

**EEHW COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**January 24, 2019     5:30 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Tim Dudley, Chair  
Helena Buckner  
Matt Brown  
Linda Little  
Jim Gresham  
Laura Zimmerman

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Debra Kraft, Vice Chair

**COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT**

Jennifer Gunter, P&Z  
Tracy Sumpter, P&Z  
Sgt Matt Reynolds, Animal Control  
Brandi Binkley, Health Dept  
Laurie Rasmus, Env Mgmt  
Kevin Greenfield, County Board Chairman  
Kevin Bird, County Board member  
Patty Cox, County Board Member  
Jerry Lord, DPBC  
Jon Perona, DPBC  
Rick Bright, DPBC Board Member  
Jeannie Durham, County Board Office

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dudley at the Macon County Office Building.

**MINUTES**

Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the 12/20/18 meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Gresham and the motion carried 6-0.

**CLAIMS**

Ms. Little made a motion to accept the report of the claims as presented, seconded by Mr. Brown and the motion carried 6-0

**ZONING –**

***Macon County Board Resolution Regarding Case S-01-01-19 A Petition Requesting A Special Use Permit Submitted By Novel Energy Solutions/Edgar Lara***

Ms. Gunter explained that this is for the construction of a 1MW Community Solar Garden on approximately 10 acres of leased ground in A-1 Agricultural zoning. The property is commonly located off of Kirby Road in Whitmore Township. On 1/2/19, the Zoning Board of Appeals hearing was held and based on the finding of facts, the staff recommended approval. The ZBA vote was 5-0 for approval of the special use permit with stipulations as found in the resolution.

Ms. Little asked if there were any objectors at the ZBA hearing. Ms. Gunter said no and explained that this is the same site that was previously approved by the County Board for the 2MW Solar Garden in November or December, 2018. They are just coming back and adding to it so when they present their application to the state, it shows for more than just 2MW.

Ms. Little made a motion to forward the resolution on to the full board, seconded by Ms. Zimmerman and the motion carried 6-0.

**SUBDIVISIONS** – None

## **REPORTS**

### **Planning & Zoning** – No Report

### **Animal Control**

Sgt. Reynolds distributed reports and explained 2018 statistics. Overall, in 2018, there were 1343 adoptions, 794 of those were cats, 526 were dogs and 23 were other types of animals.

The Home for the Holidays Program had 159 fostered animals with 132 being adopted and 27 returned.

Currently, there are 62 cats and 42 dogs for 104 animals in custody.

The next adoption special is a Decatur Macon County Animal Shelter Foundation sponsored half priced Speed Dating program. That is going to be 2/16/19.

### **Veteran's Assistance** - No Report

### **Health Department** –

Ms. Binkley reported that there is a new testimonial video that was produced with WAND. This is something a grant paid for years ago and it has now been produced and posted on the Health Department Facebook page. It features clients and patients giving stories about how the Health Department helped them. She said they are very grateful because hearing it from the people that are served speaks volumes.

Flu shots are still available.

WIC has added call-in clinics. These are done in other counties are being tried in Macon County. That is some thing that is approved through the grant funders.

Car Seat checks continue with one coming up January 26<sup>th</sup>. That program was suspended for a while, but they are now working with some partners and able to do them again. They've been very popular and helpful to families in the community.

Medication Management is a program that is offered to people who need assistance in setting up their medication organizers and working with the pharmacies and doctors to insure there is a nurse checking on the medications that are being taken in the homes. That helps them be independent as possible for as long as possible. There are currently some openings and Ms. Binkley encouraged anyone interested to give them a call.

The annual report will be published by the end of February and will have some hard core numbers of what the Health Department has been doing.

### **Regional Office of Education** - no report

### **Mental Health** – no report

**Historical Museum** - No report

**U of I Extension** No report

**Environmental Management**

***Macon County Board Resolution Authorizing the County Board Chair to Enter into a Lease Agreement with the Decatur Public Building Commission for Construction and Lease of a Recycling and Composting Center***

Chair Dudley announced that at this time, he would be hearing comments about the issue. He asked if there was anyone present that wanted to come forward and speak in opposition to the project.

Harold Gilbert, 240 Magnolia Drive, Forsyth, IL

Mr. Gilbert explained that he has been a member of the Tabernacle Baptist Church for 67 years. A lot of that time was downtown on Main & Garfield Streets, but they've been relocated to the new location about 16 years ago. He explained that when they had moved out there, there had always been the hope and they had been encouraged by the City who said that it was a great place to locate with it being across from the then Holiday Inn and that they expected that because it was a booming, potential area, more motels and restaurants would soon be seen. Mr. Gilbert said that never happened and probably will not happen. However, rezoning that property to heavy industry is going to have a major impact on the future of that area because nothing else is going to locate in that area other than another heavy industrial site. He commented that everyone had heard their opposition and things of concern with the Recycling Center and composting. He thanked Ms. Rasmus for taking a couple of them to Champaign to look at their composting site. It was good and bad because it showed how compost can be properly recycled, but it also showed that they had put it in a location that cannot be seen from anywhere around it. It is located in a very, even though really close to the business part of Champaign, you can't see it. He said they are still concerned by a lot of aspects of the project. Mr. Gilbert presented a bag of compost and a letter from an unknown party that referred to a by product from ADM being added to what is going to be recycled. The bag contained a sample of the product. He passed it to committee members saying he thought they need to look at it and smell it and realize that if a quantity of this is stored on site, it is going to attract pests and rodents. He said they are still opposed to this location, but are certainly not opposed to recycling. He said that if the board decides to go ahead with this, he prayed that they would help mitigate the site in any way possible from the church property whether that means berms with vegetation on top or whatever, they would appreciate it.

Doris Mabry, 5202 Harristown Blvd.

Ms. Mabry explained that her property butts up to the back side of the 110 acres being discussed. She said she has a borrow pit, one of the largest in the state, that can be seen from the highway. People water ski there. One of the annual events is the regional collegiate qualifier for the national tournament. It is a 14 state region. There are a lot of people who come in besides the regular tournaments and use that facility and comment on how nice it is and how much they enjoy Decatur. The water is very clean. One concern is that the water will not

stay as clean because when Ms. Rasmus had taken her & Mr. Gilbert to Champaign, when they do the composting, they cycle the piles over and chip them up and cycle them over again and chip them up. Ms. Rasmus told them that our piles would not be as high as theirs. They'd be 6' to 8' because we don't have the machinery that will be as big as they have. Nonetheless, there are plastics and other things that are mixed in to the piles, get chipped smaller and since the site is different that what they have over there, there is going to be blowing. This area is flat in the sense that it is flat farmland. There is a RR track on the N side and beyond that, it is just flat. Even the trees growing along the RR right of way road are limited in height because Ameren has a great big power line that runs across it and they will not permit mature trees to grow to a normal height under that power line. The only way anything is going to be broken is that little lower tree line to the north. Everything else is wide open. The highway that goes by on the west is too far. The breeze is still going to get it. Things will blow.

Ms. Mabry said she has had people talk about how she might have trouble selling her house one day because of the highway noise and the trucks, but at least they go by on the highway which is raised and the noise is not noticed in the house. When the chippers, trucks, etc get going, she said they will notice the noise along with the churches (there are two within a quarter mile of the site). They are going to be affected by that as well as the debris. The Conference Center will be affected. There are a ton of people who have no idea that this is even suggested for this site, even though it has shown up in the newspaper a couple of times. Ms. Mabry said she is a trustee for the Harristown Fire Department and at the last meeting, she said she had asked if anyone knew about the recycling stuff. No one did. The reason for that is because when the sign went up telling people, if you're concerned, this is a new recycling thing, go to the meeting. But when the sign went up, Wyckles was closed. They closed the whole road from 36 up to 121 in the Warrensburg area. No one could get on that. You access either of the two churches without getting up to that point on Wyckles. So, no one knows, even today she said she had asked someone about it and no one knows. She said she had done some research herself and knew that - by the way, she stated, that the recycling and composting idea is wonderful and needed -, but it is on the wrong side of town. Where it needs to go is over there on the east side where there is commercial stuff going on, where the new RR track things, new roads are being built for all of the industrial stuff that they are anticipating over there. So, she said since she sells real estate, her research revealed several parcels. There is a 227 acre site that the RR owns that is right there in the midst of that with nothing else close other than Richland being moderately close. There are some other sites over there and she mentioned it to a couple of other realtors who deal with a lot more commercial. There is more stuff available there. So, to her mind, the thing to do, because this is a good idea, is to sell the 110 acres. Ms. Mabry said that Ms. Rasmus had actually said that they do not need 110 acres. She said she didn't know what was needed, but just say its 60 or 70 acres. Use that money to buy the 60 or 70 acres over on the other part of town where you will not be disturbing residential stuff.

Chair Dudley said that had exhausted the time for opposition and called for anyone who wanted to speak in favor. There was no one present to speak in favor.

Ms. Zimmerman made a motion to forward the resolution on to the finance committee, seconded by Ms. Buckner. Ms. Little asked what happens if this passes tonight. Chair Dudley said it would go on to the Building Sub-Committee, then Finance and then to the County Board.

Mr. Brown asked what happens if it does not pass tonight. Chair Dudley said it will still go to the County Board. Nothing gets killed at committee. It just goes with a recommendation or not. Mr. Brown asked if it would require a super majority of the County Board if it does not pass in committee. Chair Dudley said the only time a super majority is required is for ZBA denials. Ms. Little said she agreed with Mr. Gilber and Ms. Mabry and she thinks it is a good idea, but she is not sold on the location and still not convinced she knows enough about the whole project although she has heard and read a lot. She asked if it would be in order to table it. Chair Dudley said she could make the motion. Ms. Little so moved, seconded by Mr. Brown. Chairman Greenfield reminded Chair Dudley that there was already a motion on the floor. Ms. Cox said she thought the motion would have to be rescinded, the first motion. Chair Dudley asked Ms. Little if she would rescind her motion. Ms. Little agreed, but stated that she would be upset if she found out she was correct. Chair Dudley asked Mr. Brown if he would rescind the second. Mr. Brown rescinded the second to the motion to table. He said he had the same concerns as Ms. Little thinking there might be other sites more suitable. Just because we already have this ground does not mean we have to do something with it. There is no reason we need to be pushing ahead without talking a little more. Ms. Rasmus has done a lot of work and it has been talked about, but Mr. Brown said he thought it was irresponsible to be spending \$10.5 million on the total project counting interest with the budget deficit that is coming this year and will probably remain for a while. Mr. Gresham said he was very much in favor of the project and sees the concerns about the location. He said he thought there should be some ways from some suggestions made to mitigate those. On the other hand, he said he would like to find a way to get this done and answer all the questions that have come up from citizens and other board members. He asked about an ad hoc committee that could spend time on this. He said they all know what the questions are. Some more in depth consideration of the questions, looking into the basis for the revenue projections so some solid stuff is in front of everybody before any kind of a vote on this is taken. He explained that while his inclination was to vote yes, he thought it might be better to vote to table it. Ms. Little explained that it can't be tabled because she had made the motion too late. Mr. Gresham said he felt that a little more work on this is needed. Ms. Zimmerman asked Ms. Rasmus to explain why this location had been picked. Ms. Rasmus explained that this particular piece of land was chosen because they wanted a parcel that was at least 40 acres, had access to a hardened highway for a truck route, was in close proximity to Decatur, and was on the SW section of Decatur. The reason for that being that much of the material that comes into the site will be from hauling trucks that have a hauling route that they are used to either going to the current compost sites in this area or to the landfill. This is not a landfill. Everything that comes onto this property will come off. Much of the hauling that comes to this comes from those same trucks. Another issue is that the parcel that is chosen has to be at least 1/8 mile from a residence. Ms. Rasmus had a map obtained from the GIS department of every 40 acre parcel that was at least 1/8 mile from a residence and in the SW quadrant of the county. She showed the map and said she had studied and it was very obvious to her that the parcel that had been chosen was the parcel we wanted. It was on Wyckles Road. It was on a truck route, in close proximity of Decatur, power lines on three sides. Ameren has cut out in the SE corner 3 acres for a future sub station. When Ms. Rasmus looked at this, it was, in her mind, as she consulted with others, her first choice. This parcel, it is a misnomer to think that Howard Buffett picked this parcel. He was gracious enough to pay for the parcel, but Ms. Rasmus said she had picked it along with some consultants. This parcel is quite special in that, not only is it in the right location, has all the amenities that are important

to us, but it was for sale. How many times have you heard where someone is trying to acquire some ground and you just can't get it? For us to be able to acquire it, to find a willing buyer, Ms. Rasmus said, that to her, this parcel is exactly what they were looking for. It was a true blessing that we were able to acquire it and to acquire it free. This was the first choice. It is not by happenstance that this parcel was chosen. Chair Dudley asked if the main reason the Kiick Family sold the property wasn't that it was going to be environmentally friendly, used for a green project. Ms. Rasmus confirmed saying that the Kiick Family had had several offers throughout the years and had turned them down. From what those offers were, our site is quite attractive compared to what was offered. They were excited about it because of the type of work we will be doing there, recycling & composting. Ms. Rasmus said she has said all along, that this property will be an environmental showcase in terms of land stewardship. This is the ideal parcel that we can make into an environmental showcase.

Chair Dudley asked Mr. Gresham about the financial piece he had spoken about. Mr. Gresham said he was referring to the revenue part of the composting site and asked if the numbers included the fee for bringing things to the site. Ms. Rasmus said yes, fees plus sales.

Chair Dudley explained that the committees are for finding out stuff and said if any of them had questions about any part of the project, that is why they were there. He encouraged them to ask. Mr. Gresham said he understood and said that everyone on the board has other things to do and if they could narrow down the items that people were having angst about, then a group could sit down and study it.

Ms. Buckner asked Ms. Rasmus about the property tax amounts. Ms. Rasmus said that with the bond, if this is fully funded at \$7.5 million, the average Decatur home at \$75,000 would see a reduction in their taxes of \$18 with the retirement of the bond for the County Office Building and Law Enforcement Center. So, that is down \$18 and this would bring it back up \$6. During the study session, Ms. Rasmus said she had spent quite a bit of time explaining how, even the \$6, there are many ways for residents and businesses to get that \$6 back just by taking advantage of services that will be offered.

Mr. Rick Bright, with the DPBC Board, 117 Southmoreland  
Mr. Bright said it is his understanding after talking with the Foundation, something that was said tonight about selling the land and move it somewhere else. He said he did not believe that is an option with the Foundation. If it is not built with the Foundation's caveats, it goes back to the Foundation.

Mr. Brown asked about the 1/8 mile requirement and what it pertained to. Ms. Rasmus said it is just the compost facility. He said that is the reason he had made the comment earlier. He said he feels both would be nice, but the main concern is the recycling center. He said he felt that there are other buildings around town that would be appropriate for a recycling center that could be rented at an appropriate rate and would be larger than the center currently being used or possibly purchased without spending \$7.5 million on the project.

Chairman Greenfield said that when Champaign started out, Champaign County, the City of Champaign, City of Urbana had all kicked in to offset the costs for the first 3 or 4 years. Let's

say we bond \$7.5 million and then it's not enough money. He asked what the plan was for accumulating more revenue. Ms. Rasmus said the bond is strictly used for development costs for construction only, not for operations. \$7.5 million is a conservative figure. It has a lot of contingency built into it, about \$300,000 worth of contingency. If that is not enough, we look at cutting things. She said she realizes that we cannot go above that \$7.5 million so if we need to make some cuts. . . Mr. Greenfield said that if you're halfway into it, with construction you can usually always figure on going 10% to 15% over. Ms. Rasmus agreed and said she has some good ideas on what the cuts would be. It might be the household hazardous waste buildings. Mr. Greenfield said ok, but what if you make it to operational and your revenues don't meet what you thought they would? Champaign had their county, city and the City of Urbana to kick in money to offset that. Ms. Rasmus said right, that is something separate from the bond. We're talking about the department's budget in terms of operations. Those are things she said she thinks about at 11 o'clock at night. Mr. Greenfield agreed that he does too. She said she understands that this is a business and it has to be operated as a business. Marketing is such a key. Mr. Greenfield said he sees part time marketing coordinator, but there's no budget for it. Ms. Rasmus said it would be \$39,000 the first year and from there it goes up. \$3 for every cubic yard of end product. Mr. Greenfield pointed out that she was talking about sales of compost and she agreed. He said that to start out, he wasn't seeing a budget for the Marketing Coordinator. She said it is \$39,000 for the first year, going up from there. Mr. Greenfield asked if that was coming out of the budget? She said from the working budget, yes. He asked where that money comes from. She said it comes from the gate fee that is \$10 per cubic yard. Mr. Greenfield said we wouldn't have anything to sell the first year. She said they would be selling topsoil. That is part of the revision to the plan. Mr. Greenfield said we cannot afford to not make money for one or two years and in looking at Champaign's numbers, in the 90's when there was a drought, etc. they had a loss. They had enough revenue backing. We can't afford that. We have a \$1.9 million deficit in the general fund at the end of this year. There is not going to be general fund money to go to. Ms. Rasmus said she understood it and said it has to be self sufficient. There is no help from the county. She said they would really have to look at making the staff as barebones as possible. Mr. Greenfield asked how it's run with little or no staff. Ms. Rasmus repeated, as bare bones as possible, not that we can be idle. Look at the compost sites we have now. There is one that is taking in all of the material in town and charging \$10 a cubic yard and selling absolutely zero. They are making a go of it because they are doing barebones. They are not even making a product but the point is that it can be done at a very barebones level and it would have to be. Mr. Greenfield said the idea of a business is to generate revenue. Ms. Rasmus agreed. He said that in the whole business plan, in a private sector, the bond payment would have to be made, but there is nothing about making a bond payment in your plan. He said you are losing ½ million dollars a year no matter what. Ms. Rasmus agreed that Mr. Greenfield is correct. She said she is looking at it as two pots of money, one is the bond, the free money if you want to call it that and the other one is the department's operating costs. She said he is right, she does not look at the operating costs as paying back the bond. The bond is covered through the real estate tax. Are people getting a benefit for that? Yes. Mr. Greenfield said that if Macon County had a population of 130,000 people, what is the percentage of people that either use compost or recycle? Ms. Rasmus said that is a good question and in terms of recycling, when the City of Decatur had those little red totes before 2012, their recycling rate was about 2%. Then they went to single stream and 65% to 80% of eligible residents are recycling. If that is the case, we are looking at 30% to 40%

increase. In terms of recycling, what we do with electronics, we get more and more every year with every program we do. It just gets bigger. It's not very convenient. If someone wants to recycle a TV, they have to wait for an event, register, pay \$10, show up to their appointment. It beats sitting in line for 4 hours. The demand is just growing and growing. Mr. Greenfield agreed that a lot of people in Decatur recycle and said he has no problem with renting a bigger building. It would be more convenient to be in the City of Decatur. He said we could probably swing something like that, but he just couldn't see how we can pay for \$7.5 million. Ms. Rasmus repeated that she is looking at this as two pots of money, one being the bond and the other one the budget. It is two different things. She said she is just asking the board to make a decision on this – yes or no.

Chair Dudley said he appreciated the Chairman's comments but cautioned him that those are just "what if's". What if it makes money? Has anyone asked that question? Are we going to steal that and put it in the general fund? He said that is a "what if" and it could make money.

Ms. Buckner asked Ms. Rasmus about falling tree limbs and not being able to burn them in the City and what if there were a hauling company that decides to bring that stuff to the facility, it's weighed and it's going to cost. Ms. Rasmus agreed. Ms. Buckner asked about the baseline cost for that. Ms. Rasmus said that in the proposal, \$10 per cubic yard is being used, but actually the plan is to convert that to tons and that rate has not been fully decided yet. That is the aim because that is what haulers are paying now. We don't want to see a rate increase for that, want to give a viable, in-county option.

Roll call vote showed the motion carried 4-2 with Ms. Little and Mr. Brown voting no. Ms. Little explained that she fully supports that we need to expand the recycling programs and look into composting, but on this particular resolution for the money, right now she is voting no.

**CITIZEN'S REMARKS** – No additional remarks.

**OLD BUSINESS** - none

**NEW BUSINESS** – none

**Closed Session** – None needed

**NEXT MEETING** Next regular meeting –2/28/19

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Brown, seconded by Ms. Little, the motion carried 6-0 and Chair Dudley adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

*Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham, Macon County Board Office*