

Building & Zoning Committee
Meeting Minutes for February 4, 2025

Members Present:

Mick Madison, Chairman
Frank Dickerson
Terry Eaker
John Janek
Fred Michael
Bobby Ross

Members Absent:

Nick Petrillo

Others Present:

Chris Doucleff, Administrator	Sean Pluta	Rhiannon Heisner
Jen Hurley, Zoning Coordinator	Jake Frey	
Jake Clay	Brandon Renfro	

Call of Meeting to Order and Roll Call:

Chairman Madison called the regular meeting of the Building & Zoning Committee to order at 5:00 p.m. and conducted roll call.

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Madison asked the Committee if all members had reviewed the minutes from the January 7, 2025 meeting, and if they had any changes to be made. Chairman Madison approved the minutes.

Zoning Petitions and Subdivision Overview:

Jen Hurley, Zoning Coordinator, gave the overview of the one zoning petition, the proposed text amendments, and two subdivisions on the agenda.

Ms. Hurley introduced Resolution Z25-0004, petition of Armoracia Solar, applicant on behalf of Scott Frey and Jacob Frey, owners of record, requesting a Special Use Permit in order to develop a Commercial Solar Energy Facility on site. She said the parcel is located in an "R-3" Single-Family Residential District in Collinsville Township at the southeast corner of Interstate 55 and Pleasant Ridge Rd, Collinsville, Illinois, County Board District #23. Ms. Hurley said that in November of 2024, Armoracia Solar, along with Rusticana Solar LLC, applied for a Special Use Permit for a combined 8 megawatt ground-mounted commercial solar energy facility to cover approximately 18 acres of the subject property. The request was denied by the Zoning Board and the applicant withdrew their petition in order to revise their plan for a smaller scale project to only include Armoracia Solar in order to reduce the facility's footprint and minimize the environmental impact. The petition today reflects the changes and includes a 7 foot tall perimeter fence. Ms. Hurley stated there are no outstanding violations, staff received comment letters, and ZBA Recommended Denial 3-1.

Ms. Hurley introduced the petition of Madison County Building and Zoning Administrator requesting text amendments to Chapter 93 of the Madison County Code of Ordinances. She stated the changes would align with the State of Illinois standards for Agricultural Experiences, Commercial Solar Energy Facilities, and Commercial Wind Energy Facilities. Ms. Hurley said the Public Act 102-492, Agricultural Experiences Act amendment is to remove "Agrotourism Operations" as a Special Use in "A" Agricultural Districts, and add "Agricultural Experiences" as a Permitted Accessory Use in "A" Agricultural Districts. She stated that Public Act 103-0580, County Wind and Solar Zoning and Site Approval Permit Restrictions amendment is for both Commercial Wind and Commercial Solar Facilities to add a requirement for a drainage plan to be submitted with the Special Use Permit application for the facility. ZBA Recommended Approval for these changes.

Ms. Hurley introduced Tarrant Resubdivision of Part of Lot 2 in Christ Heck's Subdivision, Minor Plat. She said the property is 8.70 Acres and is zoned "A" Agricultural District. Ms. Hurley said it is a 2-lot minor subdivision, with Lot 1 being 5.12 acres, and Lot 2 being 3.58 acres. She said the property is not located within the 1.5 mile growth area of any municipalities. Ms. Hurley said Lot 1 includes the existing single-family dwelling, and the applicants are not proposing any new easements. She said the proposed layout satisfies all zoning and subdivision requirements.

Ms. Hurley introduced Apple Pine Acres, Minor Plat. She said the property is approximately 15 Acres and is zoned "A" Agricultural District. Ms. Hurley said it is a 4-lot minor subdivision, with Lot 1 being 3.41 acres, Lot 2 being 2.77 acres, Lot 3 being 2.74 acres, and Lot 4 being 3.45 acres. She said the property is not located within the 1.5 mile growth area of any municipalities. Ms. Hurley said the applicants are proposing a new 40 foot wide private roadway easement to give each lot access to Moro Road, and a maintenance agreement will be recorded for the private roadway. She said the proposed layout satisfies all zoning and subdivision requirements.

Pre-Application Presentation:

None

Citizens Wishing to Address the Committee:

Jake Clay spoke in regards to Resolution Z25-0004, a representative for the developer of the project, Cultivate Power. He spoke about the community benefits to the project, in particular a proposed tax increase of approximately \$27,000 with no additional drain on any city or county services. There will only be an electrical connection to the Ameren utility grid, no water or sewer lines, and no additional traffic. He reiterated the decrease in the footprint of the project and wanted to note the changes to the tree clearing and screening proposed. He stated the western edge of the panels has been moved 650 feet to the east, reducing the output and overall footprint by about 40 percent. They are also proposing some evergreen trees for screening on the south edge of the project but are looking into finding a better option due to a neighbor's concern of lower limbs dropping later in the life of the project. Mr. Clay said that all the changes they have made are in direct response to some of the comments from the neighbors, and there are neighbors that are for and against this project. He stated that during the decommissioning of the project, they are required to return the land to the way it was before the project. Mr. Clay said they have met all the requirements in the Zoning Ordinance for this project, the neighbors would be able to benefit from the bill credits from Ameren, and there would be no additional strain on the existing services in the area.

Sean Pluta spoke in regards to Resolution Z25-0004, a lawyer for Armoracia Solar who believes the County should approve this project. He stated that the project meets or exceeds State standards and County Ordinance standards. Mr. Pluta said the Findings of Fact from the previous ZBA meeting shows there is no mention of this project failing to meet any application standards. He also said that with the proposed text amendment changes, they would incorporate a drainage plan as a condition to approval of their project if necessary.

Jake Frey spoke in regards to Resolution Z25-0004, the current owner of the property for the proposed solar project. He states that he has owned it for several years, and has never had any interest in regards to residential development. The land is below average in productivity compared to his other property in Madison County, and he wants to sign a solar lease with Cultivate Power to provide stable income.

Brandon Renfro spoke in regards to Resolution Z25-0004. He discussed his opposition to the project, and how the land could not be used for anything else for 41 years. Mr. Renfro said while he is aware of the tax benefits for the project, residential use of the land would generate additional tax money as well. He stated he would rather see it as farm land than a solar farm.

Rhiannon Heisner spoke in regards to Resolution Z25-0004, an adjoining property owner of the proposed project site. She brought up the fact that the construction of this project would take approximately 20-26 weeks, up to 6 days a week, and that would be very disruptive to the families in the neighborhood. Ms. Heisner also said that the predicted Ameren rebate of 10 percent on her most recent bill would only be about \$9.00, and that isn't worth it to have the solar farm in her backyard for

the next 40 years. She is concerned that additional subscribers could change that amount, and the possibility of outsourcing it to another company could change things too.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

Chairman Madison brought in Resolution Z25-0004. Terry Eaker made a motion to approve the denial. Seconded by Frank Dickerson. Roll-call vote. Ayes: Terry Eaker, Frank Dickerson, Mick Madison, Bobby Ross. Nays: Fred Michael, John Janek. Motion approved to uphold ZBA's denial.

Chairman Madison brought in the Ordinance Authorizing Text Amendments to Chapter 93 of the Madison County Code of Ordinances, Tarrant Resubdivision of Part of Lot 2 in Christ Heck's Subdivision, Apple Pine Acres, the Resolution to Authorize Green Schools Program Funding FY 2025, the Resolution Authorizing Environmental Grants FY 2025, the Resolution Authorizing Clean Community Litter Grants FY 2025, and the Purchase Order Report. Fred Michael made a motion to approve. Seconded by Frank Dickerson. Roll-call vote. All ayes. Motion passes.

Administrator's Report:

Mr. Doucleff said permits for January were up about 9 permits from the previous year, even with the bad weather. He also wanted to let everybody know about the first E-Waste event of the year on April 12th, from 8am – 230 pm so call and schedule an appointment because spots fill up fast. Also Mr. Doucleff reminded everyone that the Household Hazardous Waste collections are now only once a month, from 8am-3pm and the next collection date is February 7th.

Adjournment:

John Janek made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Frank Dickerson. Voice-vote. All ayes. Motion passes. Meeting adjourned.