



**Champaign County Board  
Environment and Land Use Committee (ELUC)  
County of Champaign, Urbana, Illinois**

**MINUTES – Approved as Distributed on January 7, 2021**

DATE: Thursday, November 5, 2020  
TIME: 6:30 p.m.  
PLACE: Lyle Shields Meeting Room  
Brookens Administrative Center  
1776 E Washington, Urbana, IL 61802  
and remote participation via Zoom

**Committee Members**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Aaron Esry (Chair)	
Connie Dillard-Myers	
	Jodi Eisenmann
Stephanie Fortado	
Jim Goss	
Kyle Patterson	
Eric Thorsland (Vice-Chair)	

**County Staff:** John Hall (Zoning Administrator), Susan Monte (Planner) and Mary Ward (Recording Secretary)  
**Others Present:** Giraldo Rosales (County Board Chair)

**MINUTES**

**I. Call to Order**

Committee Chair Esry called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

**II. Roll Call**

A verbal roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

**III. Approval of Agenda/Addendum**

**MOTION** by Ms. Fortado to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Thorsland. Upon vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

**IV. Approval of Minutes**

A. October 8, 2020

**MOTION** by Mr. Goss to approve the minutes of the October 8, 2020 meeting, seconded by Mr. Thorsland. Upon vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

Ms. Dillard-Myers joined the meeting.

## **V. Public Participation**

Sara (no last name) spoke in favor of residents being able to keep bees. Not even sure why this is even being discussed. She doesn't keep bees but thinks people should be able to.

Annette Donnelly asked why we are trying to legislate pollinators. Thinks it egregious. Wonders what the county has against bees.

Rachel Coventry, Curtis Orchard – her argument against regulation is it's impossible to know where the bees came from. Aren't we trying to encourage pollinators? Seems crazy to try to put in an ordinance for bees.

Jason Bartell, Rantoul, Attorney/CPA and Beekeeper. Seems like this is a 2-party dispute and should not put rules on the entire county. Thinks the proposed ordinance is a step backwards and not forwards. This area is already regulated by the Illinois Department of Agriculture. Currently they are required to register the hive and GPS coordinates. Required to submit to hive inspections at any time. Environmental changes are happening rapidly, so practices will always be changing. Encouraged the committee to vote No.

Steve Halfar stated that keeping bees is labor intensive and there are a lot of hurdles and difficulties in keeping bees. This ordinance would make it more difficult for beekeepers and would discourage people from keeping bees. He encourages the committee to vote no.

Maggie Wachter, Master Beekeeper certified by University of Florida, Teaches Beekeeping at Parkland for last 8 years – In Illinois bees have particular problems as there aren't enough places for them to forage. They don't thrive the way they do in other states as there just aren't enough flowers. Be aware of the need to encourage people to keep bees. She's never had a problem with neighbors. Don't develop a policy based on one incident or disgruntled person.

Tom Dillavou stated that by passing an ordinance we may be discouraging future beekeepers.

N E Davis wanted to echo Mr. Bartell and the others. Maybe an issue for an HOA to handle.

Robert and Bonnie Switzer are not beekeepers but have a neighbor who is. Proposed ordinance would make it more difficult for him to continue keeping bees. They have never had any problems. They have a birdbath and have had no problems with bees gathering there. Encouraged the committee to not enact such an ordinance.

Ryan Shosted has been a beekeeper for almost 10 years. He has never had any complaints or problems. The consequence of having an ordinance would be fewer beehives in the county. Does this as a hobbyist and feels that an ordinance would prevent him, and others, from performing what is essentially a service to the community.

John Trefzger said there are over 400 species of bees in Illinois. They are only aggressive if you are getting into their honey or brood. That's when they get protective. In disagreement with having an ordinance.

Randy Graham encouraged the committee to vote no. We need to be encouraging of beekeepers. It seems ironic that this county, home of the U of I, a premiere land-grant university world renowned for ag research and part of that research has to do with pollinators, it would seem strange that we would propose this kind of legislation. We rely on pollinators for crop production. It would suppress the fostering of healthy bee populations.

Bryan Miller, Co-President of local bee club and Central Regional Director of the Illinois State Beekeepers Association. They will be keeping tabs on this issue to see how it goes. They mapped the honeybee genome at the U of I. They are doing amazing work with bees at the U of I. Disagreed with the need to have an ordinance.

Cole L. does beekeeping with his children; it's a family activity. An ordinance would clearly go against that. Would be hard to tell his kids they could no longer do this activity. He's against any ordinance that's against bees.

Kyle Patterson joined the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

## **VI. Communications**

Ms. Dillard-Myers echoed the beekeepers. As a gardener at heart, she sees no reason to limit anyone who wants to keep bees. The U of I has a whole field dedicated to bees. We need pollinators. Not for anything that would limit bees or pollinators.

Mr. Goss also commented on bees and the need for pollinators.

Mr. Thorsland said that he had bees and there were no problems. If you take care of your bees, they don't seem to be a problem. Most people who have bees don't have problems.

## **VII. New Business: For Information Only**

### **A. Complete Count Committee Concludes 2020 Census Data Collection Efforts**

Ms. Monte provided a brief update on the Census. The effort concluded on October 15. We expect results to be available in Spring of 2021. The Census Bureau is conducting on-going surveys to take the pulse of the people and collect additional information to measure the accuracy of the 2020 Census.

### **B. October 2020 Residential Electronics Collection Event Results**

Ms. Monte provided the results of the recent Electronics Collection Event. Due to Covid-19, the event had to be completely outside. We did not have the availability of Community Service Workers, which typically we utilize many of them to assist. The costs were higher for that reason. Public demand was remarkable. Online registration filled up in 2 days. Event hours were extended to accommodate the demand. The no-show rate was up slightly this year. Twenty municipalities contribute support for this event to offset the cost of hiring the electronics recycler. TVs still represent about 69% of all electronics collected.

## **VIII. New Business: Items to be Approved at ELUC**

### **A. Authorization for Public Hearing on Proposed Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment to Add Requirements for Beekeeping in Residential Districts**

Mr. Hall gave an overview of the proposed amendment. It would only apply to residential zoning districts which is less than 10% of the County. Closely follows two state model ordinances. He noted that we did not have any comments tonight from those who were at previous meetings that requested these regulations. They were made aware of tonight's agenda. He doesn't think this ordinance prohibits beekeeping but also agrees with those that said this amendment is not likely to change the complaints the committee has received previously.

Ms. Fortado had a question about the water supply requirement. Is there a reason we decided to go with the two sources of water? Mr. Hall said a lot of the complaints were about bees congregating at water sources on neighboring properties. Water source is part of the problem, so wanted to make that as strong as possible.

Mr. Thorsland said that the major thing he took away from this was the bees were in other people's water. Water is important to beekeeping. Has no desire to have even a loose ordinance. If this is moved to the ZBA (Zoning Board of Appeals), would like to see a good back and forth discussion; it's a better forum for discussion. If we move anything forward want it to be the broadest possible so that we only deal with the bad actors. Mr. Hall said the Department of Ag regulations do not give them any authority to limit the number of bees on a property. He did talk with a local inspector who didn't think an ordinance would really help. He did say most insurance companies require signage.

Mr. Goss did not support moving this ordinance out of this level. He had received a lot of comments on this; only solar had more. This does not need to go to the ZBA. Mr. Esry said he didn't think this is the place to handle specific issues/cases. He didn't think the ordinance would stop beekeeping but doesn't like putting out regulations that aren't needed.

**MOTION BY** Mr. Goss to table the ordinance indefinitely and not move it forward to the Zoning Board of Appeals. The motion was seconded by Mr. Thorsland.

Mr. Patterson would support the idea of discussion about this topic. Thinks there is a way this could be done so that it wasn't restrictive. Working on an ordinance like this is a long process but thinks tabling this is best. Ms. Fortado agreed with the consensus of the committee. She did want to acknowledge all of John's work on this. There were a couple of questions for Mr. Hall before the vote regarding the number of hives on the property in question. And, if it was accurate to say, this is the only area we've gotten complaints on.

Upon roll call vote, the **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**IX. Other Business**

The September report was received and placed on file. Mr. Thorsland stated his thanks and appreciation for all the work that goes into the report.

**X. Chair's Report**

Mr. Esry thanked Tim Breen for helping with the technical side of the meeting with the Webinar format.

**XI. Designation of Items to be Placed on the Consent Agenda**

There were no items to be placed on the Consent Agenda.

**XII. Adjournment**

Mr. Esry adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

*Please note the minutes reflect the order of the agenda and may not necessarily reflect the order of business conducted at the meeting.*