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IN THE MATTER OF:  
CHRISTIAN COUNTY

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

JUNE 28, 2022

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CHRISTIAN COUNTY

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

JUNE 28, 2022

6:00 P.M.

ZONING BOARD:

Mr. Steven Sipes, Chairman

Mr. David Copenbarger

Mr. Joe Dorr

Mr. Glen Goodrich

Mr. Jon Rosenthal

Ms. JoAnn Howard

Mr. Gary Merker

PRESENT:

Mr. Dale Livingston

Mr. Charles Smedley

Mr. Duane Carell

Ms. Judy Carell

Ms. Carol Spracklen

Ms. McKinze Harris

Mr. Aaron Harris

Ms. Sadie Waddington

Ms. Theresa McGreevy

1           PRESENT CONTINUED:

2

          Ms. Kiera Gavin  
          Cypress Creek

3

4

          Ms. Patricia McGarr

5

          Mr. James R. Griffin  
          Attorney at Law  
          Schain Banks Kenny & Schwartz  
          70 West Madison Street  
          Suite 5300  
          Chicago, IL 60602  
          (312)345-5700

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          Ms. Patricia McGarr  
          Cohn Reznick  
          200 South Wacker Drive  
          Suite 2600  
          Chicago, IL 60606  
          (312)508-5900

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          Ms. Sandra K. Haines, Court Reporter,  
          CSR No. 084-002423

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1                   CHAIRMAN SIPES: It is 6 o'clock, June  
2                   28th, 2022. We will call our ZBA meeting to  
3                   order. Roll-call. This may be a little  
4                   different tonight because we are missing  
5                   somebody.

6                   So, Glen Goodrich.

7                   MR. GOODRICH: Here.

8                   CHAIRMAN SIPES: Jon Rosenthal.

9                   MR. ROSENTHAL: Here.

10                  CHAIRMAN SIPES: Gary Merker.

11                  MR. MERKER: Here.

12                  CHAIRMAN SIPES: David Copenbarger.

13                  MR. COPENBARGER: Here.

14                  CHAIRMAN SIPES: Joann Howard.

15                  MS. HOWARD: Here.

16                  CHAIRMAN SIPES: Joe Dorr.

17                  MR. DORR: Here.

18                  CHAIRMAN SIPES: And Steve Sipes, here.

19                  We have a quorum.

20                  The first order of business is approval of  
21                  minutes of the previous meeting. Has everyone  
22                  had a chance to go over those? They were in  
23                  your packet.

24                  MR. COPENBARGER: I will make a motion

1           that the minutes be approved as submitted.

2                   MR. ROSENTHAL: I will second it.

3                   CHAIRMAN SIPES: Any discussion?

4                   Roll-call, Jon Rosenthal.

5                   MR. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

6                   CHAIRMAN SIPES: Gary Merker.

7                   MR. MERKER: I wasn't present for the  
8           last meeting. This is my first one. So, I will  
9           have to abstain.

10                  CHAIRMAN SIPES: That's fine.

11                  David Copenbarger.

12                  MR. COPENBARGER: Yes.

13                  CHAIRMAN SIPES: Joann Howard.

14                  MS. HOWARD: Yes.

15                  CHAIRMAN SIPES: Joe Dorr.

16                  MR. DORR: Yes.

17                  CHAIRMAN SIPES: Steve Sipes, yes.

18                  Glen Goodrich.

19                  MR. GOODRICH: Yes.

20                  CHAIRMAN SIPES: On the agenda for this  
21           evening we have to hear a proposal, public  
22           comment, deliberation, approve or disapprove  
23           advisory report pertaining to the text amendment  
24           TX22 dealing with meteorological towers and the

1 fee schedule item on item 15 on Page 116.

2 What has happened is at the last County  
3 Board meeting they made recommendations as far  
4 as what they thought the fees should be. In the  
5 melee at that meeting afterwards they didn't  
6 bother to let anybody know and send that back to  
7 us.

8 So, I would entertain a motion to table  
9 this topic until the County Board is able to get  
10 that straightened out because what we have in  
11 front of us is exactly what we sent to them  
12 before.

13 MR. ROSENTHAL: I will make a motion to  
14 table it.

15 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Second.

16 MR. DORR: I will second it.

17 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Roll-call, Gary  
18 Merker.

19 MR. MERKER: Abstain.

20 CHAIRMAN SIPES: David Copenbarger.

21 MR. COPENBARGER: Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Joann Howard.

23 MS. HOWARD: Yes.

24 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Joe Dorr.

1 MR. DORR: Yes.

2 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Chairman Sipes, yes.

3 Glen Goodrich.

4 MR. GOODRICH: Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Jon Rosenthal.

6 MR. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

7 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Next on the agenda is  
8 to hear a proposal, public comments, deliberate,  
9 approve or disapprove advisory report pertaining  
10 to the application for rezoning of ten Pana  
11 Township parcels from residential R1 to  
12 commercial C1 for Lots 2, 4, 6, 13, 23, 24, 64,  
13 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 72, 73, 74, and 78. The  
14 information was in your packets where the  
15 parcels were on a map.

16 I believe that Carol Spracklen is here to  
17 speak on behalf of Mr. Carell, the Petitioner,  
18 and he is here also. Carol, would you like to  
19 fill us in on what the project is and what's  
20 going to happen.

21 MS. CAROL SPRACKLEN: My name is Carol  
22 Spracklen. I am here talking for Duane. He has  
23 purchased several lots that are around his  
24 property and from Joe Coleman, and he is wanting

1 to change the zoning from residential to  
2 commercial so that he can have a junk yard. He  
3 is contiguous now to the railroad right-of-way,  
4 the railroad, and so he is just requesting that  
5 his zoning be changed from residential to  
6 commercial.

7 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Okay. Are there any  
8 questions for Mrs. Spracklen? Like I said, this  
9 property does now abut up to the railroad. So,  
10 it is abutting, it adjoins to commercial  
11 property.

12 I would entertain -- we have some people  
13 opposed here. We will let them speak, but I do  
14 have a suggestion on this also. Is there anyone  
15 else here? I don't see anybody else here to  
16 speak in favor other than Mr. Carell, and Mr.  
17 Carell will take questions from us if anybody  
18 wants to direct questions of Mr. Carell. That's  
19 all that we have. Thank you, Carol.

20 I see on my list I have an Aaron Harris  
21 that's here as an interested party that's  
22 opposed to the salvage yard. Mr. Harris, would  
23 you want to speak?

24 MR. DORR: Three minutes, right?



1                   CHAIRMAN SIPES:  Yes, three minutes.  
2                   If you will state your name.

3                   MR. AARON HARRIS:  Aaron Harris.

4                   CHAIRMAN SIPES:  You have three  
5                   minutes, sir.

6                   MR. AARON HARRIS:  I am just concerned  
7                   how far all this stuff is going to come down to  
8                   our property.  It is going to raise all our  
9                   property tax.  It is going to cause all these  
10                  critters -- I already got critters coming up on  
11                  my deck.  With my grandson, with my cats I am a  
12                  little concerned about this.

13                  CHAIRMAN SIPES:  Are you an adjoining  
14                  landowner, across the road?

15                  MR. AARON HARRIS:  It comes up to my  
16                  back yard.

17                  CHAIRMAN SIPES:  So, adjoining okay.  
18                  Thank you.

19                  Mr. Smedley, did you want to speak on this  
20                  issue?

21                  MR. CHARLES SMEDLEY:  No, not at this  
22                  moment.

23                  CHAIRMAN SIPES:  Okay.  Mr. Carell, how  
24                  long have you been in business doing your

1 cleanup operation?

2 MR. DUANE CARELL: We have been  
3 full-time since '09, so for 13 years.

4 CHAIRMAN SIPES: I did go by and view  
5 this property. It is there on the -- most of  
6 you probably know -- I think that area was  
7 called Flatham at one time. Is that the right  
8 name?

9 MR. DUANE CARELL: They called it China  
10 Town or Shaney Town.

11 CHAIRMAN SIPES: So, it is on the north  
12 edge of Pana on the north edge of the tracks.  
13 It would be the west side of town out towards  
14 Pana Township building, if anybody is familiar  
15 with that.

16 I do know that Mr. Carell does provide a  
17 valuable service there in Pana, being that's  
18 where I am from. The only thing I would ask,  
19 and it was a recommendation from our former  
20 zoning administrator, and I would make that same  
21 recommendation, that if this is approved, that a  
22 six foot fence be placed around the proposed  
23 area, a privacy fence, not just a chain link  
24 fence. It would have to be a privacy fence that

1       you can't see through, and both sides of that  
2       fence would have to be maintained would be my  
3       only suggestion if approved.

4               Is there any questions for Mrs. Spracklen  
5       or Mr. Carell?

6               MR. DORR:   There are other junk yards  
7       within Pana city limits, right?

8               CHAIRMAN SIPES:   In Pana city limits  
9       yes, Coleman's and Welburn's.

10              MR. DORR:   They are fenced as well?

11              CHAIRMAN SIPES:   They are fenced, yes.  
12       Duane is kind of unique because he does smaller  
13       jobs, and he will go to the person's house, take  
14       care, clean things up, do whatever.

15              Mr. Harris, I really think that after what  
16       I drove through and saw today that his addition  
17       is probably going to make things better, and  
18       with the fence I would think that would make it  
19       better.

20              Is there a motion, more questions?

21              MR. DORR:   Are you willing to put a  
22       fence?

23              MR. DUANE CARELL:   Yes, we have been  
24       checking that out probably since we got things,

1 see if we can rezone it. I have been getting  
2 several estimates and stuff on that.

3 MR. COPENBARGER: Are we talking a  
4 privacy fence, so view blocking things, right?

5 MR. DUANE CARELL: Like a wooden fence  
6 or plastic fence, something that looks nice, not  
7 something that looks crappy for the neighbors,  
8 you know, okay.

9 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Mr. Merker.

10 MR. MERKER: If I am looking at this  
11 particular print-out, is there a fence that runs  
12 through that property, I am sorry, street?

13 CHAIRMAN SIPES: There is not right  
14 now, no. I did not see one.

15 MR. DUANE CARELL: The only fence if it  
16 is, it is the old barbed wire fence that's along  
17 the railroad track property which that's my  
18 boundary to the tracks.

19 MR. MERKER: So, there is no street  
20 that runs directly through the property?

21 MR. DUANE CARELL: No.

22 MS. CAROL SPRACKLEN: No, it is a dead  
23 end.

24 CHAIRMAN SIPES: One thing I did forget

1 to do and I know this, I know that all fees have  
2 been paid, notices have been put in the paper  
3 and sent to adjoining landowners on this issue  
4 also. I forgot to announce that before we  
5 started on this.

6 I do believe, Joe, and correct me if I am  
7 wrong, I get this mixed up constantly, we can  
8 make a recommendation to the County Board on  
9 this, but it has to go back to the County Board,  
10 I do believe.

11 MR. DORR: Yes, on that one.

12 CHAIRMAN SIPES: On the zoning change.

13 MR. DORR: Yes.

14 CHAIRMAN SIPES: I thought so. So, it  
15 will have to go back to the County Board's next  
16 meeting if there is a motion and approved here  
17 tonight. It will be as a recommendation to the  
18 County Board.

19 Any further questions? Is there a motion  
20 one way or the other?

21 MR. DORR: I will make the motion to  
22 recommend the application for rezoning of these  
23 lots.

24 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Do we want to put the

1 stipulation.

2 MR. DORR: With a six foot privacy  
3 fence around the perimeter.

4 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Is there a second?

5 MR. ROSENTHAL: I will second it.

6 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Roll-call. David  
7 Copenbarger.

8 MR. COPENBARGER: Yes.

9 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Joann Howard.

10 MS. HOWARD: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Joe Dorr.

12 MR. DORR: Yes.

13 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Steve Sipes, yes.

14 Glen Goodrich.

15 MR. GOODRICH: Yes.

16 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Jon Rosenthal.

17 MR. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

18 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Mr. Merker.

19 MR. MERKER: Yes.

20 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Okay. At the end of  
21 the meeting I will need everybody -- well, I can  
22 circle it, but also before you head out tonight  
23 I will need your mileage for the month also.

24 I appreciate your time, good luck.

1           Next item on the agenda is to hear a  
2           proposal, public comment, deliberate, approve or  
3           disapprove advisory report pertaining to the  
4           special use permits submitted by Cypress Creek  
5           for a five megawatt solar farm on Taylorville  
6           Township Parcels Number 17-13-23-200-006-00 and  
7           Number 17-13-33-23-400-001-00 for the area west  
8           of Taylorville, Illinois. I believe all of the  
9           information was in your packets. Mr. Smedley  
10          picked up information. So, he has got it. Do  
11          you need anything? So anyway I believe, is it  
12          Kiera, I am sorry?

13                   MS. KIERA GAVIN: Yes.

14                   CHAIRMAN SIPES: Kiera has a power  
15          point presentation. She is from Cypress Creek.

16                   MS. KIERA GAVIN: Yes.

17                   CHAIRMAN SIPES: All fees, notices in  
18          the paper and to adjoining landowners have been  
19          done. There were no written objections to this,  
20          and no one signed in an objection tonight either  
21          on the sign-in sheets.

22                   MS. KIERA GAVIN: I am Kiera Gavin,  
23          thank you. I am, like I said my name is Kiera.  
24          I wanted to say first off thank you to the Board

1 and to the chairman for your time tonight. I am  
2 a solar developer with Cypress Creek Renewables.  
3 I am based in Chicago, and I am from Palatine,  
4 Illinois, which is a suburb of Chicago. I am  
5 here today to speak to you about Skyline Solar,  
6 proposed solar farm in Taylorville Township not  
7 to far from here.

8 Quick overview on Cypress Creek, I will be  
9 pretty brief, but we started in 2014, and have  
10 been working in Illinois since 2016. We are a  
11 solar developer, owner, and operator.

12 Across the United States we work on both  
13 the community scale projects like the one we are  
14 talking about today, and those larger utility  
15 scale projects, which I think you all are  
16 familiar with here. In Illinois we are mostly  
17 focused on the smaller community scale.

18 We also have a strong operations and  
19 maintenance team across the U.S., but with a  
20 presence in Illinois as well where they operate  
21 over 45 solar farms. So, that's remotely  
22 monitoring them as well as in person maintenance  
23 and upkeep of those solar projects across the  
24 state.



1           To date we have developed 17 solar farms  
2 across the state that are either operational or  
3 under construction. You can see kind of on the  
4 map here or in your packet.

5           To briefly touch on what is community solar  
6 this is a graphic I find pretty helpful from the  
7 Citizens Utility Board, which is an Illinois  
8 organization meant to provide information about  
9 these kind of topics; but essentially community  
10 solar and what a solar farm like this does is it  
11 generates power for the local grid where then in  
12 this case Ameren resident, so if you get Ameren  
13 power to your home, you could subscribe to a  
14 community solar program. There is a range of  
15 different subscription kind of services that are  
16 connected to the different solar farms, and they  
17 have a range of kind of savings, guarantees,  
18 sometimes not guarantees, but what you are doing  
19 is you are sort of subscribing or supporting  
20 financially the operation of the solar farm, and  
21 supporting that clean energy being added onto  
22 the local grid. This also applies to renters or  
23 schools. Anyone can become a subscriber.

24           What community solar means in Christian

1 County or this potential solar farm means is  
2 more renewable energy added to the local grid.  
3 Like I mentioned, an opportunity for local  
4 subscribers to save on their electricity bill,  
5 local tax revenue increase on this property,  
6 additional investment during construction and  
7 operations of the solar farm, and additional  
8 income for our landowners.

9 I am going to run through some of the  
10 technical side of solar, but I will be brief  
11 because I think you all are somewhat familiar  
12 with this. So, feel free to stop me if needed,  
13 but I wanted to share some visuals.

14 So, this is the type of panel that we are  
15 proposing for this project, which is called a  
16 single access tracker. So, it kind of tracks  
17 with the sun where it is facing East in the  
18 morning. Here you can see kind of mid afternoon  
19 where it is facing straight up, and then ends  
20 the day in the West when it resets then  
21 overnight.

22 This gives you a good sense of a single  
23 steel post driven into the ground, and you can  
24 see kind of this cabling underneath the panels

1 as well. Kind of overview of the equipment  
2 besides those modules and their structural rack  
3 consistent with that steel that I mentioned, the  
4 other kind of main component are these inverters  
5 and transformers. So, the pads that those are  
6 on are kind of the only source of concrete on  
7 the property or on the project. That kind of  
8 encompasses the extent of what's on the project  
9 as well as the perimeter fencing. Here is just  
10 some more visuals about that racking system, and  
11 then what it looks like kind of pre-module  
12 installation.

13 Then in terms of the agricultural impact  
14 the good thing about these solar farms is they  
15 maintain the permeable nature of the land. So,  
16 there is gaps between each row of modules where  
17 any run-off has access to the ground. Like I  
18 said there is very limited concrete. So, it is  
19 not an impact on the permeability. These will  
20 be planted with local plants under the panels.  
21 In addition field tiles will be located -- I  
22 will talk about that in a little more detail  
23 later in terms of how we approach that.

24 Yes, just the benefit to the land lying

1 fallow for the 40 years of operation of the  
2 solar farm, which is then fully decommissioned,  
3 and the land can at that point be replanted or  
4 up to the landowner what they are interested in  
5 doing with their property at that time.

6 Here is just another visual of two of our  
7 solar farms in Illinois.

8 Then just some comments on the safety, so  
9 these are designed by licensed engineers. All  
10 kind of considerations of safety, erosion, storm  
11 water and sediment control are considered. Then  
12 there is a range of permits as well including  
13 building and electrical permits. All of the  
14 equipment follows the National Electrical Code.

15 As one of the conditions of the solar  
16 ordinance within the County we will be entering  
17 into a road agreement with the local road  
18 commissioner in terms of our site access there  
19 and the access roads that we are utilizing.

20 I mentioned the perimeter fencing as well  
21 for safety in terms of trespassing and site  
22 access.

23 Then the sites are I think, like I  
24 mentioned, monitored remotely, and maintained

1 with site visits six to ten times annually.

2 In terms of noise there is pretty minimal  
3 noise. The main source is from the inverters,  
4 which really can't be heard at around 150 feet.  
5 The same is true of electromagnetic fields. So,  
6 outside of 150 feet the magnetic field is  
7 reduced to about the level of just what's  
8 natural of earth's magnetic field.

9 To dive into the project specifically now a  
10 little bit, so the proposed project here is  
11 Skyline Solar. As you have heard it is in  
12 Taylorville Township. It is right off of  
13 Glenhill Road and 48, kind of where those two  
14 meet across from the ADM grain factory.

15 Then in terms of the projects here you all  
16 might be able to see it better from the site  
17 plans that you have, but a few things that I  
18 will call out, we have access road, just one  
19 access point to the site, a gravel road there.  
20 At that point that's also where we have our  
21 poles. So, it is five to six utility poles for  
22 our interconnection with Ameren. So, some  
23 fields are owned by us as the project owner, and  
24 some of those are owned by Ameren, and that's

1 part of kind of the transition of power from the  
2 project to the grid. The black little boxes  
3 that you can see there is two of them, one kind  
4 of in the middle, one at the end of the road.  
5 Those are the equipment pads or proposed  
6 locations of the equipment pads. So, that's the  
7 inverter and the transformer locations that I  
8 mentioned.

9 Finally I want to let you know in terms of  
10 setbacks. So, this property is in, based on  
11 definitions in the ordinance a non-residential  
12 area. So, what we are following in terms of the  
13 setbacks is the distance from the dwelling or  
14 the nearest dwelling. So, in this case we are  
15 taking a look at that southeast property in the  
16 corner, and considering the setback from there.  
17 At the time we were designing the site plan that  
18 was 100 feet from the dwelling, but in  
19 consideration of those neighbors we actually  
20 went beyond that in terms of where we put our  
21 fence line. So, the fence line is 325 feet from  
22 that neighboring residents, and we incorporated  
23 a vegetative buffer to screen their view of the  
24 solar farm. Additionally for the properties to

1 the west, the YMCA and the living facility, we  
2 incorporated a vegetative buffer there as well.

3 I want to touch on drain tile because, of  
4 course, it is important to this property and to  
5 neighboring properties. In consideration of  
6 drain tiles we did attend, or I did attend a  
7 drainage district commissioner meeting in March  
8 where any drainage commissioners were invited to  
9 give comment or ask questions about the project.  
10 The project doesn't actually fall within a  
11 drainage district, but it is nearest to  
12 Districts 34 and 35. For those that attended  
13 the meeting no one was aware of existing tile on  
14 the property. But in addition I did speak with  
15 our landowner as well as checked with the County  
16 Clerk's Office in case there were any records of  
17 drain tile or in case our landowner himself had  
18 put some tile in, but so far no tile has been  
19 identified.

20 That being said prior to construction we  
21 will complete a drain tile survey to identify  
22 any tile on the property. Then any tile that is  
23 impacted during construction will either be  
24 rerouted or repaired at that time.

1           I also want to mention the agricultural  
2           impact mitigation agreement or AIMA. So, all  
3           solar farms are subject to this agreement, which  
4           was sort of set up by the Illinois Department of  
5           Agriculture, and it covers a lot of components  
6           of solar farm design, installation,  
7           construction, decommissioning to ensure that  
8           they remain compatible with agricultural land.  
9           There is a specific component of the AIMA that  
10          addresses decommissioning, which ensures that  
11          the project is properly decommissioned according  
12          to AIMA's requirements, and I want to mention  
13          that we will be meeting these requirements as  
14          well as the Christian County requirements in  
15          regards to decommissioning, which includes  
16          providing a form of bond or a security at the  
17          commencement of the project in order to ensure  
18          that there is funds available for the  
19          decommissioning in the event that those are  
20          needed to be drawn upon.

21          I also want to briefly address the factors  
22          of special use. So, for the first factor I want  
23          to mention that the solar farm will not  
24          negatively impact the public health, safety,



1 welfare, or physical environment. It is a low  
2 impact use with minimal impact on neighbors,  
3 minimal services required, and even limited  
4 traffic impact. So, we feel it will be a  
5 positive benefit to the community and maintain  
6 these protections.

7 In terms of the second factor of special  
8 use I will let my colleague speak a bit in terms  
9 of the property values, but want to mention or  
10 call back to the considerations that we made,  
11 that we don't see this to be a negative impact  
12 to our neighbors, although we did keep them in  
13 mind as we were determining our setbacks from  
14 the neighboring homes as well as those visual  
15 buffers that we incorporated into the site plan.

16 I am going to pass it over to Pat to speak  
17 a little bit on property values with solar  
18 farms.

19 MS. PATRICIA MCGARR: Hi, everybody. I  
20 am Pat McGarr. I am a property real estate  
21 appraiser. I am an MAI member of the Appraisal  
22 Institute, and I am a counselor of real estate,  
23 also a FRICS, which is a Fellow of the Royal  
24 Institution of Chartered Surveyors. At a global

1 basis surveyors are what is known as appraisers,  
2 and allows me to appraise real estate anywhere  
3 in the world. I am currently a partner and a  
4 national director of evaluation practice of Cohn  
5 Reznick, which is a top ten accounting firm in  
6 the United States. I am also licensed in about  
7 23 different states as a certified general real  
8 estate appraiser.

9 One of my main specialties in my practice  
10 has been studying how one property can influence  
11 the value of another, property value impact  
12 studies. I have been doing it for 35 years.

13 About five years ago, six years ago when  
14 solar started becoming more popular in Illinois  
15 I started studying solar farm development and  
16 its impact on adjacent property values. To date  
17 I have done 26 different existing solar  
18 facilities across the country. In 15 different  
19 states I studied facilities that go from one  
20 megawatt to over 100 megawatts, and over the  
21 course of this I look at properties that are  
22 physically contiguous and adjacent, generally  
23 between 150 to 400 feet from the house to the  
24 solar panel. I have studied those properties

1 and compared them to control area homes, a  
2 matched pair of a home, located further away  
3 that would not be influenced. In those studies  
4 we have not found any consistent measurable  
5 impact in property values for being proximate to  
6 a solar farm. They do not sell in longer time  
7 periods. Marketing periods are very consistent  
8 across the board. The rates of appreciation are  
9 almost identical. There is no consistent  
10 influence that we have been able to determine.

11 In addition to that, in addition to that  
12 there has been impact studies that have been  
13 performed by academics as this has become a more  
14 popular use. There has been regression analysis  
15 done by the University of Rhode Island that  
16 involved 700,000 sales and 238 existing solar  
17 farms located between Rhode Island and  
18 Massachusetts, and they have studied that --  
19 their study again doing a regression analysis  
20 had determined that in rural areas, and they  
21 classify rural areas as having a population of  
22 850 people per square mile. The township that  
23 we are in right now is 295 people per square  
24 mile. So, it would be classified as rural.

1 They have determined that there is zero impact,  
2 effectively none associated with property values  
3 and being proximate to a solar farm.

4 There was a second study that was done a  
5 utility grade by the Georgia Institute of  
6 Technology on farmland. In that study they  
7 studied 299 solar farms, and almost 1,700 sales  
8 of property nearby. They also concluded that  
9 with regards to rural farmland there is no  
10 impact on property value. The only caveat they  
11 gave is that farmland that is near a solar farm,  
12 that is proximate to or near transmission lines  
13 those values seem to go up. They positively  
14 influence the value of the land.

15 We also interview assessors. We have  
16 interviewed assessors all across the country but  
17 specifically only assessors that have existing  
18 solar facilities within their boundaries that  
19 they have been able to monitor. We have not  
20 found a single assessor that has said that there  
21 has been any negative influence on adjacent  
22 property values. People do not come in asking  
23 for their assessments to be reduced, and the  
24 largest one which is the lower one in Chisago

1 County in Minnesota, that's the largest in the  
2 Midwest right now. That's over a thousand  
3 acres, 100 megawatt facility, and his board  
4 asked him to do a study three years after the  
5 facility was up and running. He looked at over  
6 700 sales compared to 15 properties surrounding  
7 that had sold during that period of time, and he  
8 also concluded that the property values had not  
9 had, suffered any effects at all. So, it is  
10 important to ask assessors because they have  
11 their fingers on the posts. They have no skin  
12 in the game. They are just doing their job.  
13 So, we put a lot of reliance on those  
14 interviews.

15 Overall across the country and specifically  
16 in the Midwest, I am from Chicago, so in this  
17 immediate area we have not found any proof of  
18 any type of detrimental impact on property  
19 values adjacent to solar farms. It does not  
20 keep them from being developed.

21 One of the ones, Dominion in Indiana has  
22 put in larger than this facility, I think it was  
23 around 8 and a half megawatt facility, and after  
24 the facility was up and running the adjacent

1 property right next door to it, about five acre  
2 piece, a person came in and put in a half  
3 million dollar house with a built in swimming  
4 pool, and from the house to the panel was 150  
5 feet. So, it doesn't deter development.

6 We have seen that in Colorado where they  
7 have houses that are 850,000 next to solar  
8 panels. It is just not something that -- I have  
9 studied all different kinds of things. I can  
10 tell you things that negatively impact property  
11 values, and I can tell you things that don't.

12 One of the things that negatively impact  
13 property values in my experience things that  
14 physically damage property. So, an example  
15 would be a quarry, a limestone quarry where  
16 there is blasting, houses within around 700  
17 feet, 800 feet their windows aren't plumb, they  
18 get cracks in their foundation, physically  
19 damaged. We have been able to measure those  
20 types of impacts. Being adjacent, a subdivision  
21 that's split, and half of it is near a river  
22 that floods it, and the other half doesn't the  
23 flooded properties suffer a severe impact on  
24 their values; and yet when the Army Corps of

1 Engineers comes in and puts a berm across the  
2 back of their properties that stops that  
3 flooding, property values go right back up, but  
4 it kind of tells us it is things that physically  
5 damage properties.

6 With regards to residential properties the  
7 thing that has the biggest positive impact on  
8 residential property values, being in a highly  
9 rated school district. What do all high rated  
10 school districts have in common, they are well  
11 funded. So, typically communities look for uses  
12 that have real estate taxes that will be  
13 generated without putting any burden on the  
14 community, not generating students, traffic,  
15 utilities, any of those types of things that  
16 become a burden to the community. That's why  
17 one of the things that I think that we are  
18 seeing a lot of these non-impacts at all with  
19 regards to solar, and some of these positive  
20 impacts is the impacts that they are having on  
21 funding schools.

22 So, any questions?

23 MS. HOWARD: What's the average life  
24 span of the solar farm?

1 MS. PATRICIA MCGARR: I would say that  
2 the leases that I have seen if they are doing a  
3 ground lease have typically been around 20 to 25  
4 years, but I have seen some as long as 50 years.  
5 I am seeing more municipalities come in and do a  
6 lot of work for the water reclamation district,  
7 and they have started trying to lease their  
8 surplus land to solar developers. They sign a  
9 50 year lease. So, I haven't seen a lot that  
10 are less than that because it is quite an  
11 investment; but at the end of a lease as opposed  
12 to any other type of development, a subdivision  
13 or anything, they pull up the poles, and you  
14 have farmland back. It is probably in better  
15 quality than it was before because it sat fallow  
16 25 years, but you get it back, and then it can  
17 be the next thing it is going to be. With  
18 regards to the life of the solar would you guys,  
19 you probably know more than me.

20 MR. JAMES GRIFFIN: I think you are  
21 accurate.

22 MS. PATRICIA MCGARR: Any other  
23 questions? Thank you.

24 MS. KIERA GAVIN: I will just wrap this



1 up. Thanks, Pat.

2 So, in terms of that tax point that Pat  
3 brought up, I just want to mention and I think  
4 you all have heard from Mr. Coady on these  
5 taxing details in the past, but just to give you  
6 a sense of this five megawatt solar farm, and  
7 the megawatts is what drives the property tax  
8 for solar. In comparison to agricultural land  
9 or what the land use is now compared to if it  
10 was a solar farm in year one, we are looking at  
11 almost a 25K increase in the property tax value,  
12 the divisions here based on the 2021 property  
13 taxes of kind of where that's going throughout  
14 the County. Then over the lifetime we are  
15 looking at almost 500 K in property taxes  
16 compared to what would be a little over 60K if  
17 the land was just agriculture, agricultural use.

18 In terms of the final factor of special  
19 use, whether there are facilities that are due  
20 special considerations, I don't necessarily know  
21 if our neighbors qualify in this case, but  
22 wanted to just mention again this will be low or  
23 no impact to the neighboring or across the  
24 highway YMCA or the assisted living center, but

1 in consideration of those properties we did add  
2 the vegetative buffer along the lower western  
3 edge of the property or of the project area.

4 So, brief summary of kind of what we have  
5 talked about in terms of the overview of the  
6 solar project here, again I will just leave you  
7 with I think this is a pretty low impact  
8 development on this property that generates  
9 revenue for the County, for a landowner, and has  
10 benefits in terms of adding renewable energy and  
11 clean power to the local grid.

12 So, we are excited to hopefully be working  
13 in Christian County. Thank you. Happy to take  
14 any questions.

15 MR. COPENBARGER: Dave Copenbarger,  
16 Zoning Board, can you explain the vegetative  
17 barrier, what you are doing height, width,  
18 species? What's the plan?

19 MS. KIERA GAVIN: Yes. So, that is a  
20 great question. So, what we typically have is a  
21 planted height between three to five feet, and  
22 it can offer, I don't have off the top of my  
23 head, but can offer some metrics in terms of  
24 growth rates that would be expected of those in

1 terms of how they are maintained, and we are  
2 typically looking at a double row vegetative  
3 buffer of typically an evergreen or something  
4 similar.

5 MR. COPENBARGER: So, three to five as  
6 planted from the beginning?

7 MS. KIERA GAVIN: Yes.

8 MR. COPENBARGER: That won't be on a  
9 berm. It will just be next to the fence?

10 MS. KIERA GAVIN: Correct.

11 MR. MERKER: Gary Merker, Zoning Board.  
12 Can you explain what the trending factor -- I am  
13 looking at the local tax revenue page, and it  
14 takes average trending factor. What is that?

15 MS. KIERA GAVIN: It is a great  
16 question. So, as part of the property tax code  
17 as it applies to solar farms it is a bit of a  
18 convoluted formula. So, there is a base rate of  
19 \$218,000.00 times a trending factor minus  
20 depreciation times the megawatts in summary.  
21 That trending factor is published, or they have  
22 published the past, I forget if it is four years  
23 or five years of the trending factor, but it is  
24 a moving variable. So, hard to assume what it

1 will be in the future. So, in terms of the  
2 calculations I showed you here I took an average  
3 of the trending factors that are published on  
4 line.

5 MR. MERKER: What is the trending  
6 factor itself?

7 MR. JAMES GRIFFIN: It is an inflation  
8 rate. The percentage goes up every year.

9 MR. MERKER: I am sure I am missing  
10 something, but over these tables 40 years and up  
11 until year 17 it declines, and then it stops.

12 MS. KIERA GAVIN: Yes. So, in terms of  
13 that that's correct, but how this works is we  
14 are allowed to account for depreciation only to  
15 the point that the total property tax value is  
16 decreased to a third of the original value. So,  
17 it stops decreasing because we can't assume  
18 lower depreciation than that.

19 MR. MERKER: I have one other financial  
20 question, I guess.

21 MS. KIERA GAVIN: Yes.

22 MR. MERKER: Somewhere here I saw, let  
23 me find it, a total investment 7 million, local  
24 spending during construction 4 million. How are

1       you going to spend 4 million dollars out of the  
2       total of 7 locally? Does that mean with local  
3       vendors?

4                   MS. KIERA GAVIN: So, it is a  
5       combination of things, and yes, including the  
6       local vendor spending, potential local labor, a  
7       kind of range of factors. In terms of what goes  
8       in locally is kind of part of high level  
9       modeling or assumptions across the project using  
10      that model.

11                   MR. MERKER: So, is it a correct  
12      assumption that 3 million of the 7 is going to  
13      be spent on the panels, et cetera, et cetera?

14                   MS. KIERA GAVIN: Sorry. I am trying  
15      to turn this off. Sorry, could you repeat your  
16      question.

17                   MR. MERKER: I am trying to understand  
18      how you are going to spend 4 million dollars  
19      locally if the total investment is only 7  
20      million?

21                   MS. KIERA GAVIN: Yes. I would like to  
22      if possible, sorry, I don't have a better answer  
23      in more detail here, but I would like to kind of  
24      follow-up with more detail if that's okay to get

1 more specifics on that question.

2 MR. JAMES GRIFFIN: I am Jim Griffin.  
3 I am the permitting attorney for the project.  
4 What that number, that local number is a  
5 combination of direct and indirect impacts. So,  
6 the 7 million that's the cost to construct the  
7 project. Some of that, some of that 7 million  
8 dollars is going to be spent on local companies  
9 providing local services. Obviously the panels  
10 themselves aren't going to be manufactured here.  
11 They are going to be bought somewhere else, but  
12 that other figure, the 4 million figure also  
13 includes indirect spending. So, construction  
14 contractors are going to come here. If they are  
15 from out of town, they will stay in hotels.  
16 They will be buying gas. They will be buying  
17 other items at the local stores. So, it is just  
18 a method of modeling what is the impact of a new  
19 7 million dollar construction project on the  
20 local community, and that's the number for  
21 indirect and direct impacts on the community.

22 Hopefully that somewhat answered your  
23 question. We don't have the details on exactly  
24 what the model provided, but we did run it

1 through a model to kick out some numbers.

2 MR. MERKER: There are no permanent  
3 local jobs connected with this, correct?

4 MS. KIERA GAVIN: Correct.

5 CHAIRMAN SIPES: The decommissioning  
6 plan, Steve Sipes, the decommissioning plan do  
7 you have one?

8 MS. KIERA GAVIN: So, at this stage we  
9 kind of have a generic commitment to be meeting  
10 decommissioning requirements outlined by the  
11 County and by the AIMA. Ahead of the building  
12 permit we will provide and work with the County  
13 in terms of a more specific outline of our  
14 decommissioning plan and those decommissioning  
15 costs to ensure. It's kind of pretty standard  
16 across these sites across the state, but to  
17 ensure all property commissioning as well as to  
18 kind of finalize what that number is when we  
19 think about what is our decommissioning bond or  
20 a surety amount to cover that cost.

21 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Because if I am  
22 reading it correctly in the wind ordinance, the  
23 County Board will be asking about that, and I  
24 know that they will. I am sure they are going

1 to require a bond of some kind to be put  
2 forward. I would assume so, Dale?

3 MR. DALE LIVINGSTON: Yes, more than  
4 likely. I can't speak for the whole board.

5 MR. JAMES GRIFFIN: It is a requirement  
6 of the ordinance now in order to get a building  
7 permit.

8 MR. DALE LIVINGSTON: Yes.

9 MS. KIERA GAVIN: To follow up on the  
10 decommissioning, are you recommending that we --

11 CHAIRMAN SIPES: I would recommend that  
12 you go ahead and prepare something because I am  
13 pretty sure you are going to need it.

14 MS. KIERA GAVIN: Thank you.

15 MR. COPENBARGER: Dave Copenbarger,  
16 Zoning Board, one more question. I guess you  
17 explained, and I guess one of the benefits or  
18 the alleged benefits to the community is that if  
19 there is a solar farm in the area, you can  
20 contact Ameren and get a credit. I don't  
21 understand how all that works. You may not  
22 either. If we learn to do that, do we contact  
23 Ameren directly?

24 MS. KIERA GAVIN: A good question,



1 first off to clarify you could benefit from kind  
2 of any community solar farm within, anywhere in  
3 Ameren territory. So, it is not kind of  
4 regulated by County or township, just on that  
5 point I wanted to be clear. Then in terms of  
6 yes, that potential kind of subscriber  
7 opportunity, it is not through Ameren directly,  
8 but there are companies who offer the subscriber  
9 program. So, typically what you would do is you  
10 sign up with the company, and you are still  
11 getting your power from Ameren. You are still  
12 getting your electric bill from Ameren, but you  
13 would have kind of a separate agreement and  
14 payment scheme with this subscription company,  
15 and there is a range across the state.

16 MR. COPENBARGER: But to figure out who  
17 that was, you would contact Ameren, and they  
18 direct you to the people? I mean how does  
19 anybody find that out?

20 MS. KIERA GAVIN: They are sometimes  
21 kind of actively looking for subscribers. I  
22 have got something in the mail recently about  
23 it, that kind of thing. But otherwise I think  
24 through just searching on line for Illinois

1 community solar subscription programs. I have  
2 been researching myself recently for my  
3 apartment, and quite a few options come up. I  
4 think that Citizens Utility Board I mentioned  
5 they have kind of recommendations in terms of  
6 protecting consumers and recommendations on how  
7 to kind of do your research across the options.

8 MR. COPENBARGER: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Where do you guys --  
10 where are you tapping into the grid at with this  
11 thing?

12 MS. KIERA GAVIN: Yes. So, the point  
13 of interconnection is that -- let me see if I  
14 can pull this up again, but it is the southwest  
15 corner of the property. So, that's kind of  
16 where our pole line up is. So, right down here  
17 in the corner, this is kind of our, what is  
18 called the pole line up, and some of those poles  
19 are owned by the solar farm, and then there is a  
20 transition point where then the remaining poles  
21 are owned by Ameren, and that kind of handles  
22 the transition of power metering on both sides,  
23 or both the solar farm and Ameren are measuring  
24 how much power is being produced, safety

1 equipment as well in terms of connecting or  
2 disconnecting the farm from the grid, and then  
3 Ameren handles -- how this works is we have  
4 applied the program to an interconnection study  
5 process with Ameren where they essentially tell  
6 us if the grid can handle power at this  
7 location, and what upgrades will be required to  
8 interconnect the solar farm to the grid, and  
9 then they handle their end of that construction,  
10 but as the solar farm we are accountable for the  
11 cost of those upgrades. So, they tell us what's  
12 going to be, what's entailed, and we finance  
13 those upgrades.

14 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Drainage districts,  
15 there is not a drainage district there, or is it  
16 one that's just idle, defunct, whatever we call  
17 them?

18 MR. DALE LIVINGSTON: The meeting that  
19 I was at before there was not a drainage  
20 district there that we know of that's not  
21 defunct or anything on record that we could  
22 find.

23 One more thing. Your decommissioning plan  
24 I would not put a salvage value on your panels

1       when you want to decommission because that will  
2       be enough years that nobody will know if there  
3       is a salvage value or not.  If it is, that's a  
4       plus for you, but as the Board when we looked at  
5       them before, that question has come up.  I think  
6       it has come up in this board too.

7                 CHAIRMAN SIPES:  Yes, salvage value  
8       doesn't really work with us or the Board.

9                 MS. KIERA GAVIN:  Sure, account for the  
10       total cost of the decommissioning, not the net  
11       cost including salvage, understood.

12                MR. DORR:  So, if this does get  
13       approved, what's the time frame of construction?

14                MS. KIERA GAVIN:  Yes, that's a great  
15       question.  We are hopeful that we would be able  
16       to start construction toward the end of 2024 --  
17       sorry, the end of 2023, yes.  But there is kind  
18       of continued development work in place between  
19       now and then.  So, it is a bit of a moving  
20       target in terms of the true timeline, but that's  
21       our goal.

22                CHAIRMAN SIPES:  On that piece of  
23       property are you having to do a lot of dirt work  
24       to change leveling, or change elevation, or is

1           it pretty well the way it lays right now will be  
2           the way the panels fit on it for the most part?

3                   MS. KIERA GAVIN:   Theresa.

4                   MS. THERESA MCGREEVY:   Yes, the slopes  
5           are pretty flat out there.  We haven't looked at  
6           grading in particular, but it shouldn't be too  
7           much of any grading.

8                   CHAIRMAN SIPES:   Is there any further  
9           questions from the ZBA?  Is there a motion for a  
10          recommendation one way or the other to the  
11          County Board?

12                   MR. COPENBARGER:   Dave Copenbarger, I  
13          would make a motion that we approve this  
14          proposal.

15                   MS. HOWARD:   I will second it.

16                   CHAIRMAN SIPES:   Joann Howard.

17                   We have a motion and a second.  Any further  
18          discussion?  Roll-call.

19                   Joann Howard.

20                   MS. HOWARD:   Here.

21                   CHAIRMAN SIPES:   Is that a yes?

22                   MS. HOWARD:   Yes.

23                   CHAIRMAN SIPES:   Glen Goodrich.

24                   MR. GOODRICH:   Yes.

1 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Jon Rosenthal.

2 MR. ROSENTHAL: Yes.

3 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Dave Copenbarger.

4 MR. COPENBARGER: Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Gary Merker.

6 MR. MERKER: Yes.

7 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Joe Dorr.

8 MR. DORR: Yes.

9 CHAIRMAN SIPES: Steve Sipes, yes.

10 So, this recommendation will go before the  
11 County Board. I believe it is usually the third  
12 Tuesday of the month. So, it will be in July.  
13 I don't know if they are going to ask questions,  
14 but you might plan for that. So, I am not sure  
15 whatever that bond may be. They will have to  
16 determine that.

17 MS. KIERA GAVIN: Right.

18 MR. JAMES GRIFFIN: Does it go before a  
19 committee, or will it go directly to the full  
20 Board?

21 CHAIRMAN SIPES: This will go from here  
22 to the full Board. As far as I know that's the  
23 way it has worked in the past, unless they kick  
24 it back to the committee at the Board level

1        maybe, but that's not very common. Things are a  
2        little different these days.

3                I don't know what's going to happen as far  
4        as more meetings after this because at this  
5        moment we have no one to prepare packets, and  
6        that sort of thing, and put this all together.  
7        So, if I hear something, I will let, I will call  
8        all of you.

9                Is there a motion to adjourn?

10               MR. DORR: I will make the motion to  
11        adjourn.

12               CHAIRMAN SIPES: Those in favor?

13               ZBA BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

14               CHAIRMAN SIPES: Opposed?

15               (Which were all of the proceedings  
16        had on this meeting as of this  
17        date.)

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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
2 COUNTY OF CHRISTIAN ) SS

3

4 I, Sandra K. Haines, a Notary Public and  
5 Certified Shorthand Reporter, do hereby certify  
6 that on June 28, 2022 the foregoing meeting was  
7 taken down stenographically by me and afterwards  
8 reduced to typewritten form by me, and that the  
9 foregoing transcript contains a true and  
10 accurate translation of all such shorthand  
11 notes.

12 Given under my hand and seal this 11th day  
13 of July, 2022 at Taylorville, Illinois.

14

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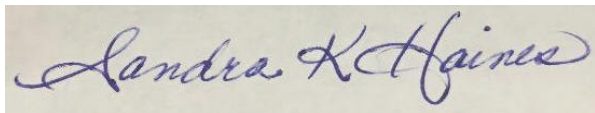
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Sandra K. Haines  
Notary Public and CSR  
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- \$218,000.00** [1] - 35:19  
**'09** [1] - 10:3  
**084-002423** [3] - 1:21, 3:13, 48:23  
**1,700** [1] - 28:7  
**100** [3] - 22:18, 26:20, 29:3  
**116** [1] - 6:1  
**11th** [1] - 48:12  
**13** [2] - 7:12, 10:3  
**15** [3] - 6:1, 26:18, 29:6  
**150** [4] - 21:4, 21:6, 26:23, 30:4  
**17** [2] - 17:1, 36:11  
**17-13-23-200-006-00** [1] - 15:6  
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**200** [1] - 3:10  
**2014** [1] - 16:9  
**2016** [1] - 16:10  
**2021** [1] - 33:12  
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**2024** [1] - 44:16  
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**238** [1] - 27:16  
**24** [1] - 7:12  
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**26** [1] - 26:17  
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