

#### STATUS

At the November 14, 2019 ZBA meeting, members requested that this case be divided into two cases: Case 947-AT-19 for the separation distance to the CR District, and Case 971-AT-19 for revisions to solar farm financial assurances. No new legal advertisement was necessary for Case 947-AT-19.

The Revised Finding of Fact, Summary Finding of Fact, and Final Determination for Case 947-AT-19 dated January 16, 2020 has been revised to only refer to the one-half mile separation between a solar farm and the CR Conservation-Recreation Zoning District.

No comments have been received.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A Legal advertisement dated September 11, 2019
- B Revised Finding of Fact, Summary Finding of Fact, and Final Determination for Case 947-AT-19 dated January 16, 2020, with attachment:
  - Annotated version of proposed amendments dated January 16, 2020

# **LEGAL PUBLICATION: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2019**

# CASES: 945-AT-19, 946-AT-19, 947-AT-19 & 948-AT-19

# NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING IN REGARD TO PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CHAMPAIGN COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE.

### CASES: 945-AT-19, 946-AT-19, 947-AT-19 & 948-AT-19

The Champaign County Zoning Administrator, 1776 East Washington Street, Urbana, has filed a petition to change the text of the Champaign County Zoning Ordinance. The petition is on file in the office of the Champaign County Department of Planning and Zoning, 1776 East Washington Street, Urbana, IL.

A public hearing will be held **Thursday, September 26, 2019, at 6:30 p.m.** prevailing time in the John Dimit Meeting Room, Brookens Administrative Center, 1776 East Washington Street, Urbana, IL, at which time and place the Champaign County Zoning Board of Appeals will consider a petition to amend the Champaign County Zoning Ordinance as follows:

#### Case 945-AT-19

Amend the requirements for a photovoltaic (PV) solar farm in Section 6.1.5 B.(2) of the Champaign County Zoning Ordinance by adding the following requirements for any proposed PV solar farm that is located within 1.5 miles of a municipality:

A. Increase the minimum required time for municipal review by adding the following:

- 1. Require the Zoning Administrator to send notice to any municipality located within 1.5 miles of a proposed PV solar farm prior to the start of a public hearing, in addition to any notice otherwise required.
- 2. Require the public hearing at the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for the PV solar farm to occur at a minimum of two ZBA meetings that are not less than 28 days apart unless the 28-day period is waived in writing by any relevant municipality.
- 3. Require the Zoning Administrator to notify said municipality of the ZBA recommendation after the close of the public hearing.
- 4. If the Environment and Land Use Committee (ELUC) makes a preliminary determination to accept the ZBA recommendation, the PV solar farm shall remain at ELUC for a maximum 30-day municipal comment period until the next ELUC meeting, unless the municipal comment period is waived in writing by any relevant municipality.
- B. Require municipal subdivision approval for any PV solar farm land lease exceeding five years when required by any relevant municipal authority that has an adopted comprehensive plan.
- C. Amend Section 8.2.3 to allow any PV solar farm authorized prior to the effective date of this amendment and that is in the process of being repaired to not lose its zoning right to operate.
- D. Add new Section 8.2.4 to allow any PV solar farm authorized prior to the effective date of this amendment to be constructed pursuant to the standard requirement of a Zoning Use Permit, provided that the Special Use Permit for the solar farm has not expired.

#### Case 946-AT-19

Amend the requirements for a photovoltaic (PV) solar farm in Section 6.1.5 B.(2) of the Champaign County Zoning Ordinance by adding the following requirements for any proposed PV solar farm that is located within 1.5 miles of a municipality:

- A. Increase the minimum required separation between a PV solar farm and a municipal boundary from 0.5 mile to 1.5 miles.
- B. Increase the minimum required time for municipal review by adding the following:

- 1. Require the Zoning Administrator to send notice to any municipality located within 1.5 miles of a proposed PV solar farm prior to the start of a public hearing, in addition to any notice otherwise required.
- 2. Require the public hearing at the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for the PV solar farm to occur at a minimum of two ZBA meetings that are not less than 28 days apart unless the 28-day period is waived in writing by any relevant municipality.
- 3. Require the Zoning Administrator to notify said municipality of the ZBA recommendation after the close of the public hearing.
- 4. If the Environment and Land Use Committee (ELUC) makes a preliminary determination to accept the ZBA recommendation, the PV solar farm shall remain at ELUC for a maximum 30-day municipal comment period until the next ELUC meeting, unless the municipal comment period is waived in writing by any relevant municipality.
- C. Require municipal subdivision approval for any PV solar farm land lease exceeding five years when required by any relevant municipal authority that has an adopted comprehensive plan.
- D. Amend Section 8.2.3 to allow any PV solar farm authorized prior to the effective date of this amendment and that is in the process of being repaired to not lose its zoning right to operate.
- E. Add new Section 8.2.4 to allow any PV solar farm authorized prior to the effective date of this amendment to be constructed pursuant to the standard requirement of a Zoning Use Permit, provided that the Special Use Permit for the solar farm has not expired.

#### Case 947-AT-19

Amend the Champaign County Zoning Ordinance by amending the requirements for PV solar farms by deleting Section 6.1.5 B.(2)b. that requires a 0.5 mile separation between a proposed PV solar farm and the CR Conservation Recreation Zoning District, and amend the requirements in Section 6.1.5 Q.(4)e. to add requirements for financial assurance provided by financial institutions headquartered in Champaign County.

### Case 948-AT-19

Amend the Champaign County Zoning Ordinance by amending Section 8.3.2 to authorize a variance to rebuild a nonconforming structure before the structure is damaged.

All persons interested are invited to attend said hearing and be heard. The hearing may be continued and reconvened at a later time.

Ryan Elwell, Chair Champaign County Zoning Board of Appeals

### TO BE PUBLISHED: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2019 ONLY

Send bill and one copy to: Champaign County Planning and Zoning Dept. Brookens Administrative Center 1776 E. Washington Street Urbana, IL 61802 Phone: 384-3708

# REVISED DRAFT 01/16/20

#### 947-AT-19

### FINDING OF FACT AND FINAL DETERMINATION of Champaign County Zoning Board of Appeals

Final Determination: *{RECOMMEND ENACTMENT/RECOMMEND DENIAL}* 

Date:	{January 16, 2020}
Petitioner:	Zoning Administrator
Request:	Amend the Champaign County Zoning Ordinance by amending the requirements for PV solar farms by deleting Section 6.1.5 B.(2)b. that requires a 0.5 mile separation between a proposed PV solar farm and the CR Conservation Recreation Zoning District <del>, and amend the requirements in</del> Section 6.1.5 Q.(4)e. to add requirements for financial assurance provided by financial institutions headquartered in Champaign County.

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# FINDING OF FACT

From the documents of record and the testimony and exhibits received at the public hearing conducted on **September 26, 2019, October 17, 2019, November 14, 2019, and January 16, 2020,** the Zoning Board of Appeals of Champaign County finds that:

- 1. The petitioner is the Zoning Administrator.
- 2. The proposed amendment is intended to update the requirements for Photovoltaic (PV) SOLAR FARMS in the Zoning Ordinance.
- 3. Municipalities with zoning and townships with planning commissions have protest rights on all text amendments and they are notified of such cases.

#### SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT

4. The proposed amendment is attached to this Finding of Fact as it will appear in the Zoning Ordinance.

#### GENERALLY REGARDING THE LRMP GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

- 5. The *Champaign County Land Resource Management Plan* (LRMP) was adopted by the County Board on April 22, 2010. The LRMP Goals, Objectives, and Policies were drafted through an inclusive and public process that produced a set of ten goals, 42 objectives, and 100 policies, which are currently the only guidance for amendments to the *Champaign County Zoning Ordinance*, as follows:
  - A. The Purpose Statement of the LRMP Goals, Objectives, and Policies is as follows:
    "It is the purpose of this plan to encourage municipalities and the County to protect the land, air, water, natural resources and environment of the County and to encourage the use of such resources in a manner which is socially and economically desirable. The Goals, Objectives and Policies necessary to achieve this purpose are as follows:"
  - B. The LRMP defines Goals, Objectives, and Policies as follows:
    - (1) Goal: an ideal future condition to which the community aspires
    - (2) Objective: a tangible, measurable outcome leading to the achievement of a goal
    - (3) Policy: a statement of actions or requirements judged to be necessary to achieve goals and objectives
  - C. The Background given with the LRMP Goals, Objectives, and Policies further states, "Three documents, the *County Land Use Goals and Policies* adopted in 1977, and two sets of *Land Use Regulatory Policies*, dated 2001 and 2005, were built upon, updated, and consolidated into the LRMP Goals, Objectives and Policies.

#### **REGARDING LRMP GOALS**

6. LRMP Goal 1 is entitled "Planning and Public Involvement" and states that as follows:

Champaign County will attain a system of land resource management planning built on broad public involvement that supports effective decision making by the County. Goal 1 has 4 objectives and 4 policies. Goal 1 is *NOT RELEVANT* to the proposed amendment in general.

7. LRMP Goal 2 is entitled "Governmental Coordination" and states as follows:

### Champaign County will collaboratively formulate land resource and development policy with other units of government in areas of overlapping land use planning jurisdiction.

Goal 2 has two objectives and three policies. Goal 2 is *NOT RELEVANT* to the proposed amendment in general.

8. LRMP Goal 3 is entitled "Prosperity" and states as follows:

# Champaign County will encourage economic growth and development to ensure prosperity for its residents and the region.

Goal 3 has three objectives and no policies. <u>Goal 3 is **NOT RELEVANT** to the proposed</u> <u>amendment in general.</u>

9. LRMP Goal 4 is entitled "Agriculture" and states as follows:

# Champaign County will protect the long term viability of agriculture in Champaign County and its land resource base.

Goal 4 has 9 objectives and 22 policies. Goal 4 is *NOT RELEVANT* to the proposed amendment in general.

10. LRMP Goal 5 is entitled "Urban Land Use" and states as follows:

# Champaign County will encourage urban development that is compact and contiguous to existing cities, villages, and existing unincorporated settlements.

Goal 5 has 3 objectives and 15 policies. Goal 5 is *NOT RELEVANT* to the proposed amendment in general.

11. LRMP Goal 6 is entitled "Public Health and Safety" and states as follows:

# Champaign County will ensure protection of the public health and public safety in land resource management decisions.

Goal 6 has 4 objectives and 7 policies. Goal 6 is *NOT RELEVANT* to the proposed amendment in general.

12. LRMP Goal 7 is entitled "Transportation" and states as follows:

Champaign County will coordinate land use decisions in the unincorporated area with the existing and planned transportation infrastructure and services.

Goal 7 has 2 objectives and 7 policies. Goal 7 is *NOT RELEVANT* to the proposed amendment in general.

13. LRMP Goal 8 is entitled "Natural Resources" and states as follows:

Champaign County will strive to conserve and enhance the County's landscape and natural resources and ensure their sustainable use.

Goal 8 has 9 objectives and 36 policies. Objectives 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.7, 8.8, and 8.9 do not appear to be relevant to the proposed amendment.

The proposed amendment will *HELP ACHIEVE* Goal 8 for the following reasons:

A. Objective 8.6 states, "Champaign County will encourage resource management which avoids loss or degradation of areas representative of the pre-settlement environment and other areas that provide habitat for native and game species.

Objective 8.6 has six subsidiary policies. Policies 8.6.1, 8.6.2b., 8.6.5, and 8.6.6 do not appear to be relevant to the proposed amendment. The proposed amendment will *HELP ACHIEVE* Objective 8.6 because of the following:

(1) Policy 8.6.2a. states, "a. For new development, the County will require land use patterns, site design standards and land management practices to minimize the disturbance of existing areas that provide habitat for native and game species, or to mitigate the impacts of unavoidable disturbance to such areas."

The proposed amendment will *HELP ACHIEVE* Policy 8.6.2a. for the following reason:

- a. Regarding the proposed amendment to remove the 0.5-mile separation required between a PV solar farm and the CR Conservation Recreation Zoning District, the Zoning Ordinance regarding PV solar farms already has protections in place for the stream corridors and other natural areas typically found in the CR District without requiring a separation from a PV solar farm.
- b. Section 6.1.5 F.(9) requires a vegetative land cover for any PV solar farm on best prime farmland. This land cover will provide some additional habitat as compared to row crop agriculture, which will actually benefit any CR District that is nearby.
- c. Sec. 6.1.5 M.(2) requires vegetative screening within 1,000 feet of dwellings, which will also benefit any nearby CR District.
- (2) Policy 8.6.3 states, "For discretionary development, the County will use the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory and other scientific sources of information to identify priority areas for protection or which offer the potential for restoration, preservation, or enhancement."

The proposed amendment will *HELP ACHIEVE* Policy 8.6.3 for the following reason:

a. Regarding the proposed amendment to remove the 0.5-mile separation required between a PV solar farm and the CR Conservation Recreation

Zoning District, the Zoning Ordinance regarding PV solar farms already requires petitioners to complete an EcoCAT environmental assessment to identify stream corridors and other natural areas typically found in the CR District without requiring a separation from a PV solar farm.

(3) Policy 8.6.4 states, "The County will require implementation of IDNR recommendations for discretionary development sites that contain endangered or threatened species, and will seek to ensure that recommended management practices are maintained on such sites."

The proposed amendment will *HELP ACHIEVE* Policy 8.6.4 for the following reason:

- a. Regarding the proposed amendment to remove the 0.5-mile separation required between a PV solar farm and the CR Conservation Recreation Zoning District, the Zoning Ordinance regarding PV solar farms already requires petitioners to implement IDNR recommendations to protect habitats and endangered or threatened species typically found in the CR District without requiring a separation from a PV solar farm.
- 14. LRMP Goal 9 is entitled "Energy Conservation" and states as follows:

# Champaign County will encourage energy conservation, efficiency, and the use of renewable energy sources.

Goal 9 has 5 objectives and 5 policies. Goal 9 is *NOT RELEVANT* to the proposed amendment in general.

15. LRMP Goal 10 is entitled "Cultural Amenities" and states as follows:

# Champaign County will promote the development and preservation of cultural amenities that contribute to a high quality of life for its citizens.

Goal 10 has 1 objective and 1 policy. Goal 10 is *NOT RELEVANT* to the proposed amendment in general.

#### **REGARDING THE PURPOSE OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE**

- 16. The proposed amendment will *HELP ACHIEVE* the purpose of the Zoning Ordinance as established in Section 2 of the Ordinance for the following reasons:
  - A. Paragraph 2.0 (a) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to secure adequate light, pure air, and safety from fire and other dangers.

The proposed amendment is not directly related to this purpose.

B. Paragraph 2.0 (b) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to conserve the value of land, BUILDINGS, and STRUCTURES throughout the COUNTY.

The proposed amendment is not directly related to this purpose.

C. Paragraph 2.0 (c) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to lessen and avoid congestion in the public STREETS.

The proposed amendment is not directly related to this purpose.

D. Paragraph 2.0 (d) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to lessen and avoid hazards to persons and damage to property resulting from the accumulation of runoff of storm or flood waters.

The proposed amendment is not directly related to this purpose.

E. Paragraph 2.0 (e) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to promote the public health, safety, comfort, morals, and general welfare.

The proposed amendment is not directly related to this purpose.

F. Paragraph 2.0 (f) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to regulate and limit the height and bulk of BUILDINGS and STRUCTURES hereafter to be erected.

The proposed amendment is not directly related to this purpose.

G. Paragraph 2.0 (g) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to establish, regulate, and limit the building or setback lines on or along any street, trafficway, drive or parkway.

The proposed amendment is not directly related to this purpose.

H. Paragraph 2.0 (h) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to regulate and limit the intensity of the use of LOT areas, and regulating and determining the area of open spaces within and surrounding BUILDINGS and STRUCTURES.

The proposed amendment is not directly related to this purpose.

I. Paragraph 2.0 (i) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to classify, regulate, and restrict the location of trades and industries and the location of BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, and land designed for specified industrial, residential, and other land USES.

The proposed amendment is consistent with this purpose.

J. Paragraph 2.0 (j) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and stablished is to divide the entire County into DISTRICTS of such number, shape, area, and such different classes according to the USE of land, BUILDINGS, and STRUCTURES, intensity of the USE of LOT area, area of open

spaces, and other classification as may be deemed best suited to carry out the purpose of the ordinance.

The proposed amendment is consistent with this purpose.

K. Paragraph 2.0 (k) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to fix regulations and standards to which BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, or USES therein shall conform.

The proposed amendment is not directly related to this purpose.

L. Paragraph 2.0 (1) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to prohibit USES, BUILDINGS, or STRUCTURES incompatible with the character of such DISTRICTS.

The proposed amendment is consistent with this purpose.

M. Paragraph 2.0 (m) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to prevent additions to and alteration or remodeling of existing BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, or USES in such a way as to avoid the restrictions and limitations lawfully imposed under this ordinance.

The proposed amendment is not directly related to this purpose.

N. Paragraph 2.0 (n) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to protect the most productive agricultural lands from haphazard and unplanned intrusions of urban USES.

The proposed amendment is not directly related to this purpose.

O. Paragraph 2.0 (o) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to protect natural features such as forested areas and watercourses.

The proposed amendment is consistent with this purpose because the Zoning Ordinance regarding PV solar farms already has protections in place for the stream corridors and other natural areas typically found in the CR District without requiring a separation from a PV solar farm.

P. Paragraph 2.0 (p) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to encourage the compact development of urban areas to minimize the cost of development of public utilities and public transportation facilities.

The proposed amendment is not directly related to this purpose.

Q. Paragraph 2.0 (q) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to encourage the preservation of

agricultural belts surrounding urban areas, to retain the agricultural nature of the County, and the individual character of existing communities.

The proposed amendment is not directly related to this purpose.

R. Paragraph 2.0 (r) of the Ordinance states that one purpose of the zoning regulations and standards that have been adopted and established is to provide for the safe and efficient development of renewable energy sources in those parts of the COUNTY that are most suited to their development.

The proposed amendment is consistent with this purpose. Eliminating the unnecessary separation to the CR District will improve the efficiency of the approval process for PV solar farms.

- 17. The proposed text amendment *WILL* improve the text of the Zoning Ordinance because:
  - A. The proposed amendment that removes the one-half mile separation between a PV solar farm and the CR District would remove unnecessary language from the Zoning Ordinance.

### SUMMARY FINDING OF FACT

From the documents of record and the testimony and exhibits received at the public hearing conducted on **September 26, 2019, October 17, 2019, November 14, 2019, and January 16, 2020,** the Zoning Board of Appeals of Champaign County finds that:

- 1. The proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendment *IS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE* the Land Resource Management Plan because:
  - A. The proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendment will *HELP ACHIEVE* LRMP Goal 8.
  - B. The proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendment is *NOT RELEVANT* to LRMP Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10.
- The proposed text amendment *WILL* improve the Zoning Ordinance because it will:
  A. *HELP ACHIEVE* the purpose of the Zoning Ordinance (see Item 16).
  - B. *IMPROVE* the text of the Zoning Ordinance (see Item 17).

# **DOCUMENTS OF RECORD**

- 1. Legal advertisement
- 2. Preliminary Memorandum dated September 19, 2019, with attachments:
  - A Legal advertisement
  - B ELUC Memorandum dated May 1, 2019, with attachments:
    - Proposed Changes to Zoning Ordinance Other Than in Response to Municipal Concerns dated February 27, 2019
    - Alternative Minimum Credit Rating for Financial Institutions Headquartered in Champaign County, Illinois dated May 1, 2019
  - C Land Resource Management Plan (LRMP) Goals & Objectives
  - D Preliminary Finding of Fact, Summary Finding of Fact, and Final Determination for Case 947-AT-19 dated September 26, 2019, with attachment:
    - Annotated version of proposed amendments
- 4. Supplemental Memorandum #1 dated November 13, 2019, with attachments:
  - A Legal advertisement dated September 11, 2019
  - B Kroll Bond Rating Agency Rating Scale
  - C Long Term Credit Ratings for S&P, Moody's, and Kroll Bond Rating Agency
  - D Revised Finding of Fact, Summary Finding of Fact, and Final Determination for Case 947-AT-19 dated November 14, 2019, with attachment:
    - Annotated version of proposed amendments dated November 14, 2019
- 5. Supplemental Memorandum #2 dated January 9, 2020, with attachments:
  - A Legal advertisement dated September 11, 2019
    - BRevised Finding of Fact, Summary Finding of Fact, and Final Determination for Case 947-<br/>AT-19 dated January 16, 2020, with attachment:
      - Annotated version of proposed amendments dated January 16, 2020

### FINAL DETERMINATION FOR CASE 947-AT-19

Pursuant to the authority granted by Section 9.2 of the Champaign County Zoning Ordinance, the Zoning Board of Appeals of Champaign County recommends that:

The Zoning Ordinance Amendment requested in **Case 947-AT-19** should *{BE ENACTED / NOT BE ENACTED}* by the County Board in the form attached hereto.

The foregoing is an accurate and complete record of the Findings and Determination of the Zoning Board of Appeals of Champaign County.

SIGNED:

Ryan Elwell, Chair Champaign County Zoning Board of Appeals

ATTEST:

Secretary to the Zoning Board of Appeals

Date

#### **PROPOSED AMENDMENT FOR CASE 947-AT-19**

- 1. Delete existing Section 6.1.5 B.(2)b.:
  - (2) The PV SOLAR FARM County Board SPECIAL USE permit shall not be located in the following areas:
    - a. Less than one-and-one-half miles from an incorporated municipality that has a zoning ordinance unless the following is provided:
      - (a) No part of a PV SOLAR FARM shall be located within a contiguous urban growth area (CUGA) as indicated in the most recent update of the CUGA in the Champaign County Land Resource Management Plan, and there shall be a separation of one-half mile from a proposed PV SOLAR FARM to a municipal boundary at the time of application for the SPECIAL USE Permit, except for any power lines of 34.5 kVA or less and except for any proposed PV SOLAR FARM substation and related proposed connection to an existing substation.
      - (b) The PV SOLAR FARM SPECIAL USE permit application shall include documentation that the applicant has provided a complete copy of the SPECIAL USE permit application to any municipality within one-and-one-half miles of the proposed PV SOLAR FARM.
      - (c) If no municipal resolution regarding the PV SOLAR FARM is received from any municipality located within one-and-one-half miles of the PV SOLAR FARM prior to the consideration of the PV SOLAR FARM SPECIAL USE permit by the Champaign County Board, the ZONING ADMINISTRATOR shall provide documentation to the County Board that any municipality within oneand-one-half miles of the PV SOLAR FARM was provided notice of the meeting dates for consideration of the proposed PV SOLAR FARM SPECIAL USE Permit for both the Environment and Land Use Committee and the County Board.

b. Less than one half mile from the CR Conservation Recreation Zoning District.