

**GREATER EGYPT REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING
April 8, 2025**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Kathy Lively, 1st Vice Chair, presided and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. A roll call was done, and a quorum was established.

Members Present:		Members Absent:	
Name:	Represents:	Name:	Represents:
Cindy Humm	Franklin Co.	Liz Allen	Franklin Co.
Kevin Weston	Franklin Co.	Neil Hargis	Franklin Co.
Gary Williams	Rend Lake CD	Lee Messersmith	Benton
David Larkin	Jackson Co.	Abra Phillips	West Frankfort
Julie Peterson	Jackson Co.	John Rendleman	Jackson Co.
Cody Lueker	Carbondale	Greg Legan	Kinkaid-Reeds CD
Brian Otten	Perry Co.	Ryan Guthman	Murphysboro
Robert Spencer	Pinckneyville	Steve Damron	Jefferson Co.
Tim Atkisson	Williamson Co.	Steve Draege	Jefferson Co.
Josh Smith	Williamson Co.	Cliff Lindemann	Jefferson Co.
Mark Kronos	Carterville	Fisher Overstreet	Jefferson Co.
Kathy Lively	Herrin	Nathan McKenna	Mt. Vernon
		Bruce Morgenstern	Perry Co.
		Josh Gross	Perry Co.
		Duncan Britton	Perry Co.
		Ruth Hale	Du Quoin
		George Shepard	Williamson Co.
		Jeff Robinson	Williamson Co.
		Jason Ashmore	ALG
		Glenn Clarida	Marion

2. Recognition of Visitors

Josh Smith from Williamson County was introduced as a new board member. Ron Kiser was also in attendance as a guest.

3. Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Tim Atkisson and seconded by Robert Spencer to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

The following reports were accepted:

- a) Minutes – February 11, 2025
- b) Financial Report
- c) List of Bills
- d) Staff Report – March 2025

It was noted on the List of Bills that the Cincinnati and Encova insurances charges are due to a change in insurance providers. The switch is being made primarily due to cost savings, as the new provider is offering a better rate compared to the previous coverage through Country Financial. This change is expected to save the organization several thousand dollars. In addition to the cost savings, the replacement cost for the building was reassessed. Previously, the insured value was significantly undervalued at under \$2.5 million. That amount has now been increased to \$3.3 million to better reflect

the true replacement cost based on current estimates. This adjustment ensures more accurate and adequate coverage while still reducing overall insurance expenses.

4. New Business

a) **Consultant Selection for Safe Routes to School Study**

The selection for the Safe Routes to School study consultant will be postponed until next month, as a recommendation is not yet ready. The executive committee will likely need to review and approve the final selection. Five firms submitted responses to the request for qualifications, and those submissions have been distributed to the selection committee. However, the committee has not yet been able to schedule a meeting to review and make a decision.

b) **Regional Project/Study Idea Discussion**

A call was made for collaborative discussion on potential impactful studies or initiatives for the region. Greater Egypt is looking to fund a new study—either through matching grants or internal resources—with a strong preference for projects that lead to implementable solutions.

Ideas shared included using QR code donation signs to redirect panhandling efforts toward community services, conducting a regional workforce study to examine low labor participation, housing affordability, and child care challenges, and assessing feasibility for a hotel and infrastructure in Johnson City to support anticipated traffic increases.

A new industrial park project in Jackson County was highlighted, along with a related port authority feasibility study.

Other ideas included rural broadband planning, repurposing abandoned mine sites for solar fields or recreation, and leveraging outdoor tourism potential through grass airstrip development.

A major portion of the discussion focused on housing—specifically, addressing abandoned properties, the complications of the Illinois tax sale process, and opportunities for redevelopment through programs. There was general consensus that workshops on housing tools and legal processes would be more immediately helpful than a large study. Additional incentives such as \$1 lot sales, TIF and enterprise zone overlays, and sales tax abatements were noted as ways to encourage infill development.

Participants were invited to submit further ideas after the meeting to help identify regional projects that could benefit from targeted funding and support.

c) **Miscellaneous**

The meeting also included an update on transportation and economic development planning funding. It was noted that Greater Egypt has previously conducted several studies using IDOT's State Planning and Research (SPR) Program funds; however, for the first time in recent memory, IDOT has not issued a call for new project proposals.

Greater Egypt is preparing for a three-year renewal of the EDA planning grant. While delays are expected, it is hoped the grant will be made retroactive to cover eligible expenses. This funding is critical, as it supports key staff roles, and with both the IDOT SPR and EDA funding currently uncertain, long-term impacts could arise if these challenges persist. However, there are no immediate concerns for the next two years unless funds are rescinded.

5. Matters from the Floor

Additional discussion was held regarding concerns over federal funding stability. It was noted that Greater Egypt continues to actively submit DRA applications and manage multiple active DRA and EDA construction projects that are still being reimbursed.

6. Upcoming Meetings

Executive Committee – May 13, 2025 – time TBA

Full Board Meeting – June 10, 2025 – 6pm

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by Cindy Humm and seconded by Robert Spencer to adjourn the meeting. The motion was carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Copies of documents furnished to the Commission in connection with this meeting are on file at the Greater Egypt office in Marion, Illinois.