential
EAST:	R-2	Resurrection Lutheran Church, Two-family and Single-family residences
SOUTH:	R-2	Single-family residences
WEST:	RE	PACE Center, Fairgrounds Park

YEAR 2040 PLAN: PE Existing (Quasi-) Public Facility

SOILS REPORT: No soils report on file.

HISTORY: There is no relevant history in the immediate area.

REVIEW COMMENTS: The Applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit for a Planned Use Development consisting of a ground mount solar array within the existing parking lot, Variation to allow a chain-link fence within the front yard along Acorn Street and a Variation to increase the fence height from four (4) feet to six (6) feet within the front yard along Acorn Street in an R-2, Two-family Residential Zoning District. The subject property is surrounded agricultural land (Exhibits B & C).

The Applicant, Greenlink Solar Solutions, is proposing a Special Use Permit for a Planned Use Development consisting of a ground mount solar array within the existing parking lot. Within the R-2 District, ground mount solar

array that covers an area more than an acre in size is an elective PUD. Solar Panels (collectors) are permitted as performance requirement uses in the R-2 District requiring them to go through a Performance Review but only if the solar collectors are installed on the roof of the principal structure or accessory structure or otherwise incorporated into and made an integral part of the main building itself unless otherwise indicated within Section 40-002-M. The maximum height and setback regulations of the zoning district in which it is proposed shall be observed.

Additionally, the Zoning Ordinance, states Freestanding Collectors in residentially zoned areas can be permitted but only if they meet the following criteria:

- (1) Freestanding solar collector panels are permitted up to 400 square feet in size provided they are located within the required rear yard. The freestanding solar collector panels are deemed as an accessory structure subject to the regulations of Section 57-003.
- (2) Minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet is required to allow freestanding solar collector panels in the residential districts as an accessory structure.
- (3) Freestanding solar collector panels may not exceed 15 feet in height and must meet the applicable setbacks of a principal building.
- (4) Freestanding solar collector panels may not be constructed on any lot before the construction of the principal building to which it is accessory.

In this situation, the ground mounted solar array does not satisfy these requirements, thus the need for the Special Use. The proposed free-standing solar collector panels will occupy more than 400 square feet in size.

Exhibit D is the proposed site plan. The property will have solar panels installed on the building that is located on the south side of the property. The ground mounted solar panels will be located within the front yard in the parking lot on the north side of along Acorn Street. The front yard setback of 30 feet will not be met and the plan shows that the solar arrays will be setback at 9'7" from the north property line. The area will be approximately 55' by 90'. This area will remain blacktop and the existing interior landscape not shown within the exhibit on the east side of this area will not be removed. There is existing frontage landscaping along Acorn Street that will remain. There will be a (6) six-foot high chain-link fence proposed enclosing this area. The Applicant has requested a Variation to allow the height and this material within the front yard along Acorn Street. The maximum height permitted within the front yard is (4) four feet. All electrical lines shall be underground if connecting to the solar panels. The ordinance states "Any power transmission lines connecting a freestanding system to any other structure on the property shall be buried underground." (Article 40-002-M-3).

Exhibit E is the Applicant's narrative. The Applicant indicates "Due to limitations in available roof area and the Club's operational energy demand, a rooftop only system does not provide energy production. The addition of the parking lot solar system allows the combined project to reach approximately a 100 percent energy offset. This level of production is necessary to make the project financially responsible and sustainable for the organization." This proposal will help reduce long term utility expenses so

that operating funds can go back into the organization. The elimination of two rows of parking will not impact the dropping off and picking up. Based on the rated capacity 1 space per 10 rated occupancy of 200 would require 20 parking spaces. Currently, the site has 80 parking spaces including (3) three handicap spaces. With the proposal of ground mount solar arrays, a total of 20 parking spaces would be eliminated leaving 60 parking spaces. Within the exhibit is the Applicant's findings of fact.

Exhibit F is the service calls for the last two years. The dates range from January 23, 2024 to May 19, 2025. There was a total of 12 calls for service to 609 Kilburn Avenue.

The Applicant is proposing a ground mounted solar array on an already developed lot. Staff finds that the proposed location does not meet the intent or standards of the zoning ordinance and is inconsistent with typical site design practices. Ground mounted solar arrays are not commonly located within the front yard, within paved or highly developed portions of a site, particularly where alternative locations are available. Staffs feels that the property contains other green areas that could accommodate this proposal. Additionally, the proximity to adjacent residential minimizes potential impacts on nearby residential uses. Staff feels the proposed location does not provide adequate buffering and is incompatible with surrounding residential land uses. For these reasons, Staff does not support this request.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends **DENIAL** of the requested Special Use Permit for a Planned Use Development consisting of a ground mount solar array within the existing parking lot, **DENIAL** of the Variation to allow a chain-link fence within the front yard along Acorn Street and **DENIAL** of the Variation to increase the fence height from four (4) feet to six (6) feet within the front yard along Acorn Street in an R-2, Two-family Residential Zoning District

See attached findings of fact.

SC: BM 02/9/2025

FINDINGS OF FACT FOR DENIAL OF A SPECIAL USE PERMIT
FOR A PLANNED USE DEVELOPMENT CONSISTING OF A GROUND MOUNT SOLAR
ARRAY WITHIN THE EXISTING PARKING LOT
IN AN R-2, TWO-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT
LOCATED AT 609 KILBURN AVENUE

Denial of this Special Use Permit is based upon the following findings:

1. The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the Special Use Permit will be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort, or general welfare of the community.
2. The Special Use Permit will be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, and will not substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood.
3. The establishment of the special use will impede the normal or orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district.
4. Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, and/or necessary facilities have been, are being, or will be provided.
5. Adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress or egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets.
6. The special use does not conform to the applicable regulations of the R2 District in which it is located.

**FINDINGS OF FACT FOR DENIAL OF A VARIATION TO
ALLOW A CHAIN-LINK FENCE WITHIN THE FRONT YARD ALONG ACORN STREET
IN AN R-2, TWO-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT
LOCATED AT 609 KILBURN AVENUE**

Denial of this Variation is based upon the following findings:

1. Because of the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions of the specific property involved, a particular hardship to the owner would not result, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, if the strict letter of the regulations were to be carried out.
2. The conditions upon which a petition for this Variation is based are not unique to the property for which the Variation is sought and are applicable, generally, to other property within the same zoning classification.
3. The purpose of this Variation is based exclusively upon a desire to increase the value or income potential of the property.
4. The alleged difficulty or hardship is not caused by this Ordinance and has been created by any persons presently having an interest in the property or by any predecessor in title.
5. The granting of this Variation will be detrimental to the public welfare, or injurious to other property or improvements in the neighborhood in which the property is located.
6. The proposed Variation will impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, or substantially increase the congestion of the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or endanger the public safety, or substantially diminish or impair the property values within the neighborhood.
7. The proposed Variation does not comply with the spirit and intent of restrictions imposed by this Ordinance.

**FINDINGS OF FACT FOR DENIAL OF A VARIATION TO
INCREASE THE FENCE HEIGHT FROM FOUR (4) FEET TO SIX (6) FEET WITHIN THE
FRONT YARD ALONG ACORN STREET
IN AN R-2, TWO-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT
LOCATED AT 609 KILBURN AVENUE**

Denial of this Variation is based upon the following findings:

1. Because of the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions of the specific property involved, a particular hardship to the owner would not result, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, if the strict letter of the regulations were to be carried out.
2. The conditions upon which a petition for this Variation is based are not unique to the property for which the Variation is sought and are applicable, generally, to other property within the same zoning classification.
3. The purpose of this Variation is based exclusively upon a desire to increase the value or income potential of the property.
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5. The granting of this Variation will be detrimental to the public welfare, or injurious to other property or improvements in the neighborhood in which the property is located.
6. The proposed Variation will impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, or substantially increase the congestion of the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or endanger the public safety, or substantially diminish or impair the property values within the neighborhood.
7. The proposed Variation does not comply with the spirit and intent of restrictions imposed by this Ordinance.

C3 C3

MAPLE

Exhibit A
609 Kilburn Avenue
SUP and Var.
#002-26

R2

R2

R2

R2

R1

R1

R1R1

R2 R2

R2
R2

ACORN

HORSMAN

KILBURN

R2 R2

R2 R2

R2 R2

R2R2

LOCUST

RE

RE

R2

R2

R2

R2

RE
RE

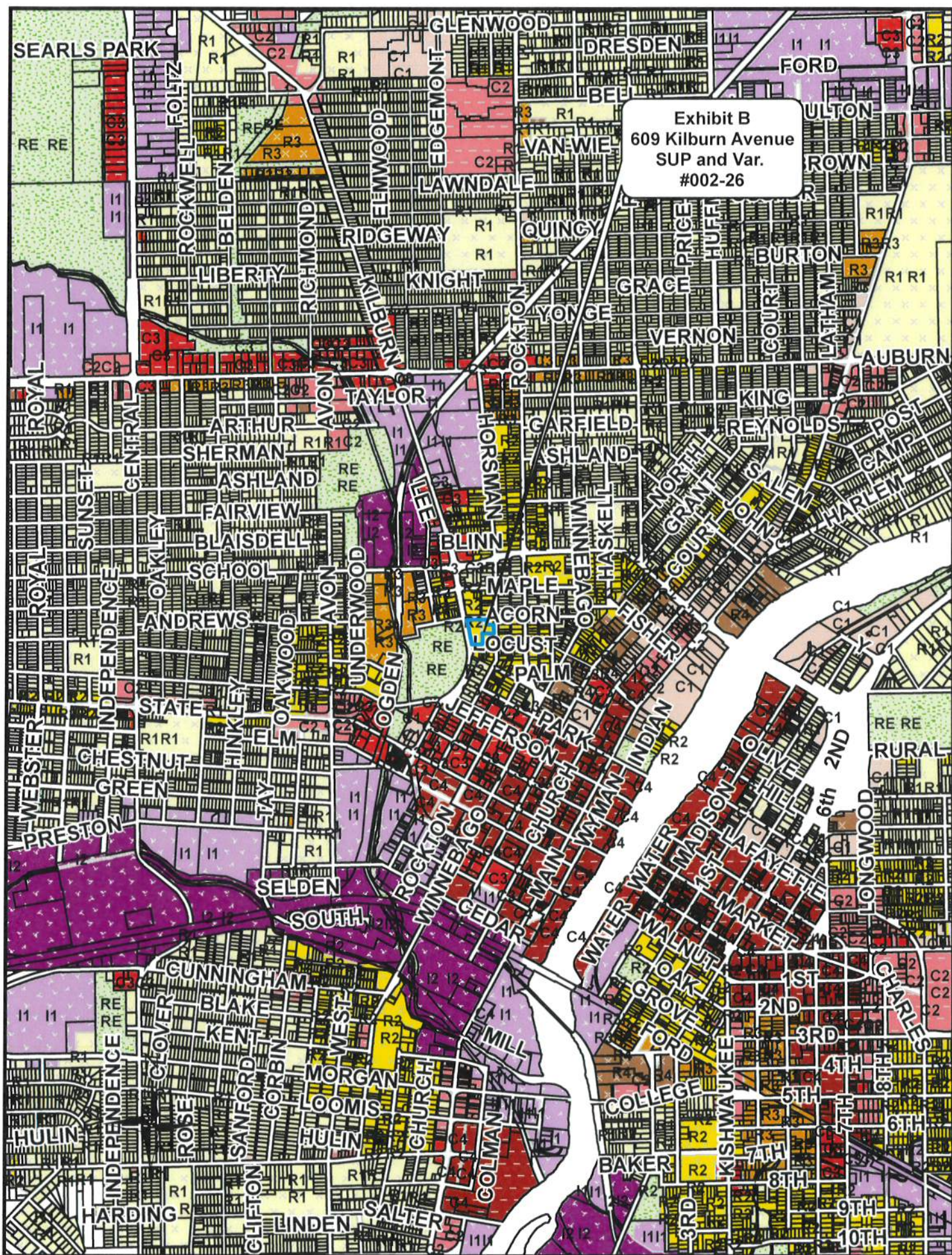
R1

R1

CHERRY

R2 R2









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REVISIONS	DATE	REV
DESCRIPTION	DATE	REV
FOR REVIEW	5/7/2025	A
REVISION	5/7/2025	B

SIGNATURE & SEAL

PROJECT NAME & ADDRESS
 ROCKFORD BOYS & GIRLS
 CLUB - STENSTROM
 (165,55KW DC)
 609 KILBURN AVE,
 ROCKFORD, IL 61101, USA
 By Text at 11:40:08 PM, 12/22/2025

SHEET NAME
 SITE PLAN
SHEET SIZE
 18" X 24"
SHEET NUMBER
 PV-2

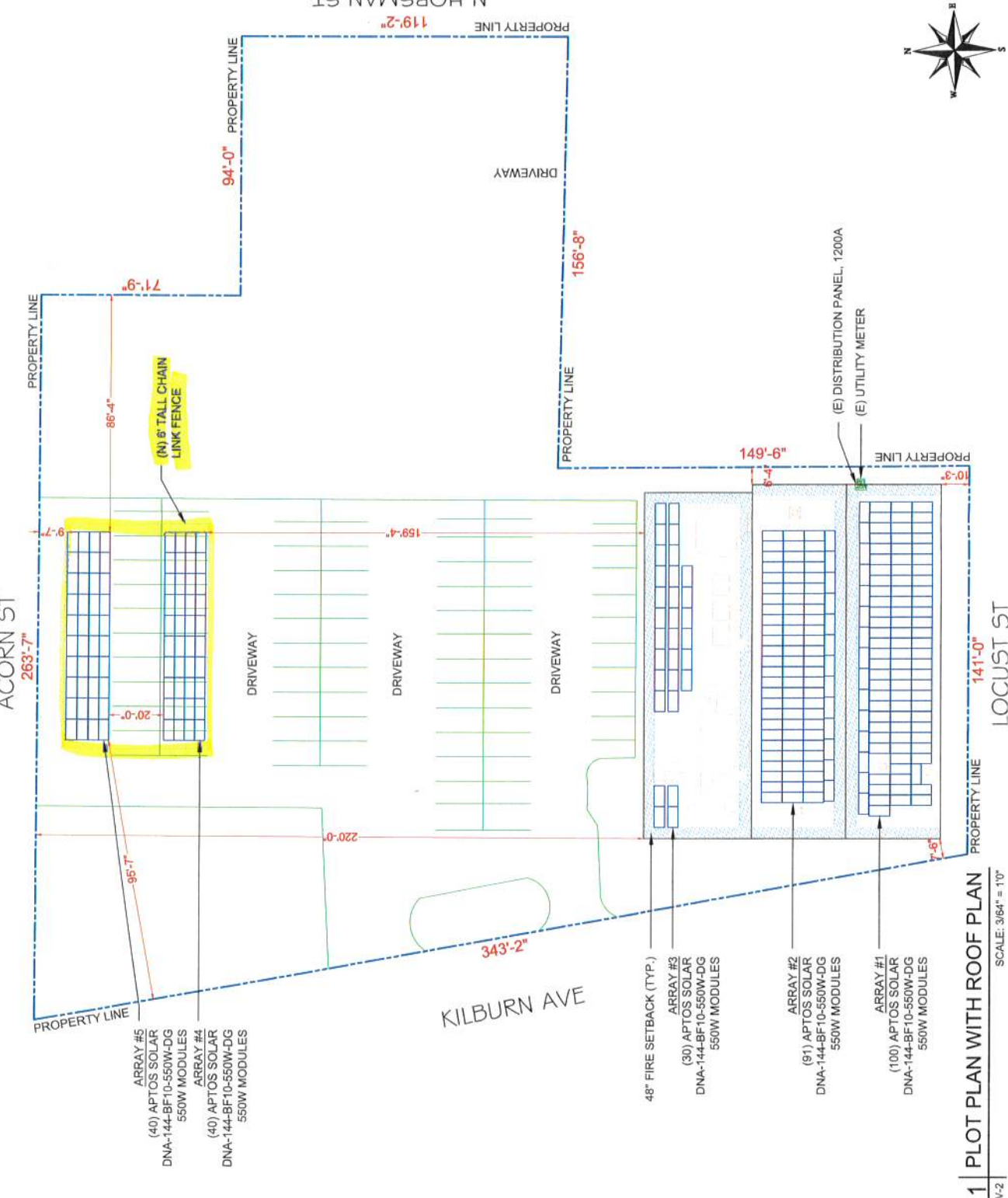


Exhibit D
 609 Kilburn Avenue
 SUP for PUD
 #002-26



Zoning Narrative

Special Use Permit - Rockford Boys and Girls Club

Exhibit E
609 Kilburn Avenue
SUP for PUD
#002-26

Purpose of Application

This application is submitted by Greenlink on behalf of the Rockford Boys and Girls Club in support of a Special Use Permit for the installation of a ground mounted solar photovoltaic system located within the existing parking lot. While the overall project also includes rooftop solar, this request is specific to the parking lot solar installation, which is required to achieve the project's full purpose.

Due to limitations in available roof area and the Club's operational energy demand, a rooftop only system does not provide sufficient energy production. The addition of the parking lot solar system allows the combined project to reach approximately a 100 percent energy offset. This level of production is necessary to make the project financially responsible and sustainable for the organization.

The intent of the project is to reduce long term utility expenses so that operating funds can be redirected back into youth programs, staffing, and community services. The project is not intended to increase property value, but rather to strengthen the financial stability of the Rockford Boys and Girls Club and support its ongoing mission.

The parking lot solar installation has been designed to minimize impact on the Club's daily operations. While it will occupy a portion of existing parking spaces, it is not expected to interfere with drop-off or pick-up activity, traffic circulation, or general public use of the site, allowing the Club to continue operating safely and efficiently. In addition, a six foot chain link fence will be installed around the parking lot solar system to prevent unauthorized access and deter vandalism.

Findings of Fact in Support of the Special Use Permit

1. Practical Hardship

The physical characteristics of the property, including limited usable roof space relative to energy demand, prevent the Club from achieving sufficient solar production through rooftop installation alone. Denial of the parking lot installation would result in a practical hardship by making the project financially unviable.

2. Unique Property Conditions

The conditions supporting this request are unique to this property. The combination of high energy usage, limited roof capacity, and an existing parking lot suitable for ground mounted solar installation is not generally applicable to other properties within the same zoning classification.

3. Purpose Not Based on Property Value

The requested Special Use Permit is not sought to increase property value or income potential. The sole purpose is to eliminate or significantly reduce monthly electric expenses so that funds can be reinvested directly into the Club's programs and operations.

4. Hardship Not Self Created

The need for this request is created by zoning limitations when applied to the site's existing conditions and energy needs, and not by any action of the current owner or prior owner of the property.

5. No Detriment to Public Welfare

Granting the Special Use Permit will not be detrimental to public welfare or neighboring properties. The parking lot will continue to function as intended while incorporating a code compliant renewable energy system. The installation is planned to maintain safe and efficient access for staff, visitors, drop-off/pick-up activity, and traffic circulation, minimizing disruption to daily operations.

6. No Adverse Impacts

The proposed installation will not impair light or air to adjacent properties, increase traffic congestion, create safety hazards, or diminish surrounding property values. The system will be designed and installed in accordance with all applicable safety and building standards.

7. Consistency With Ordinance Intent

The proposed Special Use Permit is consistent with the spirit and intent of the zoning ordinance by promoting responsible land use, sustainability, and continued community service without altering the primary use of the property.

Conclusion

The parking lot solar installation is a necessary component of the Rockford Boys and Girls Club's renewable energy project. Approval of this Special Use Permit will allow the organization to responsibly reduce operating costs, reinvest savings into its mission, and continue serving the community safely and efficiently without adverse impacts.



Property Overview – Rockford Boys and Girls Club

Current Parking Spaces:

- 77 Standard
- 3 Handicap Accessible (highlighted in **blue** on the map)

Occupancy:

- Typical Daily Use: 80
- Event Use: 200

Building Area:

- 13,696 sq. ft.

Parking Adjustments for Special Use Permit:

- 57 Standard remaining (highlighted in **green** on the map)
- 3 Handicap Accessible (highlighted in **blue**)
- 20 Standard spaces covered by the Special Use Permit (highlighted in **red**)

Parking Ratio (per City):

- 1 space per rated occupancy

Event Date	Call Number	Situation Reported	Call Disposition	Location	City
1/23/2024 14:19	24-015702	CRU	RPT - REPORT	609 KILBURN AVE	Rockford
6/27/2024 15:27	24-140606	DISORDERLY	NRPT - NO REPORT / NRPT - NO REPORT	609 Kilburn Ave	Rockford
7/31/2024 19:52	24-170782	911 DUPLICATE CALL	DUP - DUPLICATE	609 Kilburn Ave	Rockford
10/17/2024 16:59	24-235143	STAND BY	NRPT - NO REPORT / NRPT - NO REPORT	609 Kilburn Ave	Rockford
11/20/2024 20:06	24-261611	SUICIDE ATTEMPT	RPT - REPORT	609 Kilburn Ave	Rockford
11/20/2024 20:13	24-261614	911 DUPLICATE CALL	DUP - DUPLICATE	609 Kilburn Ave	Rockford
11/25/2024 13:08	24-264760	BATTERY JUST OCCURRED	RPT - REPORT / RPT - REPORT	609 Kilburn Ave	Rockford
1/31/2025 17:29	25-021280	911 CELLULAR HANG UP	911 CLOSE W/O SEND TO PENDING	609 Kilburn Ave	Rockford
2/19/2025 13:28	25-034292	CRU	RPT - REPORT	609 KILBURN AVE	Rockford
3/3/2025 17:44	25-043624	DOMESTIC	NRPT - NO REPORT / NRPT - NO REPORT / NRPT - NO REPORT	609 Kilburn Ave	Rockford
5/15/2025 15:06	25-101025	911 CELLULAR HANG UP	911 CLOSE W/O SEND TO PENDING	609 Kilburn Ave	Rockford
5/19/2025 13:48	25-104235	SUSPICIOUS PERSON	NRPT - NO REPORT / NRPT - NO REPORT	609 KILBURN AVE	Rockford

Exhibit F
609 Kilburn Avenue
SUP for PUD
#002-26