



CHAMPAIGN COUNTY BOARD
ENVIRONMENT and LAND USE COMMITTEE
County of Champaign, Urbana, Illinois

MINUTES – Approved as Distributed February 5, 2026

DATE: Thursday, January 8, 2026
TIME: 6:30 p.m.
PLACE: Shields-Carter Meeting Room
Bennett Administrative Center
102 E. Main St., Urbana, IL 61801

Committee Members

Present	Absent
Aaron Esry (Vice-Chair)	
John Farney	
Jennifer Locke	
Emily Rodriguez	
Jilmala Rogers	
Monique Settles	
Eric Thorsland (Chair)	

County Staff: John Hall (Zoning Administrator) and Mary Ward (Recording Secretary)

Others Present: None

I. Call to Order

Committee Chair Thorsland called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Roll Call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

III. Approval of Agenda/Addendum

MOTION by Mr. Farney to approve the agenda; seconded by Ms. Rogers. Upon vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. December 4, 2025 – Regular Meeting

MOTION by Ms. Locke to approve the minutes of December 4, 2025; seconded by Mr. Esry. Upon vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

V. Public Input

There was no public input.

VI. Communications

Ms. Rodriguez asked if the committee could have an overview of the ordinance regarding data centers. Mr. Hall said that the ordinance was adopted in May of 2022. At the time, data centers were not as big a concern as they are now. There are not many places where it would be allowed (only allowed in AG-2, Business B-4) and would require a Special Use Permit. It only affects a few zoning districts.

Ms. Locke extended congratulation to Ms. Rogers on being made partner at her law firm.

VII. New Business: Items for Information Only

A. Aaron Steinke email

Mr. Hall shared that Mr. Steinke has an issue with burning and emissions at the residential level. Mr. Hall said that there is not much that can be done about this, but he wanted to let the committee know about the concern.

B. Notice of Proposed Wireless Communication Tower Adjacent to 4014 East Anthony Drive, Urbana.

This was for information only. Mr. Esry asked if this used to be under the County's jurisdiction and it was taken away by the state. The tower meets all state requirements.

VIII. New Business: Items to be Approved by ELUC

A. Annual Hotel/Motel License: Urbana Motel Inc. dba Motel 6 at 1906 North Cunningham Avenue, Urbana for 01/01/26 – 12/31/26.

MOTION by Mr. Esry to approve the Hotel/Motel License for Urbana Motel Inc. dba Motel 6; seconded by Ms. Rogers. Upon vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

B. Recreation & Entertainment License: Champaign County Fair with Calendar of Events, 1302 North Coler Avenue, Urbana. 01/01/26 – 12/31/26.

C. Recreation & Entertainment License: Hudson Farm Wedding & Events, LLC, 1341 CR1800E, Urbana, IL 61802. 01/01/26 – 12/31/26.

OMNIBUS MOTION by Mr. Farney to approve the Recreation and Entertainment Licenses the Champaign County Fair and Hudson Farm Wedding & Events, LLC; seconded by Ms. Locke. Upon vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

IX. New Business: Items to be recommended to the County Board

A. **Zoning Case 177-S-25.** A request by Somer Township Solar 1 LLC c/o New Leaf Energy via agent Tom Ryan and participating landowner James Heimbürger Trustee to authorize a Community PV Solar Farm with a nameplate capacity of 4.99 megawatts and totaling 27.68 acres lying north of East Ford Harris Road and west of North Lincoln Avenue and east of the Canadian National Rail line with PIN 25-15-20-300-006 and commonly known as farmland owned by James M. Heimbürger Trust, with the following waivers of standard conditions:

Part A: A waiver for locating the PV Solar Farm less than one and one-half miles from an incorporated municipality with a zoning ordinance per Section 6.1.5 B.(2)a.(a).

Part B: A waiver for not entering into a Roadway Upgrade and Maintenance Agreement or waiver therefrom with the relevant local highway authority prior to consideration of the Special Use Permit by the Zoning Board of Appeals, per Section 6.1.5 G.(1).

Part C: A waiver for locating the PV Solar Farm 160 feet from a non-participating lot that is 10 acres or less in area in lieu of the minimum required separation of 240 feet between the solar farm fencing and the property line, per Section 6.1.5 D.(3)a.

MOTION by Ms. Locke to recommend County Board approval of a resolution approving Zoning Case 177-S-25 for Somer Township Solar I; seconded by Ms. Rodriguez.

Mr. Hall stated that this was the most remote solar farm we've been asked to approve.

Upon vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

B. **Decommissioning and Site Reclamation Plan for Zoning Case 177-S-25.** A request by Somer Township Solar 1 LLC c/o New Leaf Energy via agent Tom Ryan and participating landowner James Heimbürger Trustee to authorize a Decommissioning and Site Reclamation Plan for the Community PV Solar Farm in Zoning Case 177-S-25.

MOTION by Mr. Farney to recommend County Board approval of a resolution approving the Decommissioning and Site Reclamation Plan for Zoning Case 177-S-25 for Somer Township Solar I; seconded by Ms. Settles.

Mr. Hall said that this plan is comparable to others that have been reviewed.

Upon vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** unanimously.

C. **Zoning Case 181-AM-25.** A request by owner Fred Otten and Vaishali Patel of Pranam MAA LLC to change the zoning district designation from the I-1 Light Industry Zoning District to the B-4 General Business Zoning District on a .51-acre parcel in the Southwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 10, Township 19 North, Range 9 East of the

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Third Principal Meridian in Urbana Township, on the south side of University Ave. and more commonly known as 2205 E. University Ave., Urbana, Illinois.

MOTION by Mr. Esry to recommend County Board approval of a resolution approving Zoning Case 181-AM-25; seconded by Mr. Farney.

Mr. Esry stated he drives by this location often. He has no issue with re-zoning. It will keep the building occupied and Mr. Hall added that it will bring the existing use into compliance. Mr. Farney asked, since this is the first time video gaming has come up before ELUC since he's been on, if it will require further licensing. Mr. Hall said they would probably require a liquor license.

Ms. Rogers stated that she would be a no vote on this. She doesn't support putting this type of business close to a residential area.

Vaishali Patel, Petitioner, explained the process they have to go through to get everything licensed.

Mr. Esry shared that there is another gaming establishment right across the road. Ms. Locke stated that she also does not like this type of business. By changing the zoning, we will help bring an existing business into compliance and will be a reluctant yes for that reason.

The committee was reminded that they are voting on the type of zoning and not the use.

Upon vote, the **MOTION CARRIED** with five yays and two nays.

X. Other Business

A. Monthly Reports – None

There were no Monthly Reports

XI. Chair's Report

There was no Chair's Report.

XII. Designation of Items to be Placed on the Consent Agenda

Items to be placed on the Consent Agenda include IX. A. and B.

XIII. Adjournment

Chair Thorsland adjourned the meeting at 6:58 p.m.