

PLAN COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

7:00 p.m., Wednesday, May 28, 2025
Quincy City Hall – 730 Maine

Present: Mike Adkins, Dave Bellis, Dan Brink, Julie Brink, Jim Citro, Tony Dede, Jarid Jones, Dave Rakers, Rick Smith, Jason Traeder & Ryan Whicker

Absent: Elaine Davis

Vacant: One

Staff: Bruce Alford, Steve Bange, Gina Nottingham & Jason Parrott

J. Brink called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Smith made a motion, seconded by Bellis, to approve the previous meeting minutes. The motion carried.

No public declarations of conflict were declared.

J. Brink informed the commission that Greg Davis had resigned after 14 years on the commission. She thanked him for his service as well as Alderman Greg Fletcher who represented the City on the Commission. J. Brink welcomed Alderman Mike Adkins as the new City representative and Director of Operations Dan Brink as the new Mayoral representative.

No public comment on items not on the agenda.

Non-Conforming Use Permit – Duplex in Single-Family Residential – 2244 College Avenue

Parrott presented the staff review. He said the property has been used as a duplex for decades. Parrott said the property is zoned for single-family residential use, which does not allow for a duplex without a special permit. He said city GIS data shows two distinct address points for the property. Parrott said a non-conforming use permit is required to continue the use as a duplex. He said the neighborhood land use plan identifies the property as multi-family use. Parrott said there are seven properties within 750' that show two distinct address points on the city GIS data. He said staff supports the non-conforming use permit.

J. Brink asked the petitioner if they had any comments. Steve Duesterhaus said he has owned the property for nearly 50 years and it has always been a duplex. He said he found records that the home was a duplex in 1945, before the city's zoning ordinance was adopted.

No public comment

With no further discussion, Citro made a motion, seconded by Jones, to concur with the recommendation of staff and recommend the City Council approve the non-conforming use permit to allow for the operation of a duplex at 2244 College Avenue, which is zoned for single-family residential use. The motion carried.

Special Permit for Planned Development – Operate a Small Engine Repair Shop in a Garage located within a Single-Family Residential zoning district – 1400 Sycamore Street

Parrott provided the staff review. He said the petitioner seeks to operate the repair shop out of his garage, which is zoned for single-family residential use. Parrott said this use is not permitted within the single-family residential zoning district. He said all properties within 1,000 feet of the subject property are zoned single-family residential, the closest commercial zoning classification is at North 12th & Maple Street and the closest commercial operation is about 600 feet away in the 1200 block of North 14th Street. Parrott said the land use plan of 2013 identifies the lot as single-family residential. He said staff recommends denial of the Special Permit for Planned Development because of the introduction of commercial into a neighborhood zoned for single-family residential use. Parrott suggested 4-5 conditions for a special permit for planned development should the commission choose to recommend approval. He said he discussed the concerns of staff with the petitioner when the application was submitted.

J. Brink asked the petitioner if they had any comments. Jason Heck said he has been repairing small engines in his garage for several years as a hobby, including lawnmowers and all-terrain vehicles. He said the work is done in the garage. Heck said his neighbors support his work as he works on their equipment. Traeder asked Heck if he maintains regular hours. Heck said right now, he works on weekends and at night. He said his goal is to build up clientele so he can move into a commercial building in the spring.

No public comment

With no further discussion, Citro made a motion, seconded by Dede, to concur with the recommendation of staff and recommend the City Council deny the Special Permit for Planned Development to allow for the operation of a small engine repair shop at 1400 Sycamore Street. The motion carried with Jones & Adkins voting against.

**Special Permit/Planned Development – Commercial Solar Energy – contiguous to 3622 Ellington
(TABLED FROM APRIL 2025 MEETING)**

Parrott provided the staff review. He said the petitioner seeks to construct a 4.99 megawatt AC solar farm on a 36 acre parcel next to 3622 Ellington Road. Parrott said the city's new solar ordinance establishes guidelines for commercial solar energy facilities and that a special permit is required to place one in an industrial zoned property. He said this parcel is zoned rural/agricultural (RU1) and staff would not support rezoning the property to industrial use. Parrott said the petitioner then requested a Special Permit for Planned Development, which would allow for an industrial-related use on a parcel not zoned for industrial use. He said staff believes the best locations for solar developments are industrially-zoned sites, as allowed in city code. Parrott said this site could be considered appropriate for a solar development because there are few residential dwellings nearby and because much of the land in the area is undeveloped or used for agricultural purposes. He said if approved, there should be the following conditions: Site Plan review must be completed prior to the issuance of a building permit and the project must follow City Code Chapter 164 on commercial solar energy facilities. Parrott said the petitioner held a community meeting on May 20th from 5:30 pm -7:00 pm at Cedar Crest Country Club along North 36th Street. He said the petitioner had four representatives present to answer questions from the approximately 40-50 people in attendance. Parrott said he attended the meeting, which included multiple renderings showing how the solar development would be situated on the land and the view of the solar development from multiple angles. He said he was approached by two individuals during the meeting who said they had petitions to present to the Plan Commission: one in support of the project and one in opposition to the project. Parrott said he told them they could present them to the Plan Commission at the meeting, or they could provide them to him in advance and he would distribute to the commission. He said one petition was presented prior to the meeting and was shared with the commission. Parrott said staff had received 6-7 phone calls or in office visits regarding the project prior to the April meeting. He said those who called had questions or expressed concerns. Parrott said he invited them all to attend the public hearing. Parrott said one neighbor said his property would be contiguous to the solar farm and asked about additional fencing/screening. Parrott said the commission could add screening requirements to the special permit.

J. Brink asked the petitioner if they had any comments. Moira Cronin of Arlington, Virginia spoke on behalf of Summit Ridge Energy. She described the community meeting and said certified letters were sent out to nearly 50 homes to inform the neighborhood. Cronin said the concerns discussed included property value, hail damage, view, potential glare, and the decommissioning process, among others. She said the proposed site plan for the project had changed to provide more sight-proof landscaping and fencing for the contiguous property to the northeast. Cronin said all but one of the contiguous property owners support the project. She asked the crowd to raise their hands if they supported the project... about half the hands in attendance rose. Cronin said there are three key benefits to the community: a reduction in the spraying of chemicals on the farmland proposed for the solar development, a possible electric rate savings through Ameren Illinois, and the projected payment of \$660,000 in property taxes to Adams County over the next 40 years.

Cronin then provided the commission with the aerials and renderings for the solar farm that were presented during the community meeting. J. Brink asked that they be entered into the record as Quincy3Solar Exhibit 1.

Citro asked how many people who signed the petition in support lived in the Country Meadows subdivision. Cronin did not know. Jones asked for those in the audience who oppose the project to raise their hands. Approximately half the people in the audience raised their hand. Traeder asked Cronin to further describe the proposed site plan changes. Cronin further described the fencing and landscaping. Traeder asked why this site was selected. Cronin said it is near an interconnection site, the owner was interested in leasing the property, and she had worked with Adams County on several other solar projects. Citro discussed the concerns of Country Meadows being located so close to the development. Cronin said that is why they expanded the boundaries for notification to inform more property owners of the community meeting. Citro said it appears a number of residents nearby do not believe this is the correct location. He asked what happens if the permit is denied. Cronin said she did not know at this point. Bellis asked if there was an agreement in place as to who would maintain the fence that is installed along the northeast corner. Cronin said a maintenance agreement was not in place. She said the privacy fence proposed would be 140 feet from the security fence for the development.

J. Brink asked for public comment:

1) Gerald Rose – 3920 Ellington provided a packet of information to the commission, marked Quincy3Solar Exhibit 2 and then reviewed the contents of the packet with the commission. He said he was concerned about glare off the panels, potential health risks living near the panels, the potential reduction in property value living near the solar farm, environmental concerns, increased heat in the area, and the state subsidies. Rose questioned why the commission would support an out-of-state company over lifelong residents.

2) Dennis Klauser (Country Meadows) presented a petition in opposition to the commission, marked Quincy3Solar Exhibit 3. He said he went to all of the neighbors within 3 blocks of the project and all but a few signed the petition in opposition. Klauser said if the permit is granted, the company will keep expanded and they will lose their country way of life. He said it's a very dangerous intersection near the site and he is worried this will make that worse. Klauser asked for opponents to raise their hands and about half of the audience did.

3) John Winking – 3834 Ellington said he is more involved in this project than anyone because it is located next to his home. He said he is totally opposed to the project, in part, because they are going to construct a blacktop road to move equipment in or out. Winking said he is concerned that he would lose money if he tried to sell his home with the solar farm next door.

4) Laura Kelly (Parents live east of site) said she is concerned about the safety of her children when they visit her parents living next to the solar farm. She said progress should not come at the disruption of neighbors. Kelly said she is concerned about the glare, the excess heat coming off of the solar panels, and the unknown health risks as well as the potential toxic materials entering the soil and property values decreasing.

5) Jeff Ellerbrock (Atkinson, IL) said he grew up on this property. He said he understands that people don't want to see change, but said change occurred when the Country Meadows subdivision was constructed. Ellerbrock said there is a solar farm being constructed less than a mile away on Ellington Road, so he does not see the difference. He said most of the immediate neighbors support the project and the view for drivers is only for a quarter of a mile. Ellerbrock asked the commission to support the project.

6) Bobbette Burgdorf (Country Meadows) said the residents of the subdivision were not aware of the solar farm closer to 24th Street or they would have opposed it as well. She said her family has lived in the subdivision for years and do not want to see the area change to operate a solar farm.

7) Michael Archutte asked if the commission members would like a solar farm like this in their backyards. He said there is a lot of ground in the county this project could locate on. He asked the commission again if members would want this development in their back yards.

8) Jim Blickhan said his family owns ground near Roller Country. He said they have been approached about solar developments. Blickhan asked if the neighbors would be willing to compensate the owner of the land for

his potential lost lease income if the project does not go through. He further discussed the financial challenges related to farming.

9) David Deter asked if the rights of the private property owner have been considered and if state protocols would be followed as part of the process. He asked how many property owners nearby tried to purchase the land where United Alloy was to be located to present it from development and said that land is coming up for sale again.

10) Brad Ellerbrock said he grew up on the farm. He questioned why a subdivision built in a rural area is now able to object to another project in a rural area. He questioned why other people could tell his father how he can make money with his property. He said towns throughout the state are adding solar farms. Ellerbrock said it is not fair that a subdivision can locate outside of city limits and then dictate what occurs outside of city limits. He again questioned why someone else can say how his father uses his land.

11) Brent Frericks said he was not concerned about how people made their money. He said he does not want the solar farm in his neighborhood.

12) Leroy Klauser said the solar farm should not be allowed. He questioned how many supporters who signed from the petition even live near the project. Klauser discussed the current zoning for the property as well as a nearby solar farm that is under construction.

With no further comments, Brink closed the public hearing.

Citro discussed the process of the Planning Department and the Plan Commission regarding an application for a special permit, zoning change or other land use request. He said the fact that a Special Permit for Planned Development is required, a compelling argument must be made to approve it and he did not see it with this request.

With no further discussion, Citro made a motion, seconded by Brink, to not concur with the recommendation of staff and to recommend the City Council deny the Special Permit for Planned Development to allow for the operation of a commercial solar energy facility near 3622 Ellington Road. The motion carried.

Subdivision – One lot to Two lots – 1603 Center Avenue (TABLED FROM APRIL 2025 MEETING)

Subdivision – One lot to Three Lots – 2208 South 12th Street (TABLED FROM APRIL 2025 MEETING)

Parrott said these items were tabled at the April meeting because the subdivision plats for each were not complete. He said the plats are still in development, so staff is requesting both items remain on the table until the June 2025 Plan Commission meeting.

With no further discussion, Smith made a motion, seconded by Bellis, to concur with the recommendation of staff and keep the two subdivisions tabled until the June 2025 Plan Commission meeting. The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS – Parrott said he would like the commission to review, at a future meeting, the city's process for notifying neighboring properties. He said there could be 75 properties within 250' of a lot in the city and just 7 properties within 250' of a lot in the 1 ½ mile jurisdiction.

With no further new business or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.