

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**CHAMPAIGN COUNTY ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

**1776 E. Washington Street
Urbana, IL 61802**

DATE: February 27, 2025**PLACE: Shields-Carter Meeting Room
1776 East Washington Street****TIME: 6:30 p.m.****Urbana, IL 61802**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Andersen, Cindy Cunningham, Chris Flesner, Bryan Holderfield, Lee Roberts**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Ryan Elwell, Jim Randol**STAFF PRESENT:** Stephanie Berry, Charlie Campo, John Hall**OTHERS PRESENT:** Karen Boulanger, Tyler Bozarth, Jeff Breen, Dan Bunch, Debbie Bunch, Bridget Callahan, Mark Cousert, Jackson Craig, Moira Cronin, Chris Doenitz, Kyle Emkes, Aaron Esry, Clint Garretson, Alexis Godbee, Neil Gorsuch, Linda Hamblen, Rick Hambleton, Ted Hartke, Tim Hughes, Bryan Hartman, Sherri Kenner, Mike Murphy, Jan Carter Niccum, Eric Nurmi, Chad Osterbur, Wayne Schwaiger, Alan Singleton, Ada Stoivens, Nick Taylor, Russ Taylor, Don Wauthier,

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Hall stated that they are without their regular chair tonight, so the Board needs to vote on an interim chair and entertained a motion.

Mr. Andersen moved, seconded by Mr. Holderfield, to appoint Ms. Cunningham as the interim chair. The motion passed by voice vote.

2. Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum

The roll was called, and a quorum declared present.

3. Correspondence – None**4. Minutes – None****5. Audience participation with respect to matters other than cases pending before the Board – None****6. Continued Public Hearings – None**

7. **New Public Hearings -**

Ms. Cunningham said there will be a bunch of public participation for Mahomet IL Solar 1 LLC Case 162-S-25 and entertained a motion to move Premier Cooperative's Case 163-AM-25, to the top of the docket, so the petitioner doesn't have to wait until their case.

Mr. Roberts moved, seconded by Mr. Flesner, to move Case 163-AM-25 to first on the docket. The motion passed by voice vote.

CASE 163-AM-025

Petitioner: Premier Cooperative, Inc.

Request: Amend the Zoning Map to change the zoning district designation from the B-5 Central Business District and AG-1 Agriculture Zoning Districts to the I-1 Light Industry Zoning District.

Location: Four tracts of land in the West One-Half of Section 34, Township 22 North, Range 8 East of the Third Principal Meridian in East Bend Township located South of Second Street in the Village of Dewey with Parcel Identification Numbers of 10-02-34-326-006, 10-02-34-328-001, 10-02-34-181-002, and 10-02-34-182-002 also commonly known as the Premier Cooperative, Inc. facility on the south side of Second Street in Dewey, Illinois.

Ms. Cunningham asked Mr. Tim Hughes and Mr. Jeff Breen to the microphone.

Tim Hughes stated his name, his title as General Manager of Premier Cooperative, Inc., and his address at 407 North Whitehead Street, Tolono. Mr. Hughes said he is here with Jeff Breen the Chief Operating Officer of Premier Cooperative, Inc. Mr. Hughes said their request is to facilitate a new office and small storage area for them at Second Street in Dewey, Illinois, He said this is where their current office and inbound scales are for all the trucks they receive into the grain elevator. He said that the current office is in disrepair, in addition, particularly during harvest time in the fall, along Second Street there is a tremendous amount of semi-truck and grain traffic coming into the elevator. He said on an average harvest day, they will dump about 400 to 450 trucks, that they will come in and drive down Second Street from the East to the West. He said the reason they would like to rezone is because, they would like to move and build a new office and inbound scales in the Southeast corner of the property and divert all the traffic away from the Village of Dewey. He said the primary reason they are here tonight is to rezone and then build a new office, inbound scales, to remove all the truck traffic from the residences.

Ms. Cunningham asked the audience if they had any questions for Mr. Hughes, there were none.

Ms. Cunningham asked if there if there were any questions from the Board or Staff. Seeing none, she asked Mr. Breen if there was anything he would like to add.

Mr. Breen stated Mr. Hughes covered it all.

Ms. Cunningham entertained a motion to move to the Summary Draft Findings of Fact for Case 163-AM-25.

Mr. Andersen moved, seconded by Mr. Holderfield, to move to the Summary Draft Findings of Fact

1 for Case 163-AM-25. The motion passed by voice vote.

2
3 Ms. Cunningham referred to the Preliminary Draft, page 29 of 33.

4
5 **SUMMARY FINDING OF FACT FOR CASE 163-AM-25**

6 From the documents of record and the testimony and exhibits received at the public hearing for zoning
7 Case 161-V-24 held on February 13, 2025, the Zoning Board of Appeals of Champaign County finds
8 that:

9
10 Mr. Hall assisted Ms. Cunningham and stated in fact, if the Board agrees with all the recommendations
11 on the Summary Finding of Fact, then the Board could move to adopt the Finding of Fact. He said they
12 saw no decision points at a Staff level, so if the Board agrees with that, they can simply adopt the Finding
13 of Fact *en masse* for Case 163-AM-25.

14
15 **Mr. Andersen moved, seconded by Mr. Flesner, to adopt the Summary of Evidence, Documents of**
16 **Record, and Finding of Fact *en masse* for Case 163-AM-25, as amended. The motion passed by voice**
17 **vote.**

18
19 **Ms. Cunningham entertained a motion to close the Finding of Fact for Case 163-AM-25, as**
20 **amended.**

21
22 **Mr. Flesner moved, seconded by Mr. Holderfield, to close the Summary of Evidence, Documents of**
23 **Record, and Finding of Fact for Case 163-AM-25, as amended. The motion passed by voice vote.**

24
25 Mr. Hall said he neglected to mention that there are three special conditions, they normally recommend
26 that the Board review the special conditions and get the petitioner's concurrence on those.

27
28 Ms. Cunningham called petitioners, Mr. Hughes and Mr. Breen could up to the testimony microphone to
29 get their agreement with the special conditions on record.

30
31 **SPECIAL CONDITIONS FOR CASE 163-AM-25**

- 32 **A. A Zoning Use Permit and applicable fees shall be required any future construction on the**
33 **property.**

34
35 The special condition stated above is required to ensure the following:

36 **Conformance with the Champaign County Zoning Ordinance.**

- 37
38 **B. The owners of the subject property hereby recognize and provide for the right of**
39 **agricultural activities to continue on adjacent land consistent with the Right to Farm**
40 **Resolution 3425.**

41
42 The special condition stated above is required to ensure the following:

43 **Conformance with Policy 4.2.3 of the Land Resource Management Plan.**

- 44
45 **C. A complete Storm Water Drainage Plan that conforms to the requirements of the Storm**
46 **Water Management and Erosion Control Ordinance shall be submitted and approved as**
47 **part of the Zoning Use Permit application, and all required certifications shall be**
48 **submitted prior to issuance of the Zoning Compliance Certificate.**

1 The special condition stated above is required to ensure the following:

2 **That the drainage improvements conform to the requirements of the Storm Water**
3 **Management and Erosion Control Ordinance**

4
5 Ms. Cunningham asked Mr. Breen and Mr. Hughes if they agreed with all three of the special conditions
6 that were presented.

7
8 **Mr. Breen and Mr. Hughes, both voiced yes in agreement to all three of the special conditions**
9 **presented.**

10
11 Ms. Cunningham requested motion to proceed to final determination

12
13 **FINAL DETERMINATION FOR CASE 163-AM-25**

14 **Mr. Anderson moved, seconded by Mr. Roberts, that pursuant to the authority granted by section**
15 **9.2 of the Champaign County Zoning Ordinance, the Zoning Board of Appeals of Champaign**
16 **County recommends that:**

17
18 **The Zoning Ordinance Amendment requested in Case 163-AM-25 should *BE ENACTED* by the**
19 **County Board in the form attached hereto.**

20
21 Ms. Cunningham requested a roll call vote.

22
23 The vote was called as follows:

24 Anderson – Yes Holderfield – Yes Flessner – Yes
25 Roberts – Yes Cunningham - Yes

26
27 **CASE 162-S-25**

28 Petitioner: **Mahomet IL Solar 1 LLC.**

29
30 Request: **Authorize a Community PV Solar Farm with a total nameplate capacity of 4.99 -**
31 **megawatts (MW), including access roads and wiring, in the AG-2 Zoning District**

32
33 Location: **Approximately 36 acres on two tracts of land with PIN's 15-13-17-100-012 (52.66**
34 **acres) and 15-13-17-200-010 (43.17 acres), totaling 95.83 acres on the South side of US**
35 **Highway 150, in the West Half of the Northeast Quarter and the East Half of the**
36 **Northwest Quarter of Section 17 Township 20 North, Range 7 East of the Third**
37 **Principal Meridian, in Mahomet Township, commonly known as farmland owned by**
38 **Greater Heritage Farms LLC and Paul Nurmi Trustee**

39
40 Ms. Cunningham informed the audience that this case is an Administrative Case, and as such, the County
41 allows anyone the opportunity to cross-examine any witness. She said that at the proper time, she will ask
42 for a show of hands from those who would like to cross-examine, and each person will be called upon.
43 She said that those who desire to cross-examine do not have to sign the Witness Register but will be asked
44 to clearly state their name before asking any questions. She noted that no new testimony is to be given
45 during the cross-examination. She asked if the petitioner would like to outline the nature of their request.

46
47 Ms. Cunningham called Mora Cronin from 1000 Wilson Blvd Ste 2400, Arlington, Virginia, to the
48 testimony microphone. Ms. Cronin said she would read from a prepared statement and open the floor for
49 questions from the Board and the community.

1
2 Ms. Cronin said she represents the project company, Mahomet Illinois Solar One LLC, a subsidiary of
3 Summit Ridge Energy. Ms. Cronin stated that Summit Ridge Energy is a long-term owner and operator of
4 community solar projects, which means the company is involved for the long haul, which is between 35
5 to 40 years for this project. Ms. Cronin said Summit Ridge Energy has over 60 community solar projects
6 in operation in over 23 counties across Illinois and another 40 community solar projects in active
7 construction nationwide. Ms. Cronin stated she is here to represent the Special Use Permit (SUP)
8 application for a 4.99-Megawatt (MW) AC community solar project. Ms. Cronin continued that this
9 project would be located off County Road 125 East in Mahomet, Illinois, on a parcel which is currently
10 used for farming. Ms. Cronin said the project seeks an SUP following the Champaign County Zoning
11 Ordinance, Section 6.1.5 Photovoltaic (PV) Solar Farm County Board Special Use Permit under Zoning
12 Ordinance Resolution #971, last revised February 23, 2023. She said the permit application is also
13 submitted in accordance with the State of Illinois Regulations for the siting of community solar facilities
14 and the permit application is also submitted in accordance with the Illinois State Regulations with the
15 siting of community solar facilities.

16
17 Ms. Cronin stated this project will be connected directly to the local Ameren grid via the overhead
18 infrastructure. Ms. Cronin said there is a fully executed interconnection agreement with Ameren dated
19 2/5/2024. Ms. Cronin said the project has received all environmental approvals and studies, entered into
20 an Agricultural Impact Mitigation Agreement (AIMA), and has a draft decommissioning plan along with
21 a special use permit submitted to the County. She stated the project would include non-hazardous solar
22 panels and inverters, an access gravel road, and a pollinator-friendly vegetative solar cover, all enclosed
23 by a locked fence.

24
25 Ms. Cronin said the applicant requested to use a surety bond for decommissioning in lieu of a letter of
26 credit. Ms. Cronin continued that the County ordinance references a surety bond as acceptable security
27 for residential or planned unit facilities and improvements. Ms. Cronin stated the state of Illinois AIMA,
28 which the County enforces, identifies a surety bond as an accepted form of financial assurance for solar
29 array deconstruction. Ms. Cronin said a surety bond, unlike a letter of credit, provides an option for the
30 surety to perform or complete the decommissioning obligation in the event of a default rather than the
31 County. Ms. Cronin continued that a surety bond also allows for administering a claim or default if the
32 owner is not responsive to an issue. Ms. Cronin said Summit Ridge Energy LLC's certificate of insurance
33 was included as Exhibit L of the Special Use Permit.

34
35 Ms. Cronin showed slides, including the project outline, photos of the current farmland, and an example
36 site plan. Ms. Cronin reiterated that the project is a 4.99-Megawatt AC solar farm that takes up 36 of the
37 95 acres that are part of the Heritage Farms. Ms. Cronin stated the access road would come off County
38 Road 125 E, parallel to the railroad. Ms. Cronin said they have vegetative screening closest to the Spring
39 Lake community. Ms. Cronin continued that the trees proposed for the screening are Thuja occidentalis
40 trees, which have taken well to Illinois soils at their other projects. Ms. Cronin stated the trees are planted
41 five feet tall and can grow to 12 or 15 feet tall. Ms. Cronin said the trees will be planted eight feet apart.
42 Ms. Cronin continued that the fence around the property would be seven feet tall and only be on the sides
43 of the project facing residential housing, while the remaining sides would be a wire see-through fence you
44 see on most farms. Ms. Cronin said there isn't value in having a wooden fence next to the existing
45 vegetation and that close to the highway. Ms. Cronin stated that people driving along that section of the
46 road wouldn't see the solar farm due to the existing vegetation and residents wouldn't see the farm because
47 of the five-foot-tall trees on the perimeter of the seven-foot fence providing a buffer. Ms. Cronin said she
48 understands why people would not want to see the project from their backyard, so they proposed not
49 including the fence around the project. Ms. Cronin finished her testimony.

1
2 Ms. Cunningham asked the Board if they had any questions.
3

4 Mr. Andersen said Summit Ridge Energy LLC built a solar farm near Kernan, Illinois, which was cited
5 by the Illinois Department of Labor and incurred fines. Mr. Andersen said a common comment the Board
6 receives about solar cases involves contractors and their origin. Mr. Andersen said something to address
7 with the project is the assurances that can be given about where the labor will come from for the project
8 and that what happened at Kernan won't happen again. Ms. Cronin said she spoke to the head of
9 construction and pre-construction, Mike Dillon, and he said that, to their knowledge, Pepper was not fined.
10 Ms. Cronin said they contract with Engineering, Procurement and Construction contractors' (EPC) to pay
11 the prevailing heavyweight range. Ms. Cronin stated unions can pay the commercial rate wage, which is
12 not as high as the heavyweight.
13

14 Ms. Cronin said no contractor has been selected for the project yet. Ms. Cronin stated all of the
15 construction staff is contracted to be paid the prevailing wages heavy rate, as posted on SAM.gov. Ms.
16 Cronin said they've worked with unions previously and support unions. Ms. Cronin continued that all
17 EPC's would have apprentices on-site and support on-the-job training. Ms. Cronin continued that they
18 partner with the 548 Foundation, which helps train people to become solar technicians. Ms. Cronin stated
19 their EPC partners hire out of that program, and Summit Ridge Energy has a full-time quality technician
20 who graduated from that program to support the installation of the projects. She said, to her knowledge,
21 they haven't been fined. Mr. Andersen said it was not Pepper Construction; Dink and Roach are a
22 construction subcontractor.
23

24 Ms. Cunningham said another concern they get about solar projects is noise, and she asked Ms. Cronin to
25 walk the Board through the noise study that was conducted.
26

27 Ms. Cronin said there was a noise study completed by the company RWDI, consulting engineers and
28 scientists. She said the noise study determined that 35.8 decibels was the project contribution to the most
29 impacted receptor both day and night and that based on the measured background sound levels, the project
30 is expected to be inaudible during daytime and nighttime hours with U.S. Highway 150 being the dominant
31 noise source at all dwellings. Ms. Cronin said that construction noise would be the loudest part of the
32 project and that will only be two weeks. Ms. Cronin showed a visual of what normal noise is so that
33 everyone would understand what the decibels mean. She said their consultant put the visual together and
34 35.8 decibels is the average background sound-level in rural Illinois. She said that it is quieter than a
35 library which is 40 decibels, and it is quieter than the inside of an average home which is 50 decibels and
36 a typical conversation is 65 decibels. Ms. Cronin said their project would be inaudible outside of the fence
37 line and no one would be able to hear any of the equipment. Ms. Cronin said that part of the design of the
38 project is that the inverters are in the middle of the project to create as much space as possible to try to
39 eliminate any noise from being emitted.
40

41 Ms. Cunningham thanked Ms. Cronin and said that another question she had is, because Champaign
42 County was basically built on drained swamp land, what is her plan for drainage and how to deal with
43 drain tiles during construction.
44

45 Ms. Cronin said there was a drainage tile survey done by Huddleston-McBride. Ms. Cronin explained that
46 another permit is needed before construction and after the SUP permit and that is a storm water approval
47 from the State and that approval is very clear about what is allowed and they used silt barriers around the
48 project so there will be no possible runoff into people's homes or waterways and she knew that was a big
49 concern for the Spring Lake community because she received a comment about it from Charlie Campo.

1
2 Bridget Callahan of 1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 2400, Arlington Virginia asked with regard to drainage,
3 was the question more related to drain tile? Ms. Cunningham said her question was about drain tile, but
4 she was certain that everyone was also concerned about ground water being safe.
5

6 Ms. Callahan said that regarding drain tile, they have had the drain tile survey completed so they know
7 where the drain tile is located and as part of the Agricultural Impact Mitigation Agreement with the State,
8 we will be obligated to fix anything that is broken during construction. She said that regarding erosion
9 and sedimentation control, Ms. Cronin covered that and said they will have a designated Storm Water
10 Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that is put together closer to construction and that it will have to be
11 approved by the various entities. Ms. Callahan said that Ms. Cronin mentioned silt fencing but there could
12 also be detention basins, and it will come down to details of the construction plans as they get closer to
13 the final design.
14

15 Ms. Cronin added there are two types of panels, Tracker and Fixed Mount. She said if there are concerns
16 about changes in drainage, this project will use a Tracker array so there will be no change in the amount
17 of runoff.
18

19 Ms. Cunningham asked if they could go through the plan to maintain the site.
20

21 Ms. Cronin said they will have a pollinator seed mix that must be approved and will add more native
22 plants based on Charlies' feedback. Regarding cuttings, we cut four or five times a year. She said no one
23 will be onsite except for an annual inspection. She said there will be no blowing trash.
24

25 Ms. Cunningham asked if the Board had questions and there were none and she asked if staff had
26 questions.
27

28 Mr. Hall said that he wanted to discuss something while we were on the tile. He said that there is one
29 mutual tile serving upstream land and staff recommend that those be set off in a 40-foot wide no
30 disturbance zone or reroute around the array.
31

32 Mr. Hall said that the tile is in the northeastern part of the site, and it is the only tile that comes from off-
33 site and then exits off-site, so it serves upstream areas. He questioned where the tile is coming from,
34 because of the no disturbance around it. Mr. Hall proceeded to say that there is a special condition for that
35 40' wide no disturbance zone.
36

37 Ms. Cronin said she would confer with the engineers and coordinate with staff.
38

39 Ms. Cunningham asked if there were other questions from staff and there were none.
40

41 Ms. Cunningham asked if there was any cross-examination. Ms. Cunningham called Ted Hartke to the
42 cross-examination microphone.
43

44 Mr. Ted Hartke of Sidney, Illinois, asked Ms. Cronin to repeat the average noise level in rural Illinois.
45

46 Ms. Cronin said it was 35 decibels, and she confirmed that it was from the noise consultant.
47

48 Mr. Hartke said that earlier Ms. Cronin had said that the noise from the panels and inverters would not be
49 heard outside the fence, and he asked if she could clarify that.

1
2 Ms. Cronin confirmed that only the inverters and transformers make noise and those are in the center of
3 the site and that the panels do not make any noise.
4

5 Mr. Hartke asked how far it was from the inverters in the middle of the site to the nearest residence to the
6 south.
7

8 Ms. Cronin said that she did not know that distance, but the closest residence is 378 feet from the fence to
9 the closest point of the house.
10

11 Mr. Hartke asked if Ms. Cronin knew where the Illinois Pollution Control Board specified that the noise
12 limits applied on the property at the house or the property line?
13

14 Ms. Cronin said that she did not know where the noise limits should be applied.
15

16 Mr. Hartke asked Ms. Cronin if she could repeat her statement about neighbors not being able to hear the
17 solar farm at any time.
18

19 Ms. Cronin read the conclusion from the noise study as follows:
20

21 A three-day, two-night background noise measurement study was conducted at representative
22 locations of dwellings for the Mahomet Solar Project. Measurement date for a single location was
23 analyzed and summarized. The results support the conclusions from the Project noise study that
24 the Mahomet Solar Project will be inaudible at the receptor locations during the periods when the
25 inverters are operational. Noise contributions from the existing environment, which is Highway
26 150 will dominate any sounds from the project. This ambient measurement indicates that the
27 project location is suitable for the area in terms of capability with respect to noise, as no negative
28 impacts (audibility) are expected.
29

30 Mr. Hartke thanked Ms. Cronin and said he was now testifying. Mr. Hartke asked if the neighbors heard
31 the solar farm and called law enforcement and then if law enforcement heard a buzzing noise at the
32 home, he asked if the project would be shut off.
33

34 Ms. Cronin said that they are required to create a hotline for complaints and there has never been a
35 complaint received on any projects that she has worked on.
36

37 Mr. Hartke asked if it was typical for their solar projects to not have noise issues with neighbors.
38

39 Ms. Cronin said that was correct and that is why they design the projects the way they do. If it was a
40 common issue, they would be redesigned.
41

42 Ms. Cunningham called Brian Hartman to the cross-examination microphone.
43

44 Brian Hartman of 403 South North Shore Drive, Mahomet asked what happens to the other 60 acres, plus
45 or minus, of the existing property?
46

47 Ms. Cronin said that to the best of her knowledge, it will continue to be farmed.
48

49 Ms. Cunningham called Karen Boulanger to the cross-examination microphone.

1
2 Karen Boulanger of 404 South North Shore Drive pointed to the diagonal line on the site plan that goes to
3 the curve in North Shore Drive and said that she lives there. Ms. Boulanger said she is mainly concerned
4 about safety and maintenance, she asked if there was a chance that a spark from a moving part could light
5 the native grass on fire and will the fire department have access to the site to fight a fire. She asked if the
6 roadway will be strong enough to support the fire truck and can the fire truck make the bend required to
7 get on the roadway?

8
9 Ms. Cronin said that approval is required by the fire chief, and the fire chief has been asked to review the
10 plan. She said there is a required 40-foot turning radius that will be met, and she is confirming a couple of
11 other questions for the fire chief but there should be no problems.

12
13 Ms. Cronin said she has never heard of any sparks from moving array equipment but because of the
14 possibility of forest fires they need to have the fire department sign off on the project and they do train
15 with the fire department but in general, fires are very uncommon for solar farms.

16
17 Ms. Cronin read from a North Carolina State publication that in a fire, the silicon and chemicals in a
18 photovoltaic panel will bind to the glass and be contained and even when a cadmium and telluride panel
19 is exposed to fire sufficient to melt the glass, over 99.9% of the cadmium will be encapsulated in the
20 molten glass. She continued that a 2013 analysis found that even in the worst-case scenarios of
21 earthquakes, fires, and floods, it is unlikely that cadmium concentrations in air, sea and water would
22 exceed regulatory values.

23
24 Ms. Boulanger asked if there would be a water source for watering the trees in the perimeter buffer?

25
26 Ms. Cronin said there will not be a water source and will use the natural waterflow that exists. The trees
27 will be replaced if need be.

28
29 Ms. Boulanger asked how often the trees will be replaced if they are not watered.

30
31 Ms. Callahan said there is typically a warranty on the trees and whoever plants them will come by and
32 make sure they grow and in the first couple of years sometimes they do need to replace trees, but they will
33 replace the trees as many times as they need replaced. Ms. Callahan said there won't be any designated
34 water source onsite and any water will have to be trucked in.

35
36 Ms. Boulanger asked if the panels will be insured in case there are high winds like there has been in the
37 past few years.

38
39 Ms. Cronin said the panels are high wind and hail resistant and the panels also have a module and
40 performance warranty, which have been provided to the County.

41
42 Ms. Boulanger asked if there will be lights on the site or will there be lights in case of an emergency? Ms.
43 Cronin said they do not have lights at any solar facility so that it remains dark sky compliant.

44
45 Ms. Boulanger asked if they are planning to keep the road access clear of snow?

46
47 Ms. Cronin said yes, access is important and always kept clear.

48
49 Ms. Callahan said the most critical part to keep clear is for Ameren at the point of interconnection in the

1 northwest corner and that needs to be four season access. She said that plowing is typically only done
2 when needed but there shouldn't need to be much access after construction is complete.

3
4 Ms. Boulanger asked if there is a high wind that causes broken panels, and they drive by and see the
5 broken panels should they call the hotline to get it cleaned up?

6
7 Ms. Callahan said that on the fence there will be emergency contact information, and their facilities are
8 monitored remotely so that typically there won't be a situation where they are not aware of that type of
9 damage.

10
11 Ms. Cunningham called Michael Murphy to testify.

12
13 Michael Murphy of 1507 West North Shore Drive in Spring Lake Subdivision said that the proposed
14 access road and culvert placement over the creek to the west does not have a detailed plan with cross
15 section and he is concerned that if the construction is not done properly, it will cause erosion in the stream
16 and then into their lake. He asked if there will be more detail in the future?

17
18 Ms. Cronin explained that construction drawings are only at 30% completion and as they finalize the site
19 plan they will take it further and when they bid and select a general contractor, also known as engineering
20 procurement and construction or ECP's. She said they will have a final drawing set that they submit to the
21 County. Ms. Cronin said they have also gotten all environmental approvals from the State and that
22 included the culvert.

23
24 Mr. Murphy asked if the Department of Natural Resources was included in the State approvals.

25
26 Ms. Cronin said that the SWPPP comes from the Illinois EPA and would come later.

27
28 Ms. Cunningham called Jan Niccum to testify.

29
30 Jan Niccum of 3 Brian Court, Savoy, Illinois, asked if there will ever be a Phase 2?

31
32 Ms. Cronin said there is not one planned now.

33
34 Ms. Cunningham called Alexis Godbee to testify.

35
36 Alexis Godbee of 501 South North Shore Drive asked how many inverters will be involved in the project?

37
38 Ms. Cronin said there will be 40 inverters.

39
40 Ms. Godbee asked if that was a typical number of inverters for a project of this size?

41
42 Ms. Cronin said yes, 40 inverters are required for a project of this size.

43
44 Ms. Godbee asked if the noise mainly comes from the inverters.

45
46 Ms. Cronin said yes and if you are standing next to the inverter it is like a quiet hum. She said that is why
47 it is put in the center of the project. She said outside would be over 1,000 feet from the closest home, but
48 she will bring measurements to the next meeting.

1 Ms. Godbee asked what happens if the solar farm is audible at the homes that are nearby.

2
3 Ms. Cronin said to contact the hotline so that they can confirm that the equipment is running properly but
4 to her knowledge that has never been an issue.

5
6 Ms. Godbee asked how quick the response time from complaints on the hotline is.

7
8 Ms. Cronin said that she does not work on the operations team, but they get notified right away so she
9 thinks it would be very prompt.

10
11 Ms. Callahan said there is a 24-hour emergency hotline and, if there were noise complaints, the resolution
12 would involve verifying compliance with the Illinois Pollution Control Board noise limits. Ms. Callahan
13 further explained they presented an RWDI study to show that they are complying, but if they are in a
14 situation where they exceeded the sound limits, then they would take the next step with the Illinois
15 Pollution Control Board. Ms. Callahan said the 24-hour hotline will be posted on the gate at then end of
16 the access road.

17
18 Ms. Godbee asked if every complaint is taken seriously?

19
20 Ms. Cronin said yes and that all complaints made to the hotline are provided to the County in a monthly
21 report.

22
23 Ms. Godbee asked what is the expected profit from the project?

24 Ms. Cronin said they cannot share the financial margins, but they can talk about the expected tax benefits
25 from the project.

26
27 Ms. Godbee asked if the panels produce glare.

28
29 Ms. Cronin said no, the trackers will have an antiglare coating and since the trackers have very little glare
30 they always face the sun, and this also eliminates reflections. She said the existing vegetation along the
31 highway will keep the project from being visible to drivers and that they will be installing a wood fence
32 and an ag fence by staggering the trees to help keep the project from being visible to the community. Ms.
33 Cronin said the trees will be planted at five feet tall but should get to be 12 to 15 feet tall eventually.

34
35 Ms. Godbee asked Ms. Cronin if she had visited the site in person?

36
37 Ms. Cronin said that she has several times.

38
39 Ms. Godbee asked if the landowner sought out the company or did the company initiate contact with the
40 landowner?

41
42 Ms. Cronin said that her company-initiated contact with the landowner. She said they would only be here
43 because they are interested, in fact they are here tonight.

44
45 Ms. Godbee asked if the company was in communication with any other properties in the area?

46
47 Ms. Cronin said she is not on the land team but another project she worked on is under construction now
48 in the City of Champaign, off Market Street, known as the Dalluge project.

1 Ms. Godbee asked if erosion can be eliminated 100%, reduced or not totally prevented?

2
3 Ms. Cronin asked if that is during construction or after?

4
5 Ms. Godbee said both. Ms. Cronin said during construction if there are runoff issues the State will be
6 involved and so will the County and we will follow all environmental state law. Ms. Cronin continued
7 saying they are an environmental company and try to be good stewards of the environment. If there were
8 issues, you can contact the hotline, and we would talk with the County to determine if it is a storm surge
9 or a reoccurrence.

10
11 Ms. Godbee asked if they have other projects that are this close to a train track?

12
13 Ms. Callahan said they do have at least one other project near a railroad track located in Highland. She
14 said we work with the Railroad to maintain the proper distances for access within their easements.

15
16 Ms. Godbee asked what benefit homeowners near the project will get and why they should support the
17 project.

18
19 Ms. Cronin said they will be a quiet neighbor, quieter than agriculture, which has equipment operating
20 during planting, harvesting and watering. She said after their 9 months of construction and only 2 weeks
21 of which that being the loudest, it will be like living next to a cemetery and non-disruptive. She said,
22 along with the addition of new trees in your backyard and to the landscape, the County tax base will be
23 getting over \$30,000.00 the first year and over 4 years an additional \$765,000.00. She said this is due to
24 how AG-1 is taxed vs. Community Solar. Ms. Cronin said that Community Solar is based on the new
25 parcel being created and the size of the project, since this is a 4.99 - megawatt solar farm it is in a higher
26 tax base. So, you would get wildflowers, new trees and a quiet neighbor.

27
28 Ms. Cunningham called Linda Hambleton to testify.

29
30 Linda Hambleton of 406 South Briarfield Court in Mahomet asked the Board what the purpose was of the
31 1.5-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

32
33 Mr. Hall said the 1.5-mile ETJ is because the County Board felt it was important for landowners within
34 1.5-miles of the Village to have the option of creating solar farms. Mr. Hall stated that Villages might be
35 opposed to solar farms, but the County Board still opted to allow waivers, and most substations are within
36 the 1.5-mile ETJ. Mr. Hall continued that solar farms are usually near substations. Mr. Hall stated that the
37 County Board wanted to give rural landowners the option to do solar farms right up to the Village by
38 means of a waiver from the 1.5-mile ETJ, which was the way to try and coordinate with the Villages.

39
40 Ms. Hambleton asked if Ms. Cronin knew how many pollinators die hitting solar panels.

41
42 Ms. Cronin said she wasn't aware of the number, but she believes it depended on the project. Ms. Cronin
43 stated that this is a community solar project of a different size from a gigawatt or utility-sized solar project,
44 so no, she does not have a number.

45
46 Ms. Hambleton asked Ms. Cronin if she knew the impact of the wildlife from solar farms like this. She
47 said currently they have deer, turkeys, foxes, coyotes, and pheasants in the wetland areas and migratory
48 birds land in Spring Lake.

1 Ms. Cronin stated that the solar project will take up 36 of the 95 acres, and animals will be able to navigate
2 around the solar field. Ms. Cronin said the solar project is similar to a new house being built; animals can
3 move around it. Ms. Cronin continued that the solar farm won't be a complete barrier to getting around
4 the land and that it is fenced in but outside of the fence is where the wildlife will be able to get around.

5
6 Ms. Hambleton exclaimed, so in the 250 feet that you want to put between our homes and your fence.

7
8 Ms. Cronin replied, the setbacks, yes, so the closest neighbor is 378 feet from the exterior of the proposed
9 fence line.

10
11 Ms. Hambleton said she thought the calibration test that was attached seems outdate or not correct because
12 the test was supposed to be completed in 2023 and was completed last fall of 2024.

13
14 Ms. Cronin said she must have misspoken, and the calibrations were completed last year.

15
16 Ms. Hambleton said her last question was about what would happen to property values.

17
18 Ms. Cronin said she would get to property values but explained they had an Ecological Compliance
19 Assessment Tool (EcoCat) report from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). This covers
20 wildlife and we wouldn't be able to propose this project if it was going to be detrimental to wildlife. She
21 said it reports there is not going to be an impact. Ms. Cronin proceeded to read the report, the natural
22 heritage database contains four state-listed threatened or endangered species. Ms. Cronin continued the
23 Illinois Natural Area inventory sites dedicated to Illinois natural preserves or registered land and water
24 preserves in the vicinity of the subject property, identified the Indiana bat, Northern Long-haired bat,
25 Whooping Crane, and the Eastern Prairie Fringe Orchid are the four species in the vicinity of the subject
26 property. Ms. Cronin said the letter from IDNR concluded that adverse effects to protected species are
27 unlikely.

28
29 Ms. Cronin said a third-party property value report was done by CohnReznick, who contacted 70 different
30 County and Township assessors, including Champaign County and found that there's no measurable
31 impact on property values where solar farms are in proximity to people's homes. Ms. Cronin said a study
32 by Loyola University Chicago included 70 utility-scale solar facilities built in the Midwest between 2009
33 and 2022, using data from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and data from Zillow, along with
34 additional data like solar project size and installed capacity. Ms. Cronin stated the study, indicating that
35 utility-scale solar increases nearby property values between .5% to 2%. Ms. Cronin continued quoting the
36 study, showing a positive impact on nearby property values when the project is under 20 megawatts. Ms.
37 Cronin stated a study from 2008 in McLean County about solar farms in Indiana and Illinois found no
38 consistent negative impact to the value of adjacent properties and instead the researchers discovered that
39 properties within 1,320 feet of solar farms sold by an average of 1.92% more than compared properties
40 not located near solar farms.

41
42 Ms. Hambleton asked if the farms were rural agricultural land turned into solar farms, which resulted in
43 housing prices going up.

44
45 Ms. Cronin confirmed that is what the studies state.

46
47 Ms. Cunningham asked if anyone else had cross-examination questions. There were none.
48

1 Alan Singleton of 2086C County Road 125 E in Mahomet approached the cross-examination
2 microphone and asked what an interconnect agreement with Ameren entails.

3
4 Ms. Cronin said projects in proximity to a substation submit an interconnection agreement to Ameren for
5 them to determine if the project is viable. Ms. Cronin continued that if the project is viable Ameren will
6 determine how many meters need to be installed and the cost to cover the installation.

7
8 Mr. Singleton said he wanted to know if a copy of the interconnect agreement had been submitted.

9
10 Ms. Cronin said a copy was submitted as a requirement for the Special Use Permit and the agreement was
11 executed.

12
13 Mr. Singleton said he wanted to know if the agreement had a capacity limit.

14
15 Ms. Cronin said the limit is 4.999 megawatts.

16
17 Mr. Singleton said he wanted to know if there was language in the agreement that would allow expansion
18 to adjacent land.

19
20 Ms. Cronin said no language was in the agreement, it is very specific, and if the project downsized,
21 Ameren would have to provide permission for that to happen. She said there is no planned expansion, nor
22 have they been in discussion with the owners of an expansion.

23
24 Mr. Singleton asked about the noise levels of the 40 power inverters being measured in decibels and if
25 they have a frequency.

26
27 Ms. Cronin said they make a noticeable noise when you stand next to them, and the decibels are the
28 frequency.

29
30 Mr. Singleton asked about a road being constructed adjacent to the railroad.

31
32 Ms. Cronin said a temporary access road has been proposed, and it would be 16 feet wide. Ms. Cronin
33 continued that the road wasn't finalized, and they've been conversing with the road commissioner.

34
35 Mr. Singleton said he wanted to know if the road would be adapted to a bike or walking path or if it would
36 be closed off.

37
38 Ms. Cronin said the landowners of Greater Heritage Farms would own the road, and no conversations had
39 been had about converting the road. Ms. Cronin continued that people couldn't just walk into the solar
40 farm because of the gated fence surrounding the property, and anyone found within the solar farm would
41 be trespassing.

42
43 Mr. Singleton asked about the design work being completed.

44
45 Ms. Cronin said they are 30% done with the preliminary work and will adjust the plans as needed.

46
47 Mr. Singleton asked if the preliminary work had been submitted to Planning and Zoning.

48
49 Ms. Cronin said it hasn't been submitted yet; it's just the initial site plan. Ms. Cronin continued that they

1 have provided the drainage tile report, and the 30% completed plans are a good set of plans.

2
3 Mr. Singleton asked if the information about the inverters was given to Planning and Zoning.

4
5 Ms. Cronin said they were, and she could share that information with Mr. Singleton if he wanted it.

6
7 Ms. Cunningham called Ted Hartke to the cross-examination microphone.

8
9 Mr. Hartke asked if the noise level for the neighbors to the solar farm would be like living next to a
10 cemetery.

11
12 Ms. Cronin said she did make that statement.

13
14 Mr. Hartke asked that if there was a noise complaint, the company would come out and do a noise
15 assessment to ensure the inverters were under the DbA levels. Mr. Hartke asked if that commitment would
16 be put in writing to confirm neighbors would be living next to a cemetery and not experiencing maximum
17 noise levels.

18
19 Ms. Cronin said she used the cemetery example as a metaphor because people shouldn't be able to hear
20 the noise outside of the solar farm based on the third-party report.

21
22 Mr. Hartke again asked if you would be able to hear the solar farm at neighbors' homes or if you would
23 hear the maximum noise levels allowed by the Illinois Pollution Control Board.

24
25 Ms. Cronin said the report is based on their specific project, where the 35.8 DbA was measured. Ms. Cronin
26 continued that if there was a noise issue, they would ensure the solar farm was compliant with all state
27 regulations.

28
29 Mr. Hartke asked if the developer would agree to a maximum noise level not exceeding 39 DbA at the
30 neighbors' property lines as a condition of the project's approval.

31
32 Ms. Cronin said they can't agree with that, but the report shows they shouldn't exceed that level. Ms.
33 Cronin stated that the company that provided the report feels Highway 150 would be the loudest
34 contributor to the land.

35
36 Mr. Hartke asked if the landowners on the east side of the property would be involved in the project.

37
38 Ms. Cronin said they were not.

39
40 Mr. Hartke asked about the 240-foot setback on the south side of the property from an adjacent non-
41 participating property.

42
43 Ms. Cronin said that is a County requirement and that all homeowners exceed that distance.

44
45 Mr. Hartke asked if the east side of the property was vacant. Ms. Cronin said the closest home is 946 feet
46 from the project, and there is no housing on the east side of the property. Mr. Hartke asked if someone
47 were to build a home on the west side of the property, would they also benefit from a 240-foot setback
48 like people on the east and south sides of the property?

1 Ms. Cronin said the current plan is based on current conditions, and if someone wants to remove the trees
2 on the west side of the property to build a home, they are free to do so.

3
4 Ms. Cunningham told Mr. Hartke he couldn't ask the builder to plan ahead for conditions that didn't exist.

5
6 Mr. Hartke asked about the setback for solar panels on the east side of the property.

7
8 Ms. Cronin said she didn't have that measurement but would ensure it's on the site plan.

9
10 Mr. Hartke asked that the setbacks be confirmed for the next meeting.

11
12 Ms. Cronin said they meet setback requirements because of the 255-foot setback from adjacent, non-
13 participating residents. Ms. Cronin stated the key word is residents, which is why the measurement is
14 taken from someone's house and is the standard across Illinois.

15
16 Mr. Hartke asked if the setback was 240 feet or 255 feet. Ms. Cronin said she would confirm that setback
17 with Mr. Campo.

18
19 Mr. Hartke asked about the power poles near the entrance to the solar project and what they would look
20 like.

21
22 Ms. Cronin said the poles will look like existing poles, potentially with guiding poles.

23
24 Ms. Callahan said that the details change per project, but typically, the first three poles are owned by
25 Ameren, and the remaining poles would be owned by the project.

26
27 Ms. Cronin continued that various equipment, such as metering and disconnect points, is interconnected
28 to the system at the poles such as metering and disconnection points. Ms. Cronin stated the first connection
29 is the power outage information (POI) pole, the second pole is the utility recloser pole, and the next pole
30 is the utility meter pole then customer disconnect pole and next is a customer recloser pole.

31
32 Mr. Hartke asked if the poles could be placed within the solar farm instead of along the road so it would
33 reduce visibility for the people near the farm.

34
35 Ms. Callahan said Ameren needs access and requires the poles to be at the end of the public road.

36
37 Ms. Cronin said it is easier than keeping all property's gate numbers and access codes.

38
39 Ms. Cronin stated that Ameren worked with her company to discuss and agree upon pole locations.

40
41 Ms. Cunningham said it was time to move to testimony and reminded everyone who wanted to testify they
42 need to sign the witness registry.

43
44 Ms. Cunningham said people should sign the attendance sheet if they haven't already done so.

45
46 Ms. Cunningham called Mike Murphy of 1507 West North Shore, Mahomet, to the testimony microphone.
47 Mr. Murphy said he is the president of the Mahomet Spring Lake Association, and he was before the
48 Board to represent the 73 members and the health of the 32-acre lake. Mr. Murphy said the association
49 recently started a multi-year project to remove and dispose of excess silt in the lake caused by years of

1 erosion from the watershed. Mr. Murphy said the association is concerned about any development in the
2 area that would undermine the project. Mr. Murphy continued that the Board of directors of the association
3 do not totally object to the proposed construction, but they are skeptical of the issues being brought
4 forward and hope to continue their involvement with the ongoing permitting process.

5
6 Ms. Cunningham called Brian Hartman of 403 South North Shore Drive, Mahomet, to the testimony
7 microphone. Mr. Hartman said he has lived in Spring Lake for 15 years. Mr. Hartman continued that he's
8 not opposed to solar, but he believes that if solar goes in and it stays as a field, there is very likely little
9 win for residents. Mr. Hartman stated he doesn't understand how residents are worried about nature, but
10 the Dicamba (herbicide) sprayed on a field that nearly killed a 50-year-old tree in his yard is not nature.
11 Mr. Hartman said the bioengineered corn and soy is not nature. Mr. Hartman said if he was the field owner
12 or solar company, he doesn't understand, well he does, it's the money, but decommission the fields put in
13 all nature things and put in solar. He thinks they gain more from that and gives the residents more to cheer
14 for rather than just putting in solar and repeatedly spraying and polluting the water his kids swim in every
15 summer.

16
17 Ms. Cunningham called Karen Bollinger of 404 South North Shore Drive, Mahomet, to the testimony
18 microphone. Ms. Bollinger said she is a neighbor to the project and an active gardener. Ms. Bollinger
19 doesn't want to sound like the Lorax, but she is concerned about the new trees they are planning to plant.
20 Ms. Bollinger stated that in her personal experience, planting trees requires regular watering, and
21 insufficient water means the trees will die. Ms. Bollinger said she isn't sure if the trees are evergreens or
22 deciduous, but if they are evergreens, they would be dry and brown if they die, and she believes it is a
23 good idea to water the trees so they can have a successful planting.

24
25 Mr. Hall told Ms. Bollinger he's never seen a company install required trees and then walk away without
26 watering them. Mr. Hall stated the companies come out on a regular basis to water, and even then some
27 of the trees die and need to be replaced.

28
29 Ms. Cunningham called Linda Hambleton of 406 South Briarfield Court, Mahomet, to the testimony
30 microphone. Ms. Hambleton said she's lived at her residence for 28 years and what appealed to her was
31 the country, Ag, farmland, and wildlife. Ms. Hambleton stated she wished the Board to abide by the 1.5-
32 mile distance.

33
34 Ms. Cunningham called Ted Hartke of 1183 County Road 2300E, Sidney, to the testimony microphone.
35 Mr. Hartke said he guesses he is a noise expert, and his experience with industrial noise is that he
36 abandoned his home because of wind turbine noise. Mr. Hartke stated the noise level was 45.5 or 46 DbA
37 at his house when it was measured, and he wants to ensure no one has to go through what he went through
38 with incessant noise that wouldn't leave him alone. Mr. Hartke stated he is before the Board after attending
39 50 to 70 solar meetings. Mr. Hartke said he was glad to hear the developer state the site was as quiet as a
40 cemetery, even though she later said it was rhetorical. Mr. Hartke said it isn't rhetorical that we can
41 purchase and own property in the United States of America and live wonderfully and peacefully and then
42 have that taken away.

43
44 Mr. Hartke said the developer stated in the application that their acoustician presented the idea that the
45 noise would be unheard of or imperceptible to the neighbors, which excited him. Mr. Hartke said this is
46 the first time a developer has said such wonderful things. Mr. Hartke stated the developer said that if there
47 is a noise complaint, they'll go check the site to ensure it doesn't exceed the noise numbers. Mr. Hartke
48 said at the last solar meeting, he quizzed the developer on how noisy the inverters would be and they kept
49 mentioning the maximum noise limits allowable in the state of Illinois and they would stay below those

1 numbers. Mr. Hartke said that humans live in Champaign County, especially those living in rural areas of
2 Illinois, where 39 Dba is the average noise level. Mr. Hartke said it was a wonderful noisescape, which is
3 a wonderful way to live, and that's an attractive type of place to lay your head, spend time in your yard,
4 and relax and enjoy all of your land, not just the land where your home sits.

5
6 Mr. Hartke said there were references to the nearest dwellings, and those folks have 946 feet between the
7 property line and their home, but they own the land to the property line. Mr. Hartke said the homeowners
8 should be able to take that million-dollar investment of the huge acres to the east side of the solar farm
9 because those folks should legally and rightfully go to their wooded area along Route 150 and a railroad
10 track, which does not have many trains, and they should be able to enjoy hunting deer, falling asleep on a
11 real sunny day when the solar inverters are going at the maximum allowance. Mr. Hartke said they should
12 not have to sit and try to enjoy their woods when the next-door neighbor runs at the maximum state-
13 allowed noise level, which is 45 Dba.

14
15 Mr. Hartke said the developer doesn't know much about noise. Today they assumed and mentioned
16 numerical values. At a previous meeting, Mr. Hartke said he asked the developer if they realized there
17 are two parts to the IPCB noise limits, where one of them talks about numerical measurable noise levels,
18 and the second part is not being allowed to adversely affect your neighbors with noise pollution or
19 nuisance noise. Mr. Hartke said he was going to read part of the Illinois code. Mr. Hartke stated the Illinois
20 General Assembly finds that excessive noise endangers physical and emotional health and the well-being
21 interferes with legitimate business and recreational activities, increases construction costs, and depresses
22 property values. Mr. Hartke continued that excessive noise offends the senses, creates public nuisances,
23 in other respects reduces our environment's quality. It is the purpose of this title to prevent noise which
24 creates a public nuisance.

25
26 Mr. Hartke said living next to the maximum allowable noise limits is not in Illinois, following that portion
27 of the law, and folks should be able to enjoy all their land and their homes, including sleeping there and
28 being in a good environment. Mr. Hartke said the next section states no person shall emit beyond the
29 boundaries of his property. Mr. Hartke said the law references the property line and not where your home
30 sits. Mr. Hartke continued that any noise that unreasonably interferes with the enjoyment of life or with
31 any lawful acts or activity to violate any regulation or standard adopted by the Board under this act, the
32 Board pursue to the procedures prescribed in title seven of this act may adopt regulations prescribing
33 limitations on noise emissions beyond the boundaries of the property of any person and prescribing
34 requirements and standards for equipment and the procedures for monitoring noise in the collection, etc.

35
36 Mr. Hartke said he wanted to know if the solar farm was going to be as quiet as a cemetery or if it would
37 be at the maximum Dba allowed by the State. Mr. Hartke said he does not think it will be as quiet as a
38 cemetery, but it would be nice if the Board put a condition that the maximum noise level is 39 Dba. Mr.
39 Hartke said he's mentioned at meetings that a 40 Dba noise level is where adverse health effects begin,
40 because of sleep interference.

41
42 Mr. Hartke said he wants members of the Board to take a trip to Frito Lay because a 2 megawatt solar
43 project was constructed and was expanded 2 or 3 years ago, and now there are two 2 megawatt solar
44 projects side by side. Mr. Hartke said both sites have power pole arrays near the entrance of the solar farm,
45 where each array consists of six power poles, resulting in a total of 12 power poles. Mr. Hartke stated the
46 power poles have guide wires with sizable transformers near the top of the poles.

1 Mr. Hartke said he understands the poles are required per Ameren, which means a public utility is
2 requiring the poles to be put out at the edge of a road. Mr. Hartke said he would like the Board to push the
3 utility items farther away from the road and from neighbors who might have nearby driveways and don't
4 want to stare at them. Mr. Hartke said he would like for those poles to be closer to the fenced-in area of
5 the solar farm in that case, Ameren can easily drive their truck from the public road along the access road,
6 which should be durable for a utility vehicle, to go and access the kill switch or whatever they must do.
7 Mr. Hartke said those poles should be in a non-prominent location to save the view shed and look of a
8 solar farm. Mr. Hartke said if those changes were made, fewer people like himself would comment about
9 the mistake of the ugly poles. Mr. Hartke said the rules should be changed and push the poles back so the
10 folks near Mahomet don't have a prominent utility-looking thing in their view, coming to and from town.

11
12 Mr. Hartke said he's previously spoken about how solar and wind energy is pathetic and a giant waste of
13 taxpayer dollars for the response, reliability, and intermittent power that these things give us. Mr. Hartke
14 stated all those things are truly pathetic and to add insult to injury and insult to the financial negativity of
15 this type of development.

16
17 Mr. Hartke said he thinks it's terrible that rural areas, which the County has many of and which are just
18 breathtaking, have become the utility closet for electric users in big cities. Mr. Hartke said the data-mining
19 facilities are a Bitcoin warehouse that runs computers that take a lot of energy. Mr. Hartke said we're
20 giving up beautiful land for folks to mine Bitcoin and have giant energy hogs, and he believes that a
21 terrible direction we are going. Mr. Hartke said he encourages the Board to not give waivers for these
22 setbacks. Mr. Hartke said he believes that the project encroaches upon the County-wide setback on the
23 east side of the panels. Mr. Hartke said the solar farm should also move to the West to avoid clearing an
24 acre of trees on the east side of the property. Mr. Hartke acknowledges that trees will be planned around
25 the West and South side of the project, but an acre on the east side will still be destroyed, which he thinks
26 is a bad deal.

27
28 **Ms. Cunningham entertained a motion to close the witness registry.**

29
30 **Mr. Flesner made the motion, seconded by Mr. Andersen, to close the witness registry. The motion**
31 **passed via voice vote.**

32
33 Mr. Hall said before moving on, the Board should consider if there is anything they want to discuss or
34 provide homework for, for the petitioner or staff to work on for the next meeting. Ms. Cunningham said
35 we need to continue to next meeting. Mr. Andersen said a lot of people were heard from and the petitioner
36 needs to try and address as many of those concerns as they can for the next meeting.

37
38 Ms. Cunningham asked if the Board had any questions. There were none.

39
40 **Mr. Andersen made the motion, seconded by Mr. Flesner, to continue the case until May 29th, 2025.**
41 **The motion passed via voice vote.**

42
43 **8. Staff Report – None**
44
45

1 **9. Other Business – None**

2 **A. Review of Docket**

3
4 March 13th, ZBA meeting, No Mr. Holderfield

5
6 March 27th, ZBA meeting, no anticipated absences

7
8 April 17th, ZBA meeting, No – Mr. Flesner, Maybe – Mr. Anderson

9
10 May 15th, ZBA meeting, no anticipated absences

11
12 May 29th, ZBA meeting, no anticipated absences

13
14 **10. Adjournment**

15
16 **Mr. Andersen made the motion, seconded by Mr. Holderfield, to adjourn the meeting. Motion**
17 **passed via voice vote.**

18
19 The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

20
21
22 Respectfully Submitted,

23
24 Secretary of the Zoning Board of Appeals