



VOT ORDINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING Minutes

VILLAGE OF TILTON

6/10/2026 5:30 PMCDT

1001 TILTON RD, TILTON IL 61833

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mike Weidenburner called the meeting to order at 5:30pm

2. ROLL CALL

Attendance

Present:

Members: Lori Fields - Village Clerk, Courtney George - Board Trustee, Vanessa Sims - Board Trustee, Billy Wear - Village Mayor, Mike Weidenburner - Board Trustee

Absent:

Members: Tiffany Jones-McClellan - Village Administrator, Cassidy Warrick - Treasurer

3. APPROVE OR AMEND AGENDA PRESENTED

Motion:

MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA PRESENTED

Motion moved by Mike Weidenburner and motion seconded by Vanessa Sims. 3 AYES, 0 NAYES, MOTION PASSED

Trustee Weidenburner noted that while the Solar Ordinance was on the agenda, the committee had heard substantially all it could on that topic and the public comment portion would proceed under the standard three-minute audience rule.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – IF NEEDED

NONE REQUIRED

5. PARKING ORDINANCE

Trustee Weidenburner reported that the draft parking ordinance pertaining to no-parking zones had been forwarded to Village Attorney Wesner for review. The committee agreed that Police Chief Phil Bernardi should review the ordinance language for accuracy and completeness, as far as police enforcement, before it advances to the full Village Board.

6. VILLAGE BOARD MONTHLY MEETINGS

Trustee Weidenburner introduced a discussion regarding the structure of Village Board meetings, noting that Tilton's growth has led to increasingly lengthy meetings and a higher frequency of special board meetings. He proposed exploring a bi-monthly meeting format in which the first meeting of the month would focus on department head reports and the second on business matters, allowing for better organization and timeliness of agenda items.

Trustee Weidenburner also suggested that standing committee meetings should occur on a regular, scheduled basis with formal reports delivered at designated board meetings, rather than ad hoc updates.

Additionally, Trustee Weidenburner proposed that all official meetings be recorded. He emphasized that the purpose would not be public broadcast, but rather to ensure all board members remain informed of discussions and decisions, particularly when they are unable to attend in person. He cited the value of having reviewed prior finance committee meeting minutes, which provided him important context for understanding colleague positions on various matters.

Mayor Wear raised a concern that any recorded or written record would become part of the public record under FOIA, and noted that all communications would therefore need to be professionally conducted. The committee acknowledged this concern and agreed that while the intent is transparency and informed decision-making, care must be taken to ensure legal compliance. Trustee Sims raised a related concern about keeping board members informed when residents bring complaints or issues to the attention of staff or the Mayor, so that trustees are not caught off guard at board meetings. The committee agreed to continue refining this approach.

7. CAMPER RESIDENCE

Code Enforcement Officer David Biggerstaff presented a list of considerations the committee had previously developed regarding the regulation of camper residences within the Village. He indicated that the committee must first decide whether to allow camper residences at all, and if so, establish clear guidelines across several categories.

Short-Term vs. Long-Term Definitions The committee discussed definitions for short-term and long-term camper residency. After discussion, the committee reached a general consensus that short-term would be defined as 30 days or less — such as a visitor staying temporarily — and that anything over 30 days would constitute long-term residency. It was acknowledged that long-term does not necessarily mean permanent, and that permanent residency would be a separate category requiring additional requirements.

Permitting and Re-Permitting Mayor Wear suggested a re-permitting requirement, proposing that after an initial approval period (such as six months), an applicant would be required to return and obtain a renewed permit with an explanation of why they remain in the camper. This was seen as a mechanism to track progress — for example, in the case of a house fire where the property owner is rebuilding — and to prevent indefinite camper habitation without oversight. Officer Biggerstaff noted that the zoning board would be the decision-making body for approvals, not any individual official, ensuring consistent standards for all applicants.

Code Enforcement Officer David Biggerstaff noted that sanitation was the most common concern identified in research on other communities allowing camper residences. The committee agreed that for any long-term use, the camper must be connected to the municipal sewer system, not merely using an onboard holding tank. Short-term stays could utilize onboard tanks. Mayor Wear noted that long-term connections should also be metered for water usage.

Other Requirements Discussed The committee identified several additional considerations to be incorporated into a formal draft:

- Anchoring/Structural stability: Officer Biggerstaff recommended that long-term or permanent camper installations be physically anchored, similar to requirements for manufactured homes, to prevent shifting or rollover.
- Generators: The use of external generators was flagged as a noise concern; onboard RV generators were viewed as more acceptable than standalone external units.
- Setbacks: The camper would need to comply with standard property setback requirements, as with any structure.
- Applicant: The property owner, not the camper occupant, would be the applicant of record for any special use variance.
- Occupancy limits: A restriction on the number of occupants was suggested to prevent overcrowding in unsuitable living conditions.
- Application/Inspection Fee: The committee agreed that an application fee is appropriate to cover inspection costs. Mayor Wear suggested a fee in the range of \$150–\$250, and the committee generally agreed that approximately \$250 was reasonable to cover staff time and required inspections.
- Licensed contractors: Any utility hookups (sewer, water, electric) would be required to be performed by licensed contractors.

Officer Biggerstaff also noted as a side matter that the mobile home park ordinance situation remains unresolved, and that the owner of the local mobile home park has a notice to appear date the following week. The committee agreed to monitor that situation.

The committee directed Officer Biggerstaff and members to draft proposed definitions and guidelines for short-term, long-term, and permanent camper residency for further review at a future meeting.

8. SOLAR ORDINANCE

Trustee Weidenburner introduced the solar ordinance discussion, noting that the most recently publicly available draft — the version with tracked changes prepared by Village Attorney Wesner — was the operative document for the meeting, and that a newer draft reflecting requests made by solar developer Earthrise had not yet been formally considered by the committee.

Earthrise Meeting Update Mayor Wear reported that representatives from Earthrise had met with Village staff the prior week. He summarized two primary requests made by Earthrise: (1) that language be added to accommodate their supporting electrical equipment needed to transmit power over Interstate 74 to the peaker plant, and (2) that the groundwater testing requirements be eliminated, citing the position of their finance team that insurance companies would not cover the project if testing was required. Mayor Wear clarified that the transmission route had been revised so that lines would no longer run through the Village of Tilton, instead routing north of the road past the cemetery and over the interstate, which the committee viewed favorably.

Groundwater Testing Trustee Weidenburner expressed his view that the existing ordinance language should remain unchanged. He stated that while the solar panels themselves — now made of monocrystalline silicon (glass, silicon, and aluminum) — pose no contamination risk on their own, the disturbance of the ground through pile driving raises legitimate concerns about the shallow aquifer. He

stated this was a public health matter. Other committee members agreed that groundwater testing requirements should be retained.

Trustee Sims and other members expressed support for maintaining the testing requirements, affirming that the committee's responsibility is to protect the community, not the developer's insurability.

Jurisdictional Area – Catlin Mayor Wear raised a separate but related matter regarding the jurisdictional boundary between Tilton and Catlin in the area where the proposed solar project is located. He proposed that Tilton formally cede its jurisdictional authority — for this solar project only — to the Village of Catlin, while retaining Tilton's half-mile setback boundary. He reasoned that since the project is located within Catlin Township, served by Catlin schools, and Catlin governmental agencies have already accepted funds from Earthrise, it is more appropriate for Catlin to exercise regulatory authority over that area. He noted that Village Attorney Wesner confirmed this could be accomplished through a specific, one-time intergovernmental agreement that would not affect Tilton's mile-and-a-half jurisdictional reach for any other future project.

Trustee Weidenburner acknowledged the reasoning but expressed caution about setting a precedent of relinquishing jurisdictional rights, even in a limited context. He noted the importance of ensuring the agreement is drafted narrowly and specifically. Mayor Wear reiterated that the agreement would be project-specific and would not affect Tilton's general jurisdictional rights.

Half-Mile Setback Mayor Wear confirmed that Earthrise has agreed to honor Tilton's half-mile setback from the Village's boundary. He noted this exceeds the originally proposed 1,800-foot (approximately quarter-mile) setback in the earlier ordinance draft.

Cemetery Setback A committee member noted the presence of a small family cemetery in the project area. A representative from Earthrise confirmed that their original 2025 permit plan set included the required setback distance from the cemetery, as required.

Committee Consensus The committee agreed to retain the existing ordinance language, including the groundwater testing requirements, and directed that the currently public version of the ordinance (with Wesner's tracked changes) remain the operative draft. Any proposed changes related to supporting transmission equipment would require a formal variance application and a submitted plan for committee review before any modifications to the ordinance would be considered.

9. AUDIENCE

Trustee Weidenburner opened the floor to audience members, allowing approximately three minutes per speaker.

Becky Miller addressed the committee regarding the proposal to cede jurisdictional authority to Catlin. She expressed skepticism about Catlin's ability to handle the matter effectively, citing what she described as disorganization and lack of coherent process on Catlin's part. She also noted that the proposed solar project area had historically been envisioned as a direction for Tilton's residential growth, and questioned whether proximity to a solar facility would deter development. Mayor Wear

responded by citing conversations with developers who suggested that buyers seeking to leave urban areas are generally not deterred by proximity to solar facilities.

Ms. Miller also raised the topic of a reported incident at Horseshoe Solar in New York, in which pile driving punctured an aquifer, resulting in significant groundwater discharge. She expressed concern that old, unmapped mine shafts in the local area pose a similar risk of subsurface disruption during pile installation.

Earthrise Environmental Director Grant McFall addressed the committee regarding groundwater testing. He stated that modern utility-scale solar panels use monocrystalline silicon — free of cadmium and lead — and that in his 13 years of experience, no contamination attributable to solar installation has been documented. He cautioned, however, that conducting pre- and post-construction groundwater testing could expose the Village to liability, as testing would likely reveal pre-existing contaminants — such as nitrates, PFAS, and volatile organic compounds — originating from upstream sources entirely unrelated to the solar project. He suggested this could create obligations for the Village or residents to remediate those issues.

Chris Hanson, an engineer and area resident with 22 years of experience in solar and wind energy construction across the U.S. and Canada, corroborated Mr. McFall's comments. He explained that insurance companies are unable to quantify groundwater contamination risk over a project of 800–900 acres due to the dynamic nature of aquifer systems, making such coverage unavailable. He noted that in his 22 years of experience, groundwater was never tested on any project, and no contamination claims were ever filed. He suggested that a controlled test — placing a single panel on a contained surface with side-by-side comparison samples — could demonstrate the absence of panel-related contamination, and noted this approach might satisfy both the community's concerns and practical insurability requirements.

A community member, identified as Jarrod Hooks, raised a concern that pile driving could accelerate the leaching of existing contaminants already present in the soil into the aquifer, regardless of what materials the piles themselves are made of.

Mayor Wear and committee members engaged Earthrise representatives in a dialogue about aquifer mapping, mine shaft risks, and the depth of pile installations. Mr. McFall acknowledged that aquifer depths vary considerably and that underground mapping for solar projects is not standard practice, though his team conducts thorough field surveys and surface reviews prior to construction. He stated that if a mine shaft or other significant subsurface anomaly were encountered during construction, work would stop immediately and the appropriate state agencies (IDNR, IEPA, or the State Historic Preservation Office) would be contacted to direct remediation.

Ms. Miller also raised a question about whether Earthrise threatened Catlin with legal action if they extended their solar moratorium again. Earthrise representatives denied any threat was made. Mayor Wear stated that when Tilton sought its own moratorium extension, Earthrise indicated no objection. A member of the audience referenced statements reportedly made at Catlin board meetings, but Mayor Wear reiterated that no such threats were made by Earthrise.

Trustee Sims raised concerns about transparency in meetings between Village staff and Earthrise representatives, stating that as a voting trustee, she expects to be fully informed of all discussions. Mayor Wear explained that preliminary meetings with developers are a standard part of vetting proposals before bringing them to the board, and that Village Administrator Tiffany McClellan is always present to take notes. He committed to improving information sharing with trustees. Trustee Weidenburner connected this concern to his earlier proposal regarding meeting transparency and recording, noting that access to such records would help trustees feel informed and better prepared for votes.

A representative of Earthrise, Justin Pau, noted that the SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) concurrence for the project had been received that day.

10. ADJOURN

Motion:

MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 7:00

Motion moved by Mike Weidenburner and motion seconded by Vanessa Sims. 3 AYES, 0 NAYES,
MOTION PASSED

LORI FIELDS-CLERK

Wear 6-18-26
APPROVED

