



CITY OF QUINCY

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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Plan Commission

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

730 Maine, City Hall, council chambers, Quincy, Illinois 62301

MINUTES

Attendance

Members Present: Julie Brink (chair), Dan Brink, Jarid Jones, Elaine Davis, Dave Bellis, Mike Adkins, Tony Dede, Dave Rakers, Maggie Strong, Tim Koontz.

Members Absent: Ryan Whicker, Laura Dighe, Jason Traeder.

Staff Present: Jason Parrott, Judy Abbott, Kara Mester, David Adam.

J. Brink calls the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and requests approval minutes from Feb. 24 meeting. Koontz makes motion. Adkins seconds. Motion unanimously carries.

No declarations of conflict were made by commissioners. No public comments are made.

J. Brink introduced a request from Kaibeh Bessay for special permit for planned development to allow for the operation of a restaurant and a laundromat at 1130 S. Sixth. Parrott tells the commissioners that Bessay withdrew her petition. Koontz makes motion to accept withdrawal. Dede seconds. Motion unanimously carries.

J. Brink introduces a request from Quincy IL Solar 5, LLC, for a special permit to construct and operate a 3-megawatt solar farm on a 20.9-acre property at 3909 Wisman Lane. Parrott says the Quincy City Council adopted an ordinance regulating commercial solar energy facilities in September 2024. At the time the ordinance was adopted, the city's special permit language also was amended to allow for a commercial solar energy facility with a special permit in light industrial, heavy industrial and planned industrial districts. The petitioner has provided an option to lease the property, which is zoned M3 (planned industrial). A solar farm is not a permitted use by right in an M3 district, but it is an appropriate location through the issuance of a special permit per city code chapter 162.030. A residential dwelling on the subject lot is the lone residential dwelling in the immediate area. A site plan review by multiple city departments would be required prior to the issuance of a building permit. The 2013 Neighborhood Land Use Plan categorizes this parcel as for industrial use. Staff considers parcels zoned for industrial use to be more appropriate for a commercial solar energy facility. Staff received no public input regarding this special permit prior to the meeting.

Moira Cronin of Arlington, Va., represents the petitioner, Summit Ridge Energy, and gives packets of renderings and site plans to the commissioners. She says Summit Ridge has more than 100 solar projects in operation in 40 communities in Illinois, including two in Adams County. Visibility of this solar project would be reduced by the topography of the land on Wisman Lane, and trees also would be planted

along the road and on the western side of the property. As part of the application, Cronin says she spoke by phone with Parrott on Nov. 11 and Dec. 23, and she spoke by phone on Dec. 15 and exchanged emails with Jim Frankenhoff, an engineer and highway commissioner in Adams County. The project would be connected directly to the local Ameren grid. Cronin says community solar electricity is cheaper than normal electricity. Feeding, housing, fueling and entertaining construction workers for the 6-8 months they are here typically contribute more than \$100,000 to local businesses.

D. Brink asks if the area has any recent industrial development. Parrott says the most recent would be the Amazon building, several hundred feet to the east.

Dede makes a motion to approve the special permit. Jones seconds. The motion passes 8-2, with Rakers and D. Brink voting no.

J. Brink introduces a request from Ron Snider Auto Sales for a special use permit to allow for the expansion of a commercial parking lot at 3623 State, zoned R1C (single-family residential). To the west is Ron Snider Auto Sales at 441 S. 36th, which is zoned C2 (commercial). Both lots are owned by Snider Family LLC. The properties to the north, east and south appear to be single-family residential north and south of State Street.

In November 1969, the subject lot was owned by Quincy Coach House, Inc, which requested a zoning change from single-family residential to commercial as part of the restaurant known as Baron's. That request was denied by the Quincy Plan Commission because no final development plans were presented at the time. In June 1971, Quincy Coach House submitted a new zoning change request from single-family residential to commercial for the subject lot. An article from the Quincy Herald-Whig states that the Plan Commission recommended denial of the zoning change by a 5-4 vote but that the City Council approved a scaled-back zoning request on a 10-4 vote. Ordinance 71-23 outlines that the western portion of the lot (42 feet by 147 feet) be zoned for commercial use, while the eastern portion (33 feet by 147 feet) remain zoned for single-family residential. The newspaper article states that Attorney Owen Mays, representing Coach House, said the western portion of the lot would be used for parking and a driveway. It further states the eastern portion of the lot was to remain residential to better protect the interests of the residents to the east. A 2002 letter from City Zoning Administrator Judi Maas confirmed the split zoning.

The City informed the petitioner in February that the business could not park vehicles on the grass at 3623 State after receiving complaints from a resident. City code requires paved off-street vehicle parking with adequate drainage. In response, the petitioner applied for a special permit to expand the parking lot to the east. City code chapter 162.091(L) requires a 15-foot buffer with sight-proof landscaping if there is to be commercial parking next to a residentially zoned property. A conceptual site plan for the space includes 13 parking asphalt parking stalls with decorative rock landscaping within the 15-foot buffer.

Staff believes conditions required in section 162.030(B) of the city code would be met as part of the site review process or do not apply. Staff believes the request to expand the commercial parking lot to the east is appropriate. Staff spoke several times with the neighbors to the immediate east of the proposed parking lot expansion about the Plan Commission process and their concerns about the special permit. The neighbors registered as interested parties for the meeting.

Dede asks if there is an easement from the property to a garage to the east. Parrott said he was informed no easement exists. Dede asks if a 15-foot buffer from a commercial property would cross the neighbor's driveway. Parrott said it depends on how the fence is extended. If the fence is extended to block a

vehicle's access to the garage, that could become a civil matter. If an easement were to be in place, the fencing would have to stop to make sure access was available.

D. Brink asks to review the petition, with approximately 25 signatures submitted by the neighbors.

Abbott swears in Kent Snider, Randy McElhoe and Sandy McElhoe as interested parties. J. Brink asks Snider if he has additional comments. Snider passes out photos from the original Baron's restaurant that shows the grassy lot in question was mostly gravel in 1971, but grass has grown through over time. He says he wants to add 13 parking places to his car lot with the plan to have the entire lot repaved beginning in early May.

Bellis asks if Snider owns the fence. He said the McElhoses own the fence, and a recent survey showed the fence is right on the property line. D. Brink asks how long cars have been parked in the grassy area. Snider said since 2001, and this is the first complaint he's learned of. D. Brink says he was surprised by all the neighbors signing the petition. Snider says he also was surprised, but he did not receive one call or letter in opposition. Bellis notes that repaving the lot could allow Snider to block the McElhoses' garage. Snider admits it could be blocked now, and the garage isn't blocked.

J. Brink asks if R. McElhoe has any questions for Snider. He said Snider told him a few weeks earlier that "the permits were already done" and it was a "done deal," and he wanted to know how Snider would know that before letters were sent to the neighbors. Snider replies that he would like to hear a recording of that comment, claiming that he only said he applied for the permit. R. McElhoe says there is a four-foot elevation from the parking lot to his property, and he asks Snider if he plans to build a retaining wall to hold the gravel. He also disputes Snider's claim that the grassy area was all gravel, because poplar trees were planted there and he mowed the grass for \$5 a week when he was 8 years old. Snider says the planned parking spots will remain at a slope and that the grade will not change. R. McElhoe asks how light will be prevented from coming into his house. Snider says he's not changing any light on his car dealership, and the only lighting there now are streetlights.

R. McElhoe says an easement was granted to his parents in 1971 by John Baumgartner, but there never was anything in writing. He says this should be an easement out of necessity. He also asks if he will still have access to the garage. He says he usually comes through the lot after business hours or on Sundays. Snider says he has no plans to put up a fence or cut off the McElhoses from their garage. He also says an easement should be written and recorded, and it's just a handshake agreement, that's called a license – which can be withdrawn, according to his attorney. R. McElhoe asks about starting cars to keep batteries charged on the lot and what is done to keep carbon monoxide from entering his home. Snider replies that he never has started cars every morning, nor once a week. He says he carries 70 to 80 cars in stock and sells 60 to 70, so he doesn't need to charge his batteries.

McElhoe then makes a statement to the commission, speaking for nearly 26 minutes about the history of the corner lot at 36th and State, the house his parents bought for \$18,000 in 1971, the agreement his father reached with Baumgartner to continue to have access to the garage and the relationship between the McElhoe and Snider families. He claims his father once offered to sell the house to Snider, who refused the offer. He says that after his father died, Snider harassed him with offers to buy the house. He's hoping to get his mother out of assisted living back into the home, and he occasionally stays in the home so it doesn't just "sit" all day. He questions the need for additional parking spaces.

S. McElhoe then makes a statement to the commission, saying the 33 feet of the lot at 3623 State that was zoned residential was done to protect commercial encroachment on residential houses in 1971. She

says the petition that was signed shows that the neighbors aren't in favor of Snider's permit. She asks for Snider to "live within his means" because the current arrangement between the properties has been in place for 26 years, and if it doesn't work now, then he should move his car lot. During his statement to the commission, Snider says he didn't believe his offers to buy the home were harassment and that he offered fair prices.

D. Brink it's disappointing to see two neighbors have a conflict, but he supports Snider because he's trying to solve a problem after a complaint was given to the city. He makes a motion to concur with staff. Jones seconds. The motion passes 8-2, with Koontz and Dede voting no.

J. Brink introduces a request from Tyler Meado for a special permit for planned development to allow for the operation of a small engine repair shop at 6201 Hickory Grove North (outside the city limits). The subject lot is zoned RU1 (rural/agricultural). The petitioner says the potential public benefit is this business would help meet a high demand for this service in Quincy. He adds that by allowing the business to operate out of the garage next to his residence, the public would benefit from lower costs due to lower operational expenses and from quicker turnaround times for repairs with the work being done on-site. The petitioner does not anticipate an increase in off-street parking because customers would use the driveway at the southeast corner of the property. The business would focus on the repair of lawn mowers, snow blowers, generators, chainsaws and trimmers.

Several conditions would need to be met if the special permit is granted. However, staff does not support the introduction of a commercial business into the immediate neighborhood, which appears to be exclusively single-family residential. Staff considers this type of business to be more appropriate at a location zoned for commercial use. Four or five neighbors contacted staff to offer their support of this business.

Meado then addresses the commission. He says his operation will be low impact, reasonable daytime hours would be kept, noise levels would be kept at a reasonable level and the property will remain clean. D. Brink asks how long Meado has been conducting business. He replies that he's only done work for family and friends. He said equipment will be stored in a small shed and in his garage.

Adkins makes motion not to concur with staff and to approve the permit. Jones seconds. Motion passes unanimously, with conditions recommended by staff.

J. Brink introduces a request by Jake Vahle for a special permit to allow for the construction and operation of a self-storage unit at 4314 Harrison. Parrott says the lot is zoned RU1 (rural/agricultural) and is outside of city limits, contiguous to Ward 5. The petitioner seeks to construct a 48,000 square foot self-storage facility at this location on the southern portion of the property, with access off Harrison Street. The petitioner intends to tear down a residential dwelling on the property.

Chapter 162.030 (B) of the city code lists uses for which special permits may be secured. One of those variations is for self-storage units on a property zoned RU1 when it has frontage upon a major street (in this case, Harrison). A self-storage facility in a RU1-zoned property has six conditions to follow to secure a special use permit. The Neighborhood Land Use Plan of 2013 identifies the subject lot as single-family residential. Staff finds the construction of self-storage units at 4314 Harrison to be an appropriate use for an RU1 zoning district that fronts a major street. Staff received more than two dozen phone calls and approximately a dozen emails expressing opposition to the project. Staff also notes the mayor and the 5th Ward aldermen received several phone calls in opposition.

Koontz says Parrott's report includes an item that said the self-storage units would not significantly diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood, saying the people in City Council chambers would take issue with that. Parrott says his office isn't involved in dictating property value and doesn't know if it would affect property value. He also says his office doesn't account for public calls in making a review.

J. Brink informs the commission of a letter from the Quincy School District declaring its opposition to the self-storage units.

Abbott swears in Vahle, William Goerlich and Patricia Goerlich as interested parties. Vahle then tells the commission that a self-storage facility will have less traffic than if it were turned into quarter-acre residential lots. He notes a similar situation happened near Spring Lake more than 20 years ago, and he said property values continue to rise in that area. He says the city would require fencing, trees, shrubbery and berms to prevent the four units from being viewed from the road, and the units would be set back from the road approximately 100 yards. Koontz asks if Vahle plans to tear the house down. Vahle says he plans to leave it, using it to help block the viewing of the storage units. Vahle says he has not received any complaints or concerns about his proposal.

J. Brink asks if the Goerlichs have any questions of Vahle. W. Goerlich asks if Vahle has a site plan. Vahle replies that he does not. W. Goerlich asks if people will be always going in and out of the area during the day. Vahle says the hours likely will be 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Parrott said the city likely would look to annex the property.

W. Goerlich makes a statement to the commission. He says his home was surrounded by corn fields when he bought the property 45 years ago. He says it would be a terrible idea to add storage units in a residential neighborhood, and it would discourage future residential development. P. Goerlich believes building the self-storage units would hurt nearby property owners. She believes the facility will be lit at night and would be an eyesore to the area. She says the Neighborhood Land Use Plan calls for the property to be single-family residential. She says she keeps hearing Adams County needs more housing, so why use this property for less housing?

Bellis asks if anyone in the audience is in favor of the proposal. No hands are raised. He asks if anyone in the audience is not in favor of the proposal. Most, if not all, hands were raised.

Laura McReynolds and Glen Ebbing, 5th Ward aldermen, tell the commission they have talked with residents, going door to door, and received several emails and phone calls. McReynolds said no one is in favor of the proposal. Ebbing says he has a duty to represent the will of the people in the 5th Ward, and neither he nor McReynolds will approve of it if the proposal goes to the City Council.

Deborah Hickey presented J. Brink with a petition that had 328 signatures on it, opposing the proposal. She mentions a change in the character of the neighborhood, change to the market value of nearby homes, increased traffic and safety and security concerns. Kent Rodemich, the developer of Breckenridge and Willow Creek, says he is against anything but residential developments in the area. He believes the value of homes would be negatively affected. Kent Anderson says he's been a neighborhood resident for 34 years and doesn't want to be additional traffic. He's worried that the addition of a commercial establishment would bring more commercial establishments to the area.

Attorney Drew Erwin, representing the owner of a property at 4320 Harrison, expresses his concern for additional traffic. He notes that Parrott said he testified the city has no dog in the fight regarding property

values, but he said Parrott approved the proposal on the basis that it won't impact property values. He also questioned how many storage units are in the city and what their vacancy rates are. Steve Wavering also voiced his displeasure about the proposal, saying he had no difficulty getting signatures for the petition. He said section 29.203 of the city code implies that the special permit should not adversely impact upon the use or the enjoyment of the neighboring property. The number of signatures on the petition, he says, shows there's definitely an impact if a special permit is issued. Josh Luman, who lives adjacent to the property in question, moved to Quincy three years ago. He said it's hard to believe, based off the feedback at the meeting, that this proposal would even be considered.

Bellis says that Ebbing was correct, that people were appointed to the commission, and when people from the neighborhood show their opposition to something like this, he's going to vote to "shut her down."

Vahle asks Parrott to read the permitted uses for an RU1 neighborhood. He then said had he known that so many people would be upset that he never would have applied for the permit. He said he is talking to another client who wants to put a dog kennel – a permitted use – on the property, and traffic from a self-storage unit will be less than a dog kennel. Someone in the crowd yells, "We'll try to stop that, too." Vahle then tells J. Brink he will withdraw his application. D. Brink makes a motion to accept the withdrawal. Bellis seconds. Motion approved unanimously.

No other business is brought up. A motion to adjourn the meeting is made by Bellis. Rakers seconds. Motion carries unanimously. The meeting adjourns at 9:17 p.m.

David Adam. Commission Secretary
Community Planner and Developer, City of Quincy