



**REGULAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2026
12:00 PM**

1. Call to Order

2. Approve Agenda

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1. Minutes from the Regular EDAC Meeting on December 8, 2025

4. Public Input

5. Reports

5.1. Monthly Staff Report

6. New Business

6.1. Discussion on the Proposed Data Center Development (No Action)

7. Any Other Business to Come Before the Commission

7.1. Reminder of Expiring Terms

8. Adjourn

EDAC Meeting Minutes

December 8, 2025

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Committee was called to order at 12:00PM. A quorum was declared by Chairperson Leman.

Attendee Name	Organization	Title	Status	Arrived
Roy Bockler	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	Noon
Caty Campbell	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	Noon
John Campbell	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	Noon
Buster Hanley	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	Noon
Drew Leman	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	Noon
Amy McCoy	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	Noon
Danielle Owens	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	Noon
Earl Riley	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Absent	
Liridon Rrushaj	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	Noon
Dennis Short	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Absent	
Jack Steger	Economic Development Advisory Committee	Member	Present	12:02 PM

Approve Agenda and Meeting Minutes

A. McCoy motioned to approve the agenda for today's meeting and the meeting minutes from November 10, 2025, with a second by D. Owens. The motion passed by voice vote.

Public Input

None

Reports

6.1 Monthly Staff Report

Mr. Wray reviewed the monthly staff report included in the meeting packet.

6.2 Greater Peoria EDC Report

Mr. Setti of the GPEDC provided a review of the bi-weekly Greater Peoria Economic Development Council updates since the last meeting.

The committee discussed the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Mr. Setti noted that a meeting will be held in Tremont on Wednesday and invited members to attend. Committee members asked questions regarding the current plan document and the timeline for the upcoming update. Mr. Setti clarified that the document is not due until October 2026 and that most of the work is expected to be completed by the summer of next year.

6.3 Marketing Update

The updated logo will be presented to City Council for approval tonight at the City Council meeting.

New Business

7.1 Approval of 2026 Meeting Dates

Mr. Wray presented the proposed 2026 meeting dates. He noted that the meeting cadence will remain the same, with meetings held on the second Monday of each month at noon, with one exception. The October meeting, which falls on a holiday, has been moved to Tuesday.

A motion to approve the 2026 meeting dates as presented was made by B. Hanley and seconded by D. Owens. The motion carried by voice vote.

7.2 Input on Residential TIF Town Hall

Mr. Wray requested recommendations on potential topics or issues to be addressed at an upcoming town hall hosted by Council Member Phillips. Mr. Wray and City Attorney Vasselli will also be in attendance to assist in answering questions.

The committee discussed several potential topics, including an overview of how the process works, noting that it is not simply a handout and that projects must be completed before verified expenses are submitted for reimbursement. Members also discussed the importance of the program, noting that current offerings do not align with what prospective residents are seeking. Additional topics included declining school enrollment, the impact on property taxes for residents, and secondary benefits of population growth, such as a broader tax base.

Concerns were also raised regarding the current process for TIF grants. While there was not opposition to the program itself, members suggested implementing a separate application for each program and providing clearer guidelines. It was noted that TIF funds should not be used for routine or ongoing maintenance.

Any Other Business to Come Before the Commission

One committee member asked about the movie theater. It was clarified that this property is located in North Pekin, not City of Pekin.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting by J. Campbell at 12:32 P.M., with a second by L. Rrushaj. The motion passed by voice vote.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 12, 2026 at Noon in the City Council Chambers.



REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Agenda Date: February 9, 2026
To: Members of the Economic Development Advisory Committee
From: Joshua Wray, Economic Development Director

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly Staff Report

DESCRIPTION:

Commercial

- Retail Strategies has provided a redacted quarterly report of their recruitment efforts (attached).
- Staff has had some discussion with the prospective new restaurant for the Asher's building. They are still in negotiations with the property owner.
- The land owner south of East Court Village and southwest of Walmart is interested in selling the farmland for development and has said he will annex and zone the property so long as he does not have to pay additional property taxes while he still owns it, which can be accomplished with an annexation agreement.
- Staff is in discussion with three retail businesses planning to apply for a forgivable loan funded from the Business Development District Fund. In this model, their annual loan payment is forgiven if they generate the agreed-upon amount of sales taxes to the City. If they fall short in a given year, they must pay the City the difference.

Industrial

- Staff toured Excalibur Seasonings and met with their leadership. They are planning to finish the new R&D facility by September, and they have future plans for expansion on site after that is up and running.
- Ambient Fuels visited Pekin last month, and their project plans continue to move forward.
- Staff received an inquiry from a potential welding trade school. They are looking for a current building and would teach additional machine shop skills beyond what is available through ICC.
- Alto plans to pursue the federal port development grant again, this time with support from the Heart of Illinois Regional Port District. Dock renovations are already underway, but this grant could provide up to \$13 million of additional funding to expand the port capabilities.

Residential

- Staff has received an inquiry for another TIF renovation grant to restore an abandoned, dilapidated house. This would be the second project under the new program.

Infrastructure Projects

- Court Street reconstruction will continue as soon as weather starts maintaining consistent warm temps - late March / early April. The work is planned to be completed down to 8th Street by end of this year.
- Broadway Street reconstruction, from 14th to Parkway, is underway with engineering and IDOT review. The project is planned to be bid January 2027.
- The combined sewer outflow (CSO) rehabilitation along the river is underway and is planned to be completed within Fiscal Year 2027.



Quarterly Business Report

Pekin, IL

Quarterly Business Report

Q4 2025 Retailer Feedback and Notes

Drive-Thru Coffee

The brand is actively pursuing a ground lease on a site and is working through adjacent land control and access approvals. This represents one of the most advanced active recruitment efforts in the market, with continued coordination underway to finalize site control and approvals.

Quick-Service Burgers

Expressed direct interest in a site, supported by prior successful collaboration within the greater trade area. All viable sites have been shared for review, and follow-up engagement is ongoing.

Potential Development Site

The property is under contract with a developer with active QSR ground lease discussions underway. A 15-year ground lease structure has been proposed, including an option to purchase and potential rent abatement. Multiple national QSR users have been approached. This remains one of the most active pad-development conversations in the city.

Sandwich Shop

The Pekin market was specifically discussed with the brand, and they confirmed willingness to consider opportunities in the city. Follow-up information on available shop spaces has been provided. Continued accelerated expansion supports ongoing positioning of qualifying sites.

Existing Quick-Service Restaurant

The area franchisee reported that the Pekin location is currently their strongest performing store. Additional competitive and performance insights are being gathered to validate and leverage this data point in further recruitment discussions.



Quarterly Business Report

Q4 2025 Retailer Feedback and Notes

Convenience Store Brand

Southern Illinois expansion continues to be supported by new distribution capacity. The brand requires sites of two or more acres and remains a strong-fit convenience and fuel candidate for qualifying highway and corridor locations.

Full-Service Breakfast

Continuing aggressive expansion with stated intent to add multiple Illinois locations annually. The brand is open to both ground-up and second-generation restaurant spaces and has a strong track record of backfilling former restaurant boxes.

Mattress Retailer

A productive discussion with senior real estate leadership confirmed willingness to consider approximately 4,500 SF in new or existing strip center environments. The concept aligns well with available shop space formats in Pekin.

Full-Service Breakfast

Franchise groups continue to grow across Illinois and are open to reviewing Pekin opportunities where prototype and traffic thresholds align. Site materials will continue to be advanced.

Smoothie/Juice Concept

Market and site information has been shared, and the brand remains open to 750–1,600 SF formats with preference for co-tenancy alongside gyms, grocery, and pharmacy users.

Drive-Thru Drinks

Engaged to better understand expansion priorities. The brand can utilize small parcels and prefers grocery-anchored and drive-thru capable sites, including ground lease and build-to-suit formats.

General Retailer

Maintains aggressive expansion criteria for 8,000–10,000 SF freestanding or end-cap space with strong visibility and truck access. Remains one of the most realistic national retail targets for the market.



Quarterly Business Report

Q4 2025 Retailer Feedback and Notes

National Dental Group

Brand contact confirmed they are proceeding with a private practice acquisition in the market, representing active healthcare tenancy momentum.

Convenience Store Brand

Site details were shared, including traffic counts and nearby retailer performance. Site-specific feedback is pending following review.

Quick-Service Sandwiches

The brand continues expanding within Illinois and, while most aggressive in larger markets, remains open to reviewing Pekin opportunities that meet site and performance criteria.

Cell Phone/Internet Service Provider

Available spaces were shared and the brand responded that internal approvals are being checked relative to current market coverage. Follow-up is pending.

Barber Shop

Confirmed willingness to review fitting vacancies; however, prior store underperformance and closure in the market makes near-term re-entry less likely. Opportunities will still be shared where appropriate.

Soft Goods Retailer

Discussed a specific property and alternative spaces. While the brand expressed regret about missing a prior opportunity and reviewed current options, recent feedback indicates the presently available space does not meet their needs. The brand remains aware of the market for future positioning.

Limited-Service Cafe

Market and specific sites were discussed. The brand declined a parcel due to size and ground lease economics, and there is currently no franchisee actively pursuing Pekin. The concept remains a longer-horizon candidate.



Quarterly Business Report

Q4 2025 Retailer Feedback and Notes

Gym Concept

Large-format prototype requirements were reviewed along with spaces shared. Ceiling height and size needs remain gating factors, and new construction expansion is currently limited, placing this concept in longer-term monitoring status.

Beauty Supply Retailer

Information on available space was shared. The brand reiterated co-tenancy requirements centered on soft goods anchors, mass merchants, and grocers, placing this concept in a longer-horizon category tied to center mix and scale.

Shoe Store

Declined interest in Pekin at this time, citing a recent nearby store opening and a current focus on larger-city expansion.

Sandwich Shop

The brand currently lacks a franchisee aligned with the Pekin market and is not actively expanding in the area. Updates will continue to be shared to maintain visibility.



REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Agenda Date: February 9, 2026
To: Members of the Economic Development Advisory Committee
From: Joshua Wray, Economic Development Director

AGENDA ITEM: Discussion on the Proposed Data Center Development (No Action)

DESCRIPTION: Given the recent public interest in the prospective data center project, staff wanted to take the opportunity to brief the Committee on the current status, potential timelines, and facts about the project thus far as well as answer any questions the Committee may have, gather feedback, and untimely make sure everyone is comfortable with the current information. While this Committee is not charged with review of any particular development project, it is charged with making recommendations for "programs and actions that enhance the local economy in pursuit of a balanced and growing tax base and a high quality of life for the community."

Facts of the project thus far:

- City Council approved a real estate agreement in April last year to sell 321 acres on the north side of the Luticken property to a data center developer for about \$4.5 million. They put down \$50,000 in earnest money being held in escrow.
- The agreement included a long due diligence period for the developer to work with the utility companies on project feasibility, so it's essentially an option agreement that is conditional upon City Council's approval of a site plan.
- The developer is engaged with Ameren to do the power study that will determine if and what upgrades need to be made to the electric infrastructure for the project.
- As far as I know, the developer has not engaged with either Illinois American Water or Groveland Township Water District yet. The property under contract is in both jurisdictions.
- We have no plans or specs on the actual layout or buildings yet, but they have told us it will be a campus-like setting with several buildings rather than one or two multi-million square foot buildings.
- No site plans, zoning, incentives, or other approvals have been given.
- While we don't have a site plan yet, the closest possible location for a building to a current home on Luticken Lake is 0.7 miles.
- While we don't have building renderings yet, they have described the buildings as office-like.
- The City has annexed the Luticken property, which is what really sparked all the "outcry."
- We do not know who the end-user will be (e.g., Amazon, Google, etc.), nor can we really make that a part of the approval process by law.
- This isn't quite a fact, but I estimate the project will generate about \$20 million per year in new property taxes. My math to get there is assuming they build on just half the property and that it's valued by the assessor at \$100 per square foot (which I'm sure is way lower than construction cost for the buildings).

Other relevant information:

- Power: Power supply is a concern across the country as we bring data centers online and concurrently shut down power plants. However, that is not a local issue. If the data center is built in Pekin, Galesburg, Quad Cities, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, or anywhere else in the MISO electric grid, it will have virtually the same effect on cost of electricity. Furthermore, the upgrades to the grid that Ameren has to make, which the developer will pay for, will actually help stabilize the grid and reduce that cost burden for residents.
- Water: While older data centers do pull a lot of water from the ground, newer ones are using much more efficient cooling systems, recycle a majority of the water, and are even getting way from water-based cooling altogether. We do not know their water plans at this point, but it will likely not be the big issue some people are claiming. Something to know for context is that people are worried it might pull something like 2 or 3 million gallons per day (without assuming any of that is recycled). A single farm irrigation pivot pulls about 1.1 million gallons per day when they are running, and there are thousands of those in Tazewell County alone. I'm not claiming that data centers are the same as farming, but that helps people understand that 3 million gallons isn't as big a number as they think it is. The IEPA representative we talked to said they don't even get very interested in a project until its at about 5 million gallons per day.
- Noise: EPA standards address this and will be enforced. My example for people to consider is that you can stand on the road right outside of Winpak and hear none of the manufacturing happening inside. I also went to DeKalb to see their big data center, and I heard nothing from the road, which was about 300 feet from the building. There may be some noise whenever they kick-on their generators for maintenance/testing, but that is not constant, and the buildings will be plenty-far set back.
- Jobs: While the "jobs per square foot" in a data center is relative low compared to a manufacturing plant, it's still likely to employ 100-200 permanent jobs along with all the contractual labor needed to maintain the facilities, such as electricians, HVAC technicians, plumbers, etc. That's more jobs than any other development we have been excited about in a long time, and it's not only janitors and security guards as some have claimed.

Communication Plan:

- Website: Staff has created a webpage for all [current developments](#) and a subpage specific to the [technology park development](#). Information will be added as available.
- Town Halls: Staff is planning two relevant town halls. The first is set for Tuesday, February 24, 6pm at the Pekin Public Library and will be a general presentation of the City's development process. The second is set for Tuesday, March 24, 7pm at the Pekin Community High School auditorium and will be a more specific discussion of this project.

These venues were chosen to accommodate more attendees, but it does restrict our ability to broadcast live, so we are working on that.

- Public Hearings: Any site plan approval or zoning change will require a public hearing before the Zoning Board of Appeals followed by final consideration by City Council. Notice of a public hearing must be made 15-30 days beforehand, and any zoning change will require notice via mail to nearby property owners.