

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

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

**DATE: August 11, 2022 PLACE: Shields-Carter Meeting Room
1776 East Washington Street
Urbana, IL 61802**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ryan Elwell, Lee Roberts, Tom Anderson, Nolan Herbert, Thaddeus Bates,
Larry Wood, Jim Randol

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: John Hall, Susan Burgstrom, Isaak Simmers

OTHERS PRESENT: Janet Vogel, Denise Hanson, Ed Decker, Nick Mahoney, Tony Grilo

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum

The roll was called, and a quorum declared present.

Mr. Elwell informed the audience that anyone wishing to testify for any public hearing tonight must sign the Witness Register.

3. Correspondence - None

4. Minutes- July 14, 2022

Mr. Elwell asked if there was any discussion on the July 14, 2022 minutes. Seeing none, he entertained a motion to approve the July 14, 2022 minutes.

Mr. Wood moved, seconded by Mr. Bates, to approve the July 14, 2022 minutes. The motion carried by voice vote.

5. Audience Participation with respect to matters other than cases pending before the Board – None

6. Continued Public Hearings - None

7. New Public Hearings

Case 062-AM-22

Petitioner: Anthony Donato, d.b.a. Donato Solar – Rantoul LLC

Request: Amend the Zoning Map to change the zoning district designation from the AG-1

Agriculture Zoning District to the AG-2 Agriculture Zoning District in order to allow a data center as a Special Use in related Zoning Case 063-S-22 and a PV solar array as a second principal use as a proposed County Board Special Use Permit in related Case 064-S-22.

Location: A 14.77-acre tract in the North Half of the Southwest Quarter of Section 10, Township 21 North, Range 9 East of the Third Principal Meridian in Rantoul Township.

Case 063-S-22

Petitioner: Anthony Donato, d.b.a. Donato Solar – Rantoul LLC

Request: Authorize a data center as a Special Use Permit, subject to the proposed rezoning to AG-2 Agriculture in Case 062-AM-22, and subject to the following waiver:

Authorize a waiver from Section 6.1.3 of the Zoning Ordinance that requires a noise analysis to be performed for a Data Center.

Location: A 14.77-acre tract in the North Half of the Southwest Quarter of Section 10, Township 21 North, Range 9 East of the Third Principal Meridian in Rantoul Township.

Case 064-S-22

Petitioner: Anthony Donato, d.b.a. Donato Solar – Rantoul LLC

Request: Authorize a photovoltaic solar array with a total nameplate capacity of 5 megawatts (MW), including access roads and wiring, as a second principal use as a County Board Special Use Permit, subject to the rezoning to the AG-2 Agriculture Zoning District in Case 062-AM-22, and including the following waivers of standard conditions (other waivers may be necessary):

Part A: A waiver for not providing a Decommissioning and Site Reclamation Plan that includes cost estimates prepared by an Illinois Licensed Professional Engineer prior to consideration of the Special Use Permit by the Board, per Section 6.1.1 A.3.

Part B: A waiver for locating the PV Solar Array less than one-half mile from an incorporated municipality and within the contiguous urban growth area of a municipality per Section 6.1.5 B.(2)a.

Part C: A waiver for locating 235 feet from a non-participating existing dwelling on a lot that is more than 10 acres in area in lieu of the minimum required separation of 255 feet between the solar farm fencing and the dwelling, per Section 6.1.5 D.(3)b.

Part D: A waiver for a separation distance of 165 feet between the solar inverters and the perimeter fence in lieu of the minimum required 275 feet, per Section 6.1.5 D.(6).

Part E: A waiver for not submitting a Landscape Plan with weed control plan prior to consideration of the Special Use Permit by the Board, per Section 6.1.5 F.(9)a.(b).iv.

Part F: A waiver for having a 6 foot tall fence in lieu of the minimum required 7 foot tall fence, per Section 6.1.5 M.(1)a.

1 Location: **A 14.77-acre tract in the North Half of the Southwest Quarter of Section 10, Township**
2 **21 North, Range 9 East of the Third Principal Meridian in Rantoul Township.**

3
4 **Case 065-V-22**

5 Petitioner: **Anthony Donato, d.b.a. Donato Solar – Rantoul LLC**

6
7 Request: **Authorize the following variance for the data center proposed as a Special Use Permit**
8 **in related case 063-S-22:**

9
10 **Part A: Authorize a variance for 1 parking space in lieu of the minimum required 6**
11 **parking spaces, per Section 7.4.1 C.3. of the Zoning Ordinance.**

12
13 **Part B: Authorize a variance for no loading berth in lieu of the minimum required 1**
14 **loading berth, per Section 7.4.1 C.5. of the Zoning Ordinance.**

15
16 Location: **A 14.77-acre tract in the North Half of the Southwest Quarter of Section 10, Township**
17 **21 North, Range 9 East of the Third Principal Meridian in Rantoul Township.**

18
19 Mr. Elwell informed the audience that anyone wishing to testify for any public hearing tonight must sign
20 the witness register for that public hearing. He reminded the audience that when they sign the witness
21 register, they are signing an oath.

22
23 Mr. Elwell informed the audience that this Case is an Administrative Case, and as such, the County allows
24 anyone the opportunity to cross-examine any witness. He said that at the proper time, he will ask for a
25 show of hands from those who would like to cross-examine, and each person will be called upon. He said
26 that those who desire to cross-examine do not have to sign the Witness Register, but will be asked to
27 clearly state their name before asking any questions. He noted that no new testimony is to be given during
28 the cross-examination. He said that attorneys who have complied with Article 7.6 of the ZBA By-Laws
29 are exempt from cross-examination. He asked if the petitioner would like to outline the nature of their
30 request prior to introducing evidence.

31
32 Mr. Elwell asked Mr. Donato to approach the microphone and asked when he does speak to state his name
33 and address.

34
35 Tony Grilo, 103 N Thomas St. Thomasboro, IL 61878 said Anthony Donato could not be there that night,
36 so Mr. Grilo was filling in for him. He said the last two waivers regarding the solar farm landscaping plan
37 as well as the fence height have been taken care of. He said the electric company agreed it should be a
38 seven-foot fence, so it has been updated on the site plan. He said he and Mr. Donato built a four-megawatt
39 project in Arcola in 2020. He said they were able to build it after acquiring Solar Renewable Energy
40 Credits (SREC) from the State and as the State of Illinois has allocated more funds to that program; they
41 are planning to take advantage of that. He said they were large scale, behind the meter programs and were
42 able to pair them with the data center operation. He said the location they are looking to develop is just
43 south of Rantoul and on the cusp of the village limits. He said it was outside of their village limits and
44 despite their excitement over the project, they could not annex the piece of land because the Village of
45 Rantoul has their own private energy facility and unfortunately the terms of the SRECs require going
46 through Ameren. He said the SREC program requires all prevailing wage, meaning all jobs created were
47 fifty plus dollars an hour. He said that covered anyone from the janitorial staff to moving equipment
48 around and the electrical team. He said right now they have a solid team of around ten people that they
49 were hoping to build upon from the local economy, specifically from Rantoul, because they wanted to put

1 the money where the projects are located. He said the timeline was outdated but they were basically ready
2 to begin their project as soon as they are able to. He said this process was a longer process, but their
3 shovels are ready. He said they worked with Pheasants Forever on their landscape plan to establish natural
4 habitat throughout the site, under the panels, between the panels, all the water ways, throughout the entire
5 location. He said they started doing that in Arcola and it has helped tremendously from a maintenance
6 standpoint, but also an aesthetic one. He said the Arcola site looked tremendously better and he was glad
7 they were able to work with Pheasants Forever and establish a plan early on with them. He said they have
8 accepted the seven-foot fence, which was reflected in the updated site plan. He said the pole barn housing
9 the data center was going to be a pretty large facility and primarily used for storage of lawn mowers, skid
10 steers, mini-excavators, and replacement components for the solar farm. He said for the most part the
11 storage material was there to build and maintain the property. He said they did have a couple more projects
12 hoping to get in the pipeline and the Rantoul facility would be the core to the area. He said they were
13 wanting to store all of their equipment there, mainly because it was only three miles from his house and
14 was a convenient choice. He said they were looking at just a normal wood post frame building. He said
15 they were still waiting for their archeological study and would keep updating the site plan and understand
16 that it was kind of a fluid thing being able to take the feedback from everyone and adjust things accordingly
17 and go from there. Mr. Grilo put the site plan on the screen just in case there were any questions that
18 needed the reference image. He said that was basically all he had, and they were an open book.

19

20 Mr. Elwell thanked Mr. Grilo and asked if there was any discussion from the Board.

21

22 Mr. Wood asked if the three-acre lot in the front of the property was owned by them as well.

23

24 Mr. Grilo said it was not and that it was another company, Advantage Trucking. He said they were a semi
25 trucking company. He said they bought their land from them.

26

27 Mr. Wood asked if they had an easement across their property.

28

29 Mr. Grilo said correct, and they had two different easements for their project; one temporary construction
30 easement that utilized their existing driveway, and a permanent easement along the north edge of their
31 parcel. He said they did not want to grant a long-term easement along the south edge, but they were fine
32 with the construction entrance being there temporarily.

33

34 Mr. Wood asked if Mr. Grilo could explain what it meant when asking about the sound issue and how it
35 was immersed in water.

36

37 Mr. Grilo said they had learned over time that things work more efficiently when they were cool and one
38 of the big technologies becoming more prominent at larger tech companies such as Google and Apple is
39 that they store all their computers, servers, etc. in tubs of oil. He said it was not really an oil but a fluid.
40 He said a lot of companies started off using mineral oil, but mineral oil was not as efficient. He said
41 essentially what happens was those tubs of oil, he would keep referencing it as oil but wants the Board to
42 know he means fluid, connect to an outdoor dry cooler. He said it was essentially like the condenser unit
43 people have at their homes for their air conditioning units. He said the fluid gets pumped through the tub
44 through the pipes and outside. He said it was essentially a big radiator and worked as a big fan blowing
45 across the radiator pool of fluid and back to the tub cold. He said the hot fluid goes out, gets cooled, and
46 comes back. He said it was awesome technology. He said it was able to keep everything much cleaner and
47 substantially quieter. He said when he was there earlier talking about the data centers, they were open air
48 cooling and he was concerned about security and filthiness. He said they were surrounded by corn fields
49 and within a month or so would be covered in dust and it would be to their benefit to keep everything

1 sealed up. He said clean, filtered air was ideal for the efficiency and longevity of their project.

2
3 Mr. Wood asked if the oil, or fluid, was an environmental issue if it were to get out of the enclosed system.

4
5 Mr. Grilo said it was not according to the manufacturer. He said they claimed the fluid to be ninety-eight
6 percent biodegradable. He said the owner of the company said he would even take a drink of it. Mr. Grilo
7 said personally he would not and maybe that was a sales tactic. He said the fluid has a ten-year lifespan
8 and he could not remember if that was in the original packet or not.

9
10 Mr. Wood asked if they had to replace that periodically or if it was just recycled.

11
12 Mr. Grilo said in theory the fluid has a lifespan of ten years and at that ten year mark the manufacturer
13 will take it back to be refurbished and used again elsewhere.

14
15 Mr. Wood asked if they had a well and noted there were no bathrooms on the property.

16
17 Mr. Grilo said they did not but the other property in Arcola did have a well. He said at that point they were
18 not planning on installing a water service because it was not a manned facility. He said they were hoping
19 to avoid the extra steps that would come when needing to install bathrooms and such.

20
21 Mr. Elwell asked Mr. Hall or Ms. Burgstrom if they had to have a bathroom and water because the barn
22 was going to be used as business storage.

23
24 Mr. Hall said the County Ordinance was silent on the but the Illinois Plumbing Code would probably
25 require a rest room, but that code was not enforced. He said it was a grey area. He said another part of that
26 grey area was according to State law, any building had to meet specified codes before occupancy. He said
27 he may be out of date on that and apologized to Mr. Grilo if he was. He said the developer originally
28 wanted to build this as an agricultural building and then convert to solar when or if they were approved to
29 do so. He said agricultural buildings do not have to meet a building code but if they knew it was going to
30 be a solar farm eventually, then it would make sense to him to make the code apply. He said he does not
31 think the International Building Code, again not their code and he was not as familiar with it as the Staff
32 was with the Zoning Ordinance, required a restroom. He does not think that it would.

33
34 Mr. Randol said he would have a little concern with using this location as a center hub for their business
35 and not have restroom facilities when having employees in and out of the location. He said they were
36 going to need a restroom of some type.

37
38 Mr. Wood added that would also require a sanitary system of some sort, a septic tank/field, and that could
39 cause a problem with the land use in terms of being able to put solar equipment over the top of something
40 like that. He said he did not know if they could do that or not.

41
42 Mr. Grilo said he knew restrooms was going to be a question and if that was something the Board decided
43 was necessary than he agreed it would not be the worst thing to have to do. He said like Mr. Randol said
44 it would be good long-term to have. He said eventually it would be a thriving operation and having a place
45 for their guys to wash their hands and whatnot would be beneficial. He said he did not know the codes
46 regarding the sanitary system and would have to read up on it. He said he was sure it would not be
47 catastrophic to the solar array project just because they were able to use GPS and map it out to avoid
48 anything that needed to be avoided. He said frustratingly Ms. Burgstrom just handed him a map of a
49 pipeline owned by the Village of Rantoul going through the property even though they were told by the

1 Village it did not go through the property. He said they would be able to map everything out and adjust
2 their layout accordingly.

3
4 Mr. Hall said one comment he would offer was that on the occasions where he had talked to the Public
5 Health District on facilities that were rarely used, they do not like to see septic tank systems on facilities
6 that do not have regular flow going through them. He felt it would help to check with the health department
7 to see what they would recommend. He said they might just recommend port-a-potties until the flow gets
8 enough to utilize the septic's organic system. He said that if they were not fed regularly, they essentially
9 starve.

10
11 Mr. Grilo said that was a good call and would reach out and come up with a plan.

12
13 Mr. Anderson asked why they needed the data center. He said he had a solar array system for personal use
14 and fed energy directly into the grid and they were saying they did not intend to feed it into the local
15 energy supply. He asked who their customers were.

16
17 Mr. Grilo said they would be interconnected with Ameren during the day and when the farm is producing
18 more energy than they could use, it would be pumped into the grid with hopes it will help offset some
19 utility costs. He said it was a cheaper source of energy for Ameren and hopefully some of those savings
20 roll over to customers nearby. He said he did not know how Ameren handles all that, but it would be
21 getting pumped into Ameren during the day. He said they essentially treat Ameren as a giant battery for
22 them during the day when they were producing way more power than what they could use. He said they
23 sell it to Ameren and at night they buy it back from Ameren. Mr. Grilo asked if that answered Mr.
24 Anderson's question.

25
26 Mr. Anderson said no and asked who their customers were.

27
28 Mr. Grilo asked if he meant the data center side or the power side.

29
30 Mr. Anderson said the data center side.

31
32 Mr. Grilo said sure, okay. He said whoever was willing to pay for hosting the data center. He said it could
33 be one of the ZBA members if they wanted to host a web or email server in it. He said random data hosting,
34 web 3.0 hosting, the line was long. He said he did not have a list that he was able to share. He said it was
35 a variety of entities that host a variety of applications in the data centers.

36
37 Mr. Anderson asked who was doing that before they made the installation.

38
39 Mr. Grilo said they currently have a data center in Rantoul where they buy power from the Village of
40 Rantoul. He said as they build out to different locations, they would transition off of that and on to solar
41 power. He said their goal was to be able to use solar energy.

42
43 Mr. Wood asked Staff if the indicated 12.5 acres is different from the 14.77 acres on the Preliminary
44 Memorandum.

45
46 Ms. Burgstrom said sometimes the GIS system, the county's mapping system, had an acreage that they
47 calculate that might exclude the right of way or exclude some other easement. She said the 12.53 acres
48 was not correct according to what the Plat of Survey says, which is 14.77 acres.

49

- 1 Mr. Wood said that was a big difference.
2
- 3 Ms. Burgstrom said it was a big difference, yes.
4
- 5 Mr. Randol asked which one was the correct one.
6
- 7 Ms. Burgstrom said she was going by the Plat of Survey at 14.77 acres.
8
- 9 Mr. Herbert asked if the Village of Rantoul had an easement for the pipe running through there.
10
- 11 Ms. Burgstrom said they just found out today there is a twenty-foot required easement and they do have
12 an agreement that just had not been recorded yet. She said that was something the Village was going to
13 hop on right away.
14
- 15 Mr. Grilo said yes, that was just handed to them before the meeting. He said it was somewhat frustrating
16 because they have spoken with the Village of Rantoul Public Works Superintendent multiple times about
17 this project and thought it ended before the property. He said there might have been some confusion on
18 our end and miscommunication between the two parties. He said he would get to him the following day
19 and be able to update their site plan accordingly because now they would essentially leave a twenty-foot
20 empty strip of no panels to allow access for their equipment if needed.
21
- 22 Mr. Elwell asked if Mr. Grilo had any pictures of the Arcola facility so he could see an example of
23 Pheasants Forever vegetation.
24
- 25 Mr. Grilo said he did not and was awful at taking pictures. He said he could work on getting some.
26
- 27 Mr. Hall said he would be happy to help get them those pictures because he would like to see them himself.
28 Mr. Hall asked if Arcola had arrays as low as they were planning to install at the new facility and if they
29 would be able to establish vegetation underneath them.
30
- 31 Mr. Grilo said the difference in the two sites is that Arcola is a single-access tracker which rotates from
32 east to west, and the new location was only south facing panels. He said they were bi-facial panels which
33 means there was no backing on the back of the panel, allowing light to permeate through them theoretically
34 and vegetation could still grow. He said he did not know what to expect to be completely honest. He said
35 there were many different reports and studies that were done combining the plant and agricultural side
36 with the solar side and they will have to see how the bi-facial plates allow growth underneath them without
37 them rotating. He said right now in Arcola, the ground was able to get a fair bit of sun because of the
38 rotation of the panels. He said regarding the height of the panels, Arcola was roughly eighteen inches off
39 the ground at their highest point and the new installation was around twenty inches off the ground. He
40 said the Pheasants Forever mix that was sold to them was a twenty-four-inch mix that was specifically
41 designed to only go to about two feet. He said this was the first year that the mix has been established and
42 they had to mow twice that year because of the invasion of other species and different weeds. He said they
43 have a meeting with Pheasants Forever in about three weeks for an end of year summary and to make
44 plans for the next year.
45
- 46 Mr. Hall wanted to confirm they were doing the extra mowing the first couple of years to keep the non-
47 natives down so the natives had the chance to establish.
48
- 49 Mr. Grilo said yes, exactly. He said they were taking Pheasants Forever's recommendation and their

1 representative down in Arcola visits the site regularly to keep them updated to make sure everything gets
2 established the way it was supposed to be. He said they did not have the ability to do a controlled burn
3 every four to seven years so they would have to see over the next couple years. He thought it was a learning
4 process for everyone, including Pheasants Forever.

5
6 Mr. Hall wanted to be clear they were using the bi-facial panels there but the difference was the new
7 panels were on a fixed tilt and would expect a little less sunlight able to reach beneath them.

8
9 Mr. Grilo said yes, in his eyes there would be less sunlight under the new fixed panels, but he does not
10 know. He said in theory the single axis one should always be at the optimum level for soaking in the sun.
11 He said he did not know and was excited to see what would happen. He thought the University of Illinois
12 was doing a big project on agrovoltatics, basically trying to learn what crops and grasses can be planted
13 under solar arrays.

14
15 Mr. Hall said the issue related to this was large drainage tile for the village but the thing that concerned
16 him just as much was the fact that there was that drainageway running through the property and he could
17 not imagine letting arrays go across the drainageway when they were only eighteen inches above grade.
18 He said he did not know what Board Members were thinking about that but from the Staff view, or at least
19 his view, he could not imagine it. He could imagine like in Sidney where they were four or five feet off
20 the ground going across a drainage system like this.

21
22 Mr. Randol said he could see occasionally it would be flooded. He said eighteen inches was not much of
23 a waterway whenever they had a large rain.

24
25 Mr. Hall said the rain, litter from the field, and things like that.

26
27 Mr. Randol said exactly, and stuff could build up and catch under the posts that hold the cells up.

28
29 Mr. Grilo said what he would expect was a topographical survey would be done and the panels would not
30 follow the contour of the swale. He said they would remain at a constant height and would have three feet
31 plus the eighteen inches to the bottom of the swale. He said they would get the four and a half feet at that
32 point. He said additionally when talking with the Soil Conservation District, the goal would be to make
33 the poles span the swale to the best of their ability, centering the bottom of the swale between the posts so
34 that they prevent the catch of debris and prevent any slowdown of water.

35
36 Mr. Hall said in addition to the large tile which was going to be maintained by the village, there were at
37 least one or two smaller private tiles located in that drainageway.

38
39 Mr. Grilo said he would assume that there was a twelve-inch field tile following the drainageway and he
40 would assume that was Triple Fork's drainage tile. He asked if Mr. Hall did not think it was.

41
42 Mr. Hall said it was a mutual tile.

43
44 Mr. Grilo said there were a couple of tiles located at their site in Urbana and essentially no one knew
45 exactly where they were, so they had to go out, probe them, and record the GPS coordinates to map the
46 system around the tiles to prevent damage or blockage long-term.

47
48 Mr. Randol asked what their plan was for repair if something had to be done. He said just because the tile
49 was working that day does not mean they would not need maintenance in the future.

1 Mr. Grilo said the village had a twenty-foot easement and they would not construct any panels or structure
2 in that twenty feet. He said that would be completely wide open and grassy. He said the other field tile
3 would be based on how deep it was, and they would evaluate his decision based on that. He said if it was
4 six feet deep then he would probably lean on avoiding building it on top of it as much as possible. He said
5 if it was only something like two feet, then that would be a little bit different. He said he would not want
6 it under the very bottom of the array, but it could be intertwined in there. He said the panels were very
7 modular and removable once they were up. He said they were able to take about ten panels off in the span
8 of forty-five minutes and be able to work underneath that section of the system without any issues. He
9 said now that they have new information, they would be able to investigate that further and find the best
10 plan of action.

11
12 Mr. Randol said he would assume they were not expecting the Board to make a vote due to the amount of
13 information and research still needing to be done.

14
15 Mr. Grilo said of course he would take a vote as long as it was in the affirmative. He said no, he was not
16 expecting a vote that evening and expected questions that still needed to be answered. He said that was
17 their goal; the Health Department, the Drainage District, and now the Village of Rantoul, so he did not
18 expect that.

19
20 Mr. Randol said that was good.

21
22 Mr. Herbert asked if they spoke with the farmers to the north and south of their property.

23
24 Mr. Grilo said they spoke with the farmer to the north and initially looked into buying a portion of their
25 property, but he was not interested in selling, or rather his wife was not interested in selling it. He said he
26 had not spoken to the people to the south. He said he did not even know who farmed it.

27
28 Mr. Herbert said they would probably have a feel about the drainage tile going through the property. He
29 asked what was on the north side.

30
31 Mr. Grilo said he thought it was brush, a separation, maybe it used to be a hedgerow or something.

32
33 Mr. Herbert asked if they were going to keep their fence on top of the property line.

34
35 Mr. Grilo said yes, and thought the Staff told them how far it needed to be from the property line. He said
36 it was pulled off the property line quite a bit.

37
38 Mr. Wood asked Ms. Burgstrom referring to Case 064-S-22, looking at page fifty-two and fifty-three,
39 which was the special condition. He said one instance they were talking about a PV Solar Farm, and one
40 instance referring to a PV Solar Array. He asked if they were two different things.

41
42 Ms. Burgstrom said they were defined as two different things in the Zoning Ordinance; however, when
43 they hit a certain size of PV Solar Array, the PV Solar Farm regulations come into play so there might be
44 some interchangeability that was not intentional as well, but in general they were talking about the same
45 regulations for the size of this solar array project.

46
47 Mr. Anderson said he was looking over the Preliminary Memorandum and asked about the insufficient
48 site plans to see if that was taken care of. He knew they talked about the fence height earlier.

49

1 Mr. Grilo said they did have updated site plans and have since submitted them to Ms. Burgstrom but to be
2 clear it looked like he was going to have updated, updated site plans in the future to show the easement
3 and other potential changes if necessary; bathrooms, drain tile, etc. He said as of tonight, Ms. Burgstrom
4 did have a site plan with the updated seven-foot chain-link fence indicated on them.
5

6 Mr. Elwell wanted confirmation that this solar farm was State subsidized and not federal.
7

8 Mr. Grilo said correct, it was the State of Illinois's SREC program. He said from what he understood, the
9 State of Illinois had allocated money years ago to help nuclear power development and set aside X amount
10 of money for renewable energy. He said that was where money for the SREC program came from and
11 what they were trying to use for their project.
12

13 Ms. Burgstrom asked Mr. Grilo what SREC stood for; she thought it was Solar Renewable Energy Credits.
14

15 Mr. Grilo said yes, he believed so, if not he felt it sounded good so they should use it.
16

17 Mr. Wood said it was regulated by the State and not the federal government.
18

19 Mr. Grilo said correct.
20

21 Mr. Randol asked why they were asking for a waiver and not providing a decommissioning and
22 reclamation plan that included costs.
23

24 Ms. Burgstrom said she would explain that if Mr. Grilo did not mind.
25

26 Mr. Grilo said he did not mind.
27

28 Ms. Burgstrom said they did provide a decommissioning plan; however, just like previous solar farms the
29 Staff sought approval for, there were cost estimates that could not be well estimated until it got closer to
30 construction. She said it was really a waiver for holding off on giving the full information with cost
31 estimates because it was just not viable to provide that information accurately yet.
32

33 Mr. Randol asked what the timeframe would be.
34

35 Mr. Grilo said if they were told it was all going to be approved by November 1, 2022, then they would be
36 able to solidify their plans more. He said things like the easement will change various costs and the timing
37 of the project could really change the cost because solar technology changes rapidly. He said the timeline
38 really depends on the Board's approval of the construction and rezoning.
39

40 Mr. Hall said for example, both solar farms that have been approved previously had the condition requiring
41 the decommissioning to be approved by ELUC. He said the community farm down in Sidney went
42 smoothly, but with the larger solar farm he thought it would be fair to say it was not going smoothly. He
43 said there were a lot of things that needed to be reviewed by ELUC before they build. He said as long as
44 the developer kept all the deadlines in mind and knew they needed approval by the County Board and
45 ELUC, it worked for the Staff. He said there were multiple deadlines and if the developer did not monitor
46 that closely they could lose track of them.
47

48 Mr. Wood said the waivers were basically temporary for the special conditions they would have to meet
49 later on before getting their permit.

1 Mr. Randol said they would list the time limit as a special condition when the time comes.

2

3 Mr. Elwell asked Mr. Randol if he had any questions relating to fire protection.

4

5 Mr. Randol said from what he read in the material, the Village of Rantoul's Fire Department did not have
6 any objection to the plan.

7

8 Mr. Wood asked if the fluid baths were flammable.

9

10 Mr. Grilo said it was not and they observed it through a demonstration given by the manufacturer. He said
11 they put the fluid in a five-gallon bucket and shot high-powered voltage through it to demonstrate its
12 inability to conduct electricity or have an arc within the fluid. He thought it was crazy to see.

13

14 Mr. Randol wanted to bring it back to the fire department. He said he assumed when the time came, they
15 would have a plan to do training with the Village of Rantoul Fire Department on what they would need
16 and not need to do in case of a fire at their facility.

17

18 Mr. Grilo said yes, the solar array has all the disconnects clearly labeled. He said Rantoul just changed
19 fire chiefs and a lot of the information talks were with the former fire chief, but they fully expect to speak
20 with the newly appointed chief soon to make sure they are all on the same page.

21

22 Mr. Bates asked if there was training for Arcola.

23

24 Mr. Grilo said there was not training with the Arcola fire department. He said as a city they were extremely
25 relaxed in their permit approval process. He said he spoke with their police department quite a bit and
26 went through things with different officers at different times to make sure that anyone who was working
27 understands what was going on out there and how it operates. He said down in Arcola every section of
28 Ameren was handled a bit differently. He said down there Ameren does not want people touching the
29 disconnect switches and want to be the ones to do it; the police department calls Ameren and Ameren
30 shuts the switch down to avoid the police department touching any major breakers and stuff like that.

31

32 Mr. Bates asked if there were any instances where the police department had to be called, like for
33 vandalism.

34

35 Mr. Grilo said no, but was afraid Mr. Bates jinxed him. He said it has been very quiet and the site was
36 monitored with cameras. He said there was not fencing in that location. He did say that during construction
37 someone got on the site and stole some copper wire, but he was not positive it was a random person. He
38 believed it was someone already on the site and knew it. He said that was the only happenstance he was
39 aware of.

40

41 Mr. Randol said he found it amazing they would have a site like that in Arcola and not have it fenced.

42

43 Mr. Elwell asked if there were any more questions from the Board or Staff.

44

45 Mr. Randol said he did not have a question but thought it would be a good idea to receive a letter from
46 their neighbors for Staff, or to bring one, if they had no objections to their project. He said if they objected,
47 he was sure they would have been there to say something, but it would be prudent to get it in writing
48 before he would approve something.

49

1 Mr. Elwell said there were two people waiting to testify and maybe one of them was their neighbors. He
2 asked if there were any more questions from the Board or Staff.

3
4 Mr. Grilo said he would be happy to go and acquire the letters from the appropriate people. He asked the
5 Board to clarify the term neighbors.

6
7 Mr. Randol said his concern was to the property north of them where they would have the easements and
8 agreements to use their driveways. He said at some point they were going to need their own and asked
9 when they would start using their own.

10
11 Mr. Grilo said he believed that information was present in the packet regarding the construction easement
12 agreement and temporary agreement from the landowner.

13
14 Ms. Burgstrom said she did receive the agreement with the application and did not include it in the packet
15 because of its length. She said she could provide it if desired.

16
17 Mr. Elwell asked if there were any further questions from the Board or Staff. Seeing none, he asked if
18 anyone would like to cross-examine the witness.

19
20 Mrs. Denise Hanson introduced herself and said her address was 415 W Frost Ave, Rantoul and said she
21 lived across the street from the proposed project. Her concern was noise.

22
23 Mr. Grilo said with respect to noise Mrs. Hanson was already in a noisy area because of US Route 45 and
24 the world's busiest train tracks. He said he knows this because he lives in Thomasboro just south of
25 Rantoul. He said their site plan, which he was happy to print a copy of for Mrs. Hanson, shows the large
26 distance the inverters were from the property line, about 800 feet and about 1000 feet from Mrs. Hanson's
27 house. He said there was a plan in place to build a wall around the inverters, so the sound stays going east
28 away from her residential neighborhood. He said they wanted to make sure they were conscious of that.
29 He referenced the site plan and pointed out the two rectangles representing the inverters and the fencing
30 to help isolate the noise. He said the noise made from the inverters had always been a point of contention
31 in Champaign County and others, so it was important to them to cover all their bases.

32
33 Mrs. Hanson began to testify and was stopped by Mr. Elwell because this time was just for cross-
34 examination. Mr. Elwell ensured Mrs. Hanson that she would be able to testify, just not at that moment.

35
36 Mr. Elwell asked if anyone else would like to cross-examine the witness. Seeing no one, he called the next
37 witness, Mr. Ed Decker.

38
39 Mr. Elwell entertained a motion to allow Mr. Decker to speak with respect to matter other than cases
40 pending before the Board because he missed the opportunity before continuing to New Public Hearings.

41
42 **Mr. Herbert moved, seconded by Mr. Bates, to allow Mr. Decker to speak with respect to matters**
43 **other than cases pending before the Board. The motion carried by voice vote.**

44
45 Mr. Ed Decker introduced himself and said he lived at 915 CR 1700 E, Philo, Illinois. He said he felt
46 compelled to come there that night and thank the Board and Staff for their service. He said he knew hearing
47 Case 037-AT-22 was pretty rough on them and wanted to say he appreciated their community service and
48 everything they did, Zoning Board as well as the Staff. He said he felt it was a fair process and thanked
49 them for listening to all they had to say and answering their questions. He said that was all he had to say

1 and thanked the Board for their time.

2
3 Mr. Elwell thanked Mr. Decker and asked if there were any questions for the witness. Seeing none, he
4 asked if anyone would like to cross-examine the witness. Not seeing any, he thanked Mr. Decker for his
5 testimony.

6
7 Mr. Elwell entertained a motion to close the Witness Register.

8
9 **Mr. Bates moved, seconded by Mr. Roberts, to close the Witness Register. The motion carried by**
10 **voice vote.**

11
12 Mr. Elwell asked Mr. Hall when he believed would be a good time for the petitioner to come back.

13
14 Mr. Hall said Ms. Burgstrom could correct him if she felt differently, but he felt October 13, 2022 would
15 be a good time to hear their case again. He said each of the meeting dates between now and then had
16 multiple cases and on each of those meeting dates at least one case may have prolonged discussion. He
17 said given the issues the petitioner is going to come back with, he felt October 13, 2022 would be sufficient
18 enough time to get the information they need together for the Board.

19
20 Mr. Elwell asked Mr. Grilo if October 13, 2022 was satisfactory to them.

21
22 Mr. Grilo said yes.

23
24 Mr. Hall said another thing about these cases, even if everything was decided, working their way through
25 four Findings of Fact was almost half a meeting right there. He said that was one drawback of needing
26 this many approvals.

27
28 Mr. Elwell entertained a motion to continue all four cases to October 13, 2022.

29
30 **Mr. Roberts moved, seconded by Mr. Randol, to continue all four cases to October 13, 2022. The**
31 **motion carried by voice vote.**

32
33 **8. Staff Report - None**

34
35 **9. Other Business**
36 **A. Review of Docket**

37
38 Mr. Randol asked if Case 058-AT-22 was still going to be pending on October 13, 2022.

39
40 Mr. Hall said yes, and ordinarily when they have a private case on the same day as a text amendment
41 the Board usually takes the private case first and the text amendment got whatever time was left over.
42 He said he did not have a problem with that.

43
44 Mr. Elwell asked if there were going to be any absences coming up. He saw none.

45
46 **10. Adjournment**

47
48 Mr. Elwell entertained a motion to adjourn.

49

1 **Mr. Roberts moved, seconded by Mr. Wood, to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Elwell asked for a roll call**
2 **vote.**

3
4 **Randol- yes Roberts- yes Anderson- yes Herbert- yes**
5 **Elwell- no Wood – yes Bates- yes**

6
7 The meeting adjourned at 7:39PM

8
9 Respectfully Submitted

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13 Secretary of the Zoning Board of Appeals

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