



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

**MINUTES – Approved as Distributed March 10, 2022**

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DATE: Thursday, February 10, 2022  
TIME: 6:30 p.m.  
PLACE: Shields-Carter Meeting Room / Zoom  
Brookens Administrative Center  
1776 E Washington, Urbana, IL 61802  
and remote participation via Zoom

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**Committee Members**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Aaron Esry (Vice-Chair)	
Stephanie Fortado	
Mary King	
Kyle Patterson	
Jacob Paul	
Chris Stohr	
Eric Thorsland (Chair)	

**County Staff:** John Hall (Zoning Administrator), Susan Monte (Planner) and Mary Ward (Recording Secretary)

**Others Present:** None

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**MINUTES**

**I. Call to Order**

Committee Chair Thorsland called the meeting to order at 6:31 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. King to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Esry. Upon roll call vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously to approve the agenda.

**IV. Approval of Minutes**

A. January 6, 2022

**MOTION** by Mr. Stohr to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2022, regular meeting seconded by Mr. Esry. Upon roll call vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

## **V. Public Participation**

Brad Uken, Manager, Champaign County Farm Bureau, is here to be available to answer questions about their ARPA Funding proposal.

Josh Hartke – excited to see we are addressing and looking at upgrading the county Wind Farm Ordinance.

Mike Wilson, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative – here to answer questions about their proposed Tower that will require a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment update.

## **VI. Communications**

There were no communications.

## **VII. New Business: Item for Information Only**

### **A. Champaign County Farm Bureau Proposal for \$325,000 ARPA Funding to Accelerate Use of Cover Crops in Champaign County Agriculture**

Brad Uken, manager of the Champaign County Farm Bureau, gave a presentation on their proposal for a Cover Crop initiative. He highlighted what cover crops are and their benefit. Cover crops have many environmental benefits. Cover crops keep the soil where it belongs and helps prevent runoff; can help reduce compaction, improve soil health, reduce herbicide use and improves soil moisture. They are requesting \$325,000 in ARPA funds to be spent over four years. \$285,000 will be used to accelerate the usage of cover crops through a per acre incentive paid to the farmer/landowner and \$40,000 (\$10,000/year) will be spent on farmer/landowner training, education, and field days.

Ms. Fortado commented that the spending time frame may have to be changed. It was her understanding that ARPA funds needed to be spent by 2024. She also had a couple of questions on the proposal. She thought incentivizing was a good idea but questioned why they went with a higher rate of \$7.50/acre compared to an IDOA program of \$5/acre. U of I research indicates that it costs \$37.00/acre to plant cover crops. Early adopters took advantage of the \$5/acre. Those that are more reluctant may need more incentive. There is a minimum of 5 acres; is there a maximum? Those that aren't doing this will probably start small and not do a full field.

Mr. Paul asked if there was any focus on using native plants for cover crops? There are a lot of varieties that can be used, and there are some native plants that could be used.

Mr. Stohr asked what their education program will do that hasn't been done over the past several years? Cover crops are not a new concept. It has been just over the last decade that you've seen some growth, but there is still a lot of room for growth. The educational efforts would talk about the costs and the potential for yield reduction at the beginning. It takes time for the benefits of cover crops to build up. Mr. Stohr also asked about the USDA requirements and how this differs? Farm Bureau hopes to make it simpler without so many hoops to jump through. There would be a simple application and then have a certification or spot check system in place that they can verify the info and do field inspections. This is not totally dependent on ARPA funds, Champaign County Farm Bureau will put funds in as well.

Mr. Esry spoke about cover crops and native species. The idea of cover crops is to have something growing or having roots of a live plant. The problem with native species is that some don't over-winter very well and some you can plant and might not see until the second year. They may also be more

expensive. Not sure they are the best answer for what is trying to be done. He has done cereal rye and have had mixed results. There are pros and cons to everything, and cost is probably the biggest reason we don't see more of it. Would like to see this advance to the full County Board for discussion.

Ms. King questions if we should be using ARPA funds for this project as there are so many more projects we could be using the funds for. There are surely other incentive programs the Farm Bureau can access for this program.

Mr. Paul asked if cover crops can be used for pasture for livestock? There are some who are using it for pasture/grazing. The U of I is getting ready to do some research of grazing cattle on cover crops.

Discussion then focused on the fact that we don't want to replace what is already being done. We want to see that we're reaching new people. We need to think in terms of broader water projects in the county. We've allocated \$2 million dollars for this category in 2022. How we allocate this money is important. The rural caucuses will have a lot to say about the water projects in their districts. Ms. Kloepfel added that we have currently allocated enough for \$500,000 for each of the rural districts and \$500,000 for the Mahomet Aquifer. No other projects have been decided yet.

It was felt that this needs to go back to the caucuses for discussion and then come back to ELUC in March and then take to the full County Board after that. There were some unanswered questions from tonight that we should let Mr. Uken and the Farm Bureau do some research and come back as an agenda item again next month to discuss in more detail. It would also give the rural districts time to discuss the various water projects and what they may want to fund. We can then send this to the full County Board in March.

#### **VIII. New Business: Items to Receive and Place on File by ELUC to Allow a 30-Day Review Period**

##### **A. Pollution Control Facility Ordinance Update**

Susan Monte presented the updated Pollution Control Facility Ordinance. This was last updated in 2005. Updates include use of an Ordinance format, updated references and definitions, and streamlined provisions with the option that an application for a new Pollution Control facility may be considered at a public hearing held by ELUC or delegated to be held by a Hearing Officer. This needs to be held for 30 days for review. It is exempt from the zoning ordinance requirement based on state statute.

#### **IX. New Business: Items to be Approved by ELUC**

##### **A. Annual Renewal of Recreation and Entertainment License for Champaign County Fair Association, 1302 N. Coler Avenue, Urbana, IL. 01/01/22 – 12/31/22.**

It was noted that the Sheriff's office has signed off on this application.

**MOTION** by Ms. Fortado and seconded by Mr. Esry to renew the Recreation and Entertainment License for the Champaign County Fair Association. Upon roll call vote the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

##### **B. Authorization for Public Hearing on Proposed Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment to Authorize a Tower over 100 feet in height as a Second Principal Use with an Electrical Substation in AG-1 and Ag-2 Districts**

We have been approached by Eastern Illini Electric Co-op. They had planned to add towers less than 100 feet to better manage their substations. They were approached by an internet service provider, who will rent space on the towers, if they can be extended to 120 feet to provide high-speed internet

access for rural areas. Once a tower is more than 100 feet tall the zoning ordinance is very restrictive on second principal uses in rural districts. We would need to amend the ordinance. At the staff level, we think this sounds like a good thing.

Mike Wilson, with Eastern Illini Electric Co-op, said they are working with NextLink. They have received federal funding for providing improved broadband in East Central Illinois. EIEC had looked at doing it themselves, but it is cost prohibitive. They look at it as way to help provide broadband access in the area. EIEC is already putting up the towers for a new metering system, so for a little bit taller tower we could help provide this service.

Ms. Fortado pointed out that we are in the middle of a county broadband plan. We have some overlap with the Broadband Task Force and maybe we can help serve as a hub for information and make sure this type of information gets funneled to the Task Force.

Mr. Esry felt that this was pretty straight forward and should be a fairly straight forward text amendment. A 20-foot taller tower will not affect much. If a company is willing to put internet on the towers, feels like we should go for it.

Mr. Uken, as chairman of the Broadband Task Force, stated that NextLink has been in touch with the committee and consultant and the information has been shared.

**MOTION** by Ms. King to authorize the public hearings on the proposed text amendment. The motion was seconded by Mr. Patterson. Upon roll call vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

**X. New Business: Items to be Recommended to the County Board**

- A. Resolution Authorizing Agreement to Use State Farm Center Parking Lot for IEPA One-Day Household Hazardous Waste Collection on April 9, 2022

Ms. Monte stated that the State Farm event coordinator and his team has been wonderful to work with so far. Everyone is optimistic about this event this year.

- B. Resolution Approving Agreement between Champaign County, Parkland College and A-Team Recyclers Regarding the Residential Electronics Collections on May 21, 2022 and October 15, 2022
- C. Resolution Approving Champaign County Opt-In Form to Illinois EPA to Participate in Manufacturer E-Waste Program in 2023.

**OMNIBUS MOTION** by Mr. Stohr and seconded by Mr. Patterson to approve items 10 A., B., and C. Upon roll call vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

- D. **Zoning Case 014-AG-21.** Amend the Champaign County Zoning Ordinance to establish beekeeping Requirements as summarized in the full legal advertisement and summarized as follows:

1. Amend Section 3.0 Definitions by adding a definition for “apiary”, “beekeeping”, “honey bee”, “nucleus colony” and other related terms
2. Add footnote 29 to section 5.2 Table of Authorized Principal Uses
3. Add footnote 30 to Section 5.2 Table of Authorized Principal Uses

4. Add new Section 7.8 Beekeeping in the R-1, R-2 and R-3 Districts, with new requirements for beekeeping

Mr. Hall explained that this doesn't necessarily have to be forwarded to the County Board. The ZBA has recommended denial and this committee also recommended denial but it is ultimately up to the County Board to pass or not. What we would be voting on tonight would be to move to pass it on with the recommended denial from both ELUC and ZBA.

Mr. Esry stated he was not in favor of passing it to the full board. Mr. Thorsland said we could put it through to the full County Board so that it would have been through the full process, although he would be a no vote at the County Board.

This item died due to lack of a motion and second.

**XI. Other Business**

A. Monthly Reports

- i. December 2021

The December monthly report is delayed. These reports may be delayed due to a retirement and a new person starting. Reports may be sporadic the next few months.

**XII. Chair's Report**

There was no Chair's Report.

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

Items 10 A, B and C were placed on the Consent Agenda.

**XIV. Adjournment**

**MOTION** by Mr. Esry and seconded by Ms. Fortado to adjourn the meeting. Upon voice vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

Mr. Thorsland adjourned the meeting at 7:49 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.*