

MINUTES OF THE
CREST HILL PLAN COMMISSION

The April 24, 2025, Special Plan Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Thomas, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the City Center, 20600 City Center Boulevard, Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

Roll call indicated the following present: Chairman Bill Thomas, Commissioner Ken Carroll, Commissioner Angelo Deserio, Commissioner Jeff Peterson, Commissioner Marty Flynn, Commissioner John Stanton, Commissioner Cheryl Slabozeski.

Also present were: Community & Economic Development Director Patrick Ainsworth, City Attorney Mike Stiff, Administrative Clerk Samantha Tilley.

Absent were: Community Development Consultant Ron Mentzer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Chairman Thomas asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the Plan Commission meeting held on March 13, 2025, for Commission approval.

(#1) Motion by Commissioner Deserio seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve the minutes from the Plan Commission meeting held on March 13, 2025.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioners Deserio, Peterson, Flynn, Stanton, Carroll, Slabozeski, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being seven (7) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Chairman Thomas asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the Special Plan Commission meeting held on March 27, 2025, for Commission approval.

(#2) Motion by Commissioner Carroll seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve the minutes from the Special Plan Commission meeting held on March 27, 2025.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioners Carroll, Peterson, Flynn, Stanton, Deserio, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Slabozeski.

ABSENT: None.

There being six (6) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC HEARING: Chairman Bill Thomas presented case number SU-25-2-4-1, of Hendrickson USA LLC seeking approval for a Special Use Permit and Variation(s) for a New Solar Array which is Classified as a Utility Facility under the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance on a 4.8-acre area of land in a M-2 General Manufacturing District located at 501 Caton Farm Road in Crest Hill, Illinois. Chairman Thomas asked if the paperwork is in order. The necessary paperwork was in order.

Chairman Thomas asked for a Motion to Open the Public Hearing on Case Number SU-25-2-4-1.

(#3) Motion by Commissioner Deserio seconded by Commissioner Slabozeski, to open a public hearing on case number SU-25-2-4-1.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioners Deserio, Slabozeski, Carroll, Stanton, Peterson, Flynn, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being seven (7) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The Public Hearing was opened at 7:03 p.m.

Chairman Thomas asked the Community and Economic Development Director Patrick Ainsworth to present the specifics on this case.

Community and Economic Development Director Patrick Ainsworth presented an overview of the case. Director Ainsworth explained that Hendrickson USA LLC was seeking approval for a special use permit and variations for a new solar array on their property at 501 Caton Farm Road. The project involved one special use, one variation from the zoning ordinance, and a deviation from the city code for driveway width.

Director Ainsworth noted that Hendrickson had been at the site for almost 50 years and was investing in alternative energy. The solar array would help power their facilities for their annual needs, producing approximately 1.8 megawatts of power. He explained that the unique size of the project required special considerations.

Director Ainsworth detailed the variations being requested, including:

- A deviation for the existing driveway width on the eastern parcel
- A variation for the use of limestone gravel material for an emergency vehicle access road around the solar array

Director Ainsworth also explained that staff had worked closely with the Lockport Fire Protection District on the access road design. The City Engineer had also been involved in the planning process. Director Ainsworth noted that staff were supportive of granting the variations due to the unique circumstances of the project.

Director Ainsworth concluded by stating that staff recommended approval with ten conditions to help maintain high standards for the development. The conditions are as follows:

1. That the drawings submitted for a building permit shall be in substantial compliance with the drawings approved by City Council and identified below, unless otherwise noted in the remaining conditions:
 - Solar Ground Mount System Plans Engineered by PurePower Engineering last dated 3/28/2025.

- Stormwater Management Permit Details Prepared by Hey and Associates Inc. Last Dated April 15, 2025
 - Structural Detail Drawings Created by DCE Solar Sheets 1 through 5 Last Dated 3/6/2025.
 - Landscape Plans Created by Hey and Associates Inc. Last Dated 3/31/2025.
2. The gravel driveway and loading area in the front of the accessory building on the property with the Permanent Index Number of 11-04-33-100-002-0000 shall receive a permit to transition this surface material to an approved surface material to be in compliance with Zoning Ordinance Section 11.6-1 and follow applicable construction standards. This specific area includes the driveway entrance from Caton Farm Road leading to the accessory building as well as to the gates of the solar array area. This permit shall be issued before May 19, 2026.
 3. The emergency access road containing the three-fourths" limestone surface material shall be improved with a base material and construction method approved by the City Engineer. All details of the materials and construction methods shall be submitted with the building permit application for the solar array.
 4. The thickness of stone for the temporary construction access road should be at least two inches thick.
 5. Prior to permitting issuance for the solar array the structural calculations report provided with through submittal will need to be signed and stamped by a Licensed Structural Engineer.
 6. A Fire Truck Turning Performance Analysis shall be provided for review and approval as part of the building permit application submittal for the solar array.
 7. If any new outdoor lighting is proposed with this project, then a Photometric Plan shall be provided at time of submitting a building permit application to ensure compliance with applicable codes and regulations.
 8. All required final design drawings and related supporting project information shall be submitted for final engineering review and approval in conjunction with the formal building permit application submitted for the solar array.
 9. All new shade trees, ornamental trees, and evergreen trees proposed on north of the solar array shall be planted with a minimum height of six feet and a minimum of 2.5" caliber at time of planting.
 10. All conditions made with this Ordinance shall be transferred to any new property owner.

Chairman Thomas asked the representatives in attendance for Hendrickson if they would like to give a presentation.

Mr. Chris Batch, the General Manager of Hendrickson Bumper, presented it on behalf of the company. Mr. Batch provided an overview of Hendrickson's history, operations, and commitment to sustainability. Mr. Batch explained that the solar project was driven by customer demands for sustainability and carbon neutrality. Mr. Batch also detailed recent investments in the Crest Hill facility and emphasized the company's dedication to growing their business and bringing more jobs to the community.

Grace Rasmussen, from Verde Solutions, the solar installer, then presented details of the proposed solar array. Ms. Rasmussen outlined Verde's experience and qualifications, showed examples of completed similar projects, and presented the design plans for the Hendrickson site.

The plans included details on the array layout, fencing, access road, drainage, and landscaping.

Chairman Thomas asked the commissioners if anyone had a comment or question.

Commissioners asked questions and raised concerns about various aspects of the project:

- Commissioner Slabozeski inquired about cost savings from the solar panels. Mr. Batch was unable to share specific numbers due to company privacy policies.
- Commissioner Stanton expressed concerns about:
 - The plan for system removal, particularly buried conduits
 - The use of gravel for the access road and its long-term permeability
- Chairman Thomas asked about the impact of tariffs on Hendrickson's business. Mr. Batch explained that the bumper division was minimally affected due to their primarily US-based customers and operations.
- There was discussion about the access road material, with staff explaining it was the best compromise based on cost, regulatory requirements, and input from the City Engineer and Fire Department.
- Commissioners discussed the need to potentially address conduit removal in 30+ years when decommissioning might occur.

Chairman Thomas asked if anyone in the audience would like to make a public comment. There were none.

Chairman Thomas asked for a Motion to Close the Public Hearing on Case Number SU-25-2-4-1.

(#4) Motion by Commissioner Peterson seconded by Commissioner Flynn, to close the public hearing on case number SU-25-2-4-1.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioners Peterson, Flynn, Stanton, Carroll, Slabozeski, Deserio, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being seven (7) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:47 p.m.

Chairman Thomas asked for a motion to approve the recommendation of case number SU-25-2-4-1, the request of Hendrickson USA LLC seeking approval for a Special Use Permit and Variation(s) for a New Solar Array which is Classified as a Utility Facility under the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance on a 4.8-acre area of land in a M-2 General Manufacturing District located at 501 Caton Farm Road, Crest Hill with the previously discussed ten (10) conditions.

Chairman Thomas asked Mr. Batch if he was aware of the ten (10) conditions listed and Mr. Batch stated that he has seen them, and they have agreed to all ten (10) conditions.

(#5) Motion by Commissioner Peterson seconded by Commissioner Slabozeski, approve the recommendation of case number SU-25-2-4-1, the request of Hendrickson USA LLC seeking approval for a Special Use Permit and Variation(s) for a New Solar Array that is outlined in the staff report, which is Classified as a Utility Facility under the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance on a 4.8-acre area of land in a M-2 General Manufacturing District located at 501 Caton Farm Road, Crest Hill with the previously discussed ten (10) conditions below:

1. That the drawings submitted for a building permit shall be in substantial compliance with the drawings approved by City Council and identified below, unless otherwise noted in the remaining conditions:
 - Solar Ground Mount System Plans Engineered by PurePower Engineering last dated 3/28/2025.
 - Stormwater Management Permit Details Prepared by Hey and Associates Inc. Last Dated April 15, 2025
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2. The gravel driveway and loading area in the front of the accessory building on the property with the Permanent Index Number of 11-04-33-100-002-0000 shall receive a permit to transition this surface material to an approved surface material to be in compliance with Zoning Ordinance Section 11.6-1 and follow applicable construction standards. This specific area includes the driveway entrance from Caton Farm Road leading to the accessory building as well as to the gates of the solar array area. This permit shall be issued before May 19, 2026.
3. The emergency access road containing the three-fourths limestone surface material shall be improved with a base material and construction method approved by the City Engineer. All details of the materials and construction methods shall be submitted with the building permit application for the solar array.
4. The thickness of stone for the temporary construction access road should be at least two inches thick.
5. Prior to permitting issuance for the solar array the structural calculations report provided with through submittal will need to be signed and stamped by a Licensed Structural Engineer.
6. A Fire Truck Turning Performance Analysis shall be provided for review and approval as part of the building permit application submittal for the solar array.
7. If any new outdoor lighting is proposed with this project, then a Photometric Plan shall be provided at time of submitting a building permit application to ensure compliance with applicable codes and regulations.
8. All required final design drawings and related supporting project information shall be submitted for final engineering review and approval in conjunction with the formal building permit application submitted for the solar array.
9. All new shade trees, ornamental trees, and evergreen trees proposed on north of the solar array shall be planted with a minimum height of six feet and a minimum of 2.5" caliber at time of planting.

10. All conditions made with this Ordinance shall be transferred to any new property owner.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioners Peterson, Slabozeski, Deserio, Carroll, Stanton, Flynn, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being seven (7) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Chairman Thomas congratulated Hendrickson USA LLC for being a Crest Hill business for almost 50 years and thanked them for their commitment to renewable energy. He informed the applicant that the Plan Commission is only a recommendation body and that the City Council would hear their case at the work session on May 12th and have an official vote.

OTHER BUSINESS: City Attorney Mike Stiff briefly explained that the only changes made to the bylaws were to incorporate the new ordinance regarding compensation and the number of absences, add a signature line for Director Ainsworth as the new Director of Community and Economic Development, and update the dates.

Chairman Thomas asked for a motion to approve the bylaws and changes as presented.

(#6) Motion by Commissioner Carroll seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to approve the bylaws and changes as presented.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioner Carroll, Peterson, Flynn, Stanton, Slabozeski, Deserio, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being seven (7) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Deserio announced his resignation from the Planning Commission, effective at the close of the meeting, due to his recent election as Alderman of Ward 1. Chairman Thomas and other commissioners thanked him for his service and wished him well in his new role.

Chairman Thomas noted that the election of officers (Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary) would be added to the June meeting agenda, as there were no agenda items for May.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

There being no further business before the Commission, a motion for adjournment was in order.

(#7) Motion by Commissioner Deserio seconded by Commissioner Flynn, to adjourn the April 24, 2025, Plan Commission meeting.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioners Deserio, Flynn, Stanton, Peterson, Carroll, Slabozeski, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: None.

There being seven (7) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

As approved this _____ day of _____, 2025.

As presented _____

As amended _____

BILL THOMAS, COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

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