

DRAFT COPY - SUBJECT TO COMMITTEE APPROVAL

BOARD: TAZEWELL COUNTY

COMMITTEE: LAND USE

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, July 1, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairman K. Russell Crawford, Jay Hall, Vice Chairman Jon Hopkins, Greg Longfellow, Eric Schmidgall, Eric Stahl and Joe Woodrow

ABSENT: Mark Goddard

STAFF PRESENT: Jaclynn Workman, Community Development Administrator, Matt Drake, Assistant States Attorney, Melissa Kreiter, Chief Deputy, County Board Member Greg Sinn

OTHERS PRESENT: Brad Sauder, Kate Vandenburg and other interested parties

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Crawford called the meeting to Order at 5:03 p.m.

MINUTES: Moved by Hopkins, seconded by Stahl to approved the minutes of the June 10, 2025 Land Use meeting.

On voice vote, **motion declared carried.**

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

CASES

LU-25-08, Case No. 25-28-S The petition of Elm Grove CSG 1, LLC for a Special Use to allow the construction of a 5 Mega Watt Commercial Solar Farm in an A-1 Agriculture Preservation District.
Elm Grove CSG 1, LLC

Member Hopkins requested a memo from the Petitioner, as done on a previous case, detailing the company's insurance policy.

Member Stahl questioned if tiling repairs had been addressed prior.

Member Schmidgall stated that insurance would not cover the clean up of "his" property in the event of a tornado or other natural disaster and that would be one reason for his opposition.

Following discussion, moved by Hopkins, seconded by Hall to recommend approval of LU-25-08, Case No. 25-28-S to the Tazewell County Board.

On voice vote, **motion declared carried.**

LU-25-09, Case No. 25-29-S The petition of Hittle Twp. Solar, LLC for a Special Use to allow the construction of a 2 Mega Watt Commercial Solar Farm in an A-1 Agriculture Preservation District.
Hittle Twp. Solar, LLC

Member Stahl stated he had concerns about the effect on neighboring property values as well as the close proximity to town. Mr. Stahl questioned if it was known

where the cutoff was for Ameren services and CornBelt services across the proposed farm field.

Member Hopkins recalled the petitioner stating they had only worked with Ameren and had not dealt with CornBelt on any solar projects thus far. Mr. Hopkins questioned if the committee had the authority to change the location of the site to situate the location farther from the town.

Chairman Crawford stated solar cases could not be denied if they met the criteria of the Statute, however he thought the Board may be able to negotiate a proposed location on a parcel.

Assistant States Attorney Matt Drake stated that the Board cannot deny a petitioner, nor impose any restrictions on a petitioner that would be more restrictive than State Statute.

Member Woodrow asked for clarification on the LaSalle factors and why they were used.

Member Longfellow stated there was no opposition to the request at the ZBA public hearing.

Following discussion, moved by Longfellow, seconded by Hall to recommend approval of LU-25-09, Case No. 25-28-S to the Tazewell County Board.

On roll call vote, **motion failed**. Ayes: Hall & Longfellow; Nays: Hopkins, Schmidgall, Stahl, Woodrow and Chairman Crawford; Absent: Goddard

LU-25-10, Case No. 25-30-Z The petition of Brad Sauder of the Sauder Family Trust #10 for a Map Amendment to the Official Tremont Township Zoning Map of Tazewell County to change the zoning classification of property from an A-1 Agriculture Preservation Zoning District to a R-R Rural Residential Zoning District.

Brad Sauder stated he had purchased this property 2 years ago and had since had interest from individuals wanting to purchase land to build homes upon. Mr. Sauder said that he was trying to develop the land with larger lots, as what was across and down the road, and was looking to create no more than 4 lots. Mr. Sauder added that a 5th tract was proposed to remain farmland and used as a buffer for the Benckendorf's who resided to the Northwest of the site, however the Benckendorf family would not negotiate an easement to access the land, therefore he would have to sell the land as a part of the 4 lots proposed. Mr. Sauder stated that this portion of the land was not considered Prime Soils as detailed by the soil survey information provided at the time of the auction, which is why Mr. Sauder chose this piece to subdivide. Mr. Sauder stated he spoke with Rob Clark of Tazewell County Soil and Conservation, and the Mr. Clark uses a much older and outdated map for determining soil types and what is considered prime.

Chairman Crawford questioned if the property were rezoned to a Rural Residential classification, could the land be further subdivided, wherein he was informed that it could be divided further if the landowner desired to.

Member Hall questioned Mr. Sauder if there would only be one dwelling per lot and if the case could be conditioned to only 4 developable lots.

Administrator Workman stated that a petition for rezoning could not be conditioned like variance of special use requests.

Member Stahl questioned the potential density for 25 acres of Rural Residential land, wherein it was discussed that at least 12 to 13 sites could ultimately be created.

Jody Vance-Dudley, who did not speak at the ZBA Public Hearing appeared with concerns and wanted to offer her support to her neighbors and other objectors. Ms. Dudley stated this land had been farmed for over 100 years and should remain farmland. Ms. Dudley stated that had other farmers known Mr. Sauder's intentions to develop the land, they may have tried harder to purchase the property. Ms. Dudley said the proposed property was not comparable to the land across the road, as that land was timber and ravine and not suitable for farming. Ms. Dudley added that she felt Mr. Sauder should propose a subdivision closer to town so that the Village of Tremont could annex.

Jeremy Meeker appeared with concerns. Mr. Meeker stated the land was not comparable and thought Mr. Sauder could locate a better piece of ground to develop.

Noah Benckendorf, Attorney for Jared Benckendorf appeared with concerns. Mr. Benckendorf gave a background of the proposed property came to auction and stated how Jared would be most affected by the subdividing of this property. Mr. Benckendorf said the Comp Plan showed this area to be A-2, with 10 acre lots at minimum, not 2 acre lots. Mr. Benckendorf said he felt this land was better suited for farm ground only.

Kate Vanderford appeared with concerns. Ms. Vanderford re-read her speech given during the ZBA Public Hearing and reiterated her reasons of opposition. Ms. Vanderford stated had she known this property would be developed, she would have found a way to purchase the land.

Jared Benckendorf appeared with concerns. Mr. Benckendorf re-read his speech that was given during the ZBA Public Hearing. Mr. Benckendorf had a map prepared, but was not permitted to submit it per Chairman Crawford.

Ben Vanderford, who did not speak at the ZBA Public Hearing stated he did not oppose growth within the County, but opposes improper planning and he was opposed to developing in this location.

Rod Petrov, who did not speak at the ZBA Public Hearing stated he would only support the land being used to raise corn or beans.

Mike Knapp appeared to state he supported everything that Jared and Kate had stated.

Member Hopkins questioned the initial sale of the property.

Member Stahl questioned if the layout of the property could be required prior to approving any rezoning.

Administrator Workman stated she had spoke with County Board Member Sinn

regarding possible other options for Mr. Sauder to achieve the 4 lots, however, he would need to ask to rezone the property to an A-2 classification and then request variances to allow the lots to be less than 10 acres, allowing for 4 acres total.

Chairman Crawford suggested that if the petition were to be denied, that Mr. Sauder meet with the objectors and try to negotiate an outcome that everyone could agree upon.

Member Hopkins stated this was a tough discussion to have due to the intertwined relationships of the local families involved. Mr. Hopkins said part of the problem with developing near Tremont was the amount of prime soil. Mr. Hopkins added that the population of Tazewell County was decreasing at a faster rate than the State of Illinois, so he would be all for any new land development, but not in this location.

Following discussion, moved by Hopkins, seconded by Stahl to recommend approval of LU-25-10, Case No. 25-30-Z to the Tazewell County Board.

On roll call vote, **motion failed, unanimously.**

DISCUSSION

Refund of Filing Fees
Dustin Pollitt &
Markwayla Barnes

Administrator Workman stated we had accepted to Special Use applications for chickens in a residential district, prior the code being amended. Ms. Workman stated both petitioners requested their filing fees be refunded. Ms. Workman added that neither petition was ever processed, nor taken before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

This item was for discussion purposes only. No action was taken; however it was the consensus of the committee to support the reimbursement of these fees.

STAFF REPORT:

Administrator Workman presented the Committee a Staff Report detailing revenues, expenses and other office related activity for the month and year to date. This item was for discussion purposes only and no action was taken.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Land Use Committee will be held on Tuesday, August 12, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

RECESS:

There being no further business, the meeting recessed at 6:36p.m.

Jaclynn Workman, Secretary
(Transcribed by Melissa Kreiter, Chief Deputy)