

LEE COUNTY RENEWABLE ENERGY COMMITTEE

Ad Hoc Meeting

January 27, 2022, at 9:00 AM

**County Board Room
Old Lee County Courthouse, Dixon, Illinois**

Zoom Video- & Tele-conferencing

Meeting ID: 828 7215 0974

Password: 797986

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ks1FhmBLkKE>

or search, "Lee County Renewable Energy Committee – 01/27/22" in YouTube

Appointed Committee Members

Chris Norberg – Chair
Marilyn Shippert
Tom Kitson
Tom Wilson
Danielle Allen
Dave Bally

Advisory Members

Dee Duffy, Zoning Administrator
Alice Henkel, Renewable Energy Coordinator/Clerk
Charley Boonstra, State's Attorney

At 9:00AM, Chair Chris Norberg called the meeting to order.

Chair Norberg called for roll call of members of the committee and county staff.

Appointed Members present: Norberg, Shippert, Kitson, Wilson, Bally
Appointed Members absent: Allen

Advisory Members present: Duffy, Henkel, Boonstra
Advisory Members absent: None

The following visitors were present:

Rick Humphrey, Lee County Board Member
Dan O'Connell, Carpenters' Union
Len Saunders, Jr., Business Agent with Carpenter's Local 790
Brenda Merriman, Resource Conservationist with Lee Co. Soil & Water Conservation District
Glen Hughes, Lee County Zoning Board of Appeals Member
Bruce Forster, Lee County Zoning Board of Appeals Chair
Adam Henkel, Lee County Farm Bureau President
Martha Johansson, Interested Party
Christian Johnson, Illinois Land and Liberty Coalition Field Operations Director

Curtis Cook, P.E. – Chastain & Associates, LLC
Emily Pratt, Lee County Regional Planning Commission/Lee County Farm Bureau
John Nicholson, Lee County Board Member
Chris Henkel, Independent Consultant
Courtney Kennedy, Attorney
Will Hantzmon, Associate Development Manager at Hexagon Energy
Scott Reamer, Director of Development at Hexagon Energy
Emily Skill, Enel
Bob Olson, Lee County Board Chair
Steven Hall, Ameresco (via ZOOM)
Mark Zwieg, Senior Director of Development for Summit Ridge Energy (via ZOOM)
Anthony Neve, Recall Strategies (via ZOOM)
Ben Sych, Enel (via ZOOM)
James Schielein, Lee County Board Member (via ZOOM)
Kerri Neary, Chief Development Officer for Summit Ridge Energy (via ZOOM)

Chair Norberg began with new business. Curtis Cook, P.E. with Chastain and Associates, LLC was present to discuss consulting engineer services that he and his firm can provide to the County, specifically the creation and/or amendment of ordinances and the overseeing of large wind and solar projects to verify compliance at the cost of the developer. Mr. Cook presented the proposed contract to the Committee, explaining it is an hourly contract that requires a \$25,000 fee. He went through what services will be provided as part of the contract.

Marilyn Shippert made a motion to send this matter to the Lee County Finance Committee. A second was discerned, and there was no debate. A vote was taken, and the ayes prevailed. Motion passed, 5-0.

There was no other new business.

The next order of business was visitor, Brenda Merriman, a Resource Conservationist with the Lee County Soil and Water Conservation District. Mrs. Merriman was present to discuss Lee County's Land Evaluation and Site Assessment ("LESA"). She gave a brief history on the State's use of the LESA and the County's adoption of the LESA.

Mrs. Merriman explained that the LESA doesn't rely solely on the productivity index of a parcel. It considers primarily the uniqueness of the soil to Lee County and the uniqueness of the soil to the State of Illinois; however, productivity index is considered. There are soils in the County that are unique to the County and/or State but are not considered productive. The State looks to protect these rare soils regardless of productivity.

Mrs. Merriman noted the LESA will hold up in court and that any changes to the site assessment questions adopted by the County will require the approval of the Natural Resources Conservation Services and the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

LESA's site assessment is meant to keep development adjacent to existing development and save prime soil. Therefore, it doesn't work when applied to wind and solar as those types of developments should occur away from existing cities. Mrs. Merriman said that since LESA is a tool, it is up to the County to decide how to use the LESA, whether it be in part, as whole or not at all.

Tom Wilson departed the meeting at 9:32 am.

It was noted that approval of the minutes was overlooked. There were no changes and/or corrections to minutes of the January 5, 2022 meeting. The minutes were approved as written.

The next order of old business was the solar ordinance update, which included a presentation by Hexagon Solar regarding project siting and the construction timeline. Will Hantzmon, Associate Development Manager, and Scott Reamer, Director of Development, were present on behalf of Hexagon Energy.

Mr. Reamer and Mr. Hantzmon proposed a solar overlay district to site solar away from the municipalities. They also explained that when siting solar projects, they primarily look for a location near existing power infrastructure and presented a map of where the existing transmission lines are in Lee County. Developers also look for landowners who are willing to participate in the project, a lack of environmental concerns, and a clear permitting process.

With regard to the construction timeline, the County has concerns over the amount of time it takes from the time the special use permit is approved to the time ground is broken for construction. Mr. Hantzmon and Mr. Reamer explained that in order to proceed with construction, the developer must first have a finalized interconnect agreement with PJM, a permit from the County, and completion of all necessary surveys. They try to plan their projects so that the special use permit and interconnect agreement are done around the same time; however, PJM is currently running behind and is taking approximately two (2) years to respond to applications. Annually reporting progress and providing proof of continued investment and progress by the developer was suggested as ways to ensure the County that these developers are working during that time to bring their projects to fruition.

Chair Norberg called for a brief recess at 10:33 a.m. The meeting resumed at 10:43 a.m.

The next order of new business was a discussion on an ordinance for battery energy storage systems. Emily Skill with Enel presented a draft utility-scale battery energy storage system ordinance for the Committee to consider.

There were no comments from any visitors present.

There was no other business.

At 11:00 a.m., Marilyn Shippert made a motion to adjourn. A second was discerned and there was no debate. A vote was taken, and all were in favor. Motion passed, 5-0.

The next meeting will be March 3, 2022, at 9:00 a.m.

*Live feed can be viewed on **YouTube** at [Lee County Renewable Energy Committee – 01/27/22](#).*

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Henkel