

BUILDING SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING
February 6, 2013
5:15 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dave Drobisch, Chair
Jerry Potts
Gary Minich
Kevin Meachum

MEMBERS ABSENT

David Williams
Tim Dudley

COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT

Jerry Lord, Public Building Commission
Mike Baggett, State's Attorney's Office
Jay Dunn, Board Chairman
Lt. Jeff Scheibly
Amy Stockwell, Auditor
Jeannie Durham, County Board Office

OTHERS PRESENT

Rick Bright, DPBC
Michelle Huttes, Animal Shelter Foundation
Randy West, BLDD Architect
Larry Livergood, Architectural Expressions

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order by Chair Drobisch at the Macon County Office Building.

MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes of the prior open meeting (1/7/13) made by Kevin Meachum, seconded by Gary Minich, and motion carried 4-0.

Motion to approve the minutes of the prior closed meeting (1/7/13) made by Kevin Meachum, seconded by Gary Minich, and motion carried 4-0.

CITIZEN'S REMARKS – PUBLIC COMMENT

NONE

OLD BUSINESS

Kevin Meachum questioned what the status was on the additional bed space upgrade at the jail. Jerry Lord reported that this has not been started yet. They put one bunk in to test it. Jail Standards has been out to inspect and take a look at it. They gave the recommendation to take the ladder away. It goes before the DPBC tomorrow morning for their approval to spend the money. It is moving along, just not completed yet.

NEW BUSINESS

Michelle Huttes, Vice President of the Decatur / Macon County Animal Shelter Foundation, presented a proposal for an addition to the existing Animal Shelter for a free roaming cat room. The architect, Randy West with BLDD, & Lt. Scheibly who runs the shelter are here if you have questions of any of us. The addition would add just over 500 sq ft so that about half of the cats in the front of the shelter that are up for adoption that are currently residing in cages could go into the free roaming room. We would also like to add portals between the cages so that the cats that are still living in the cages can go between two and have expanded space to live in and get a little more exercise and hopefully be happier and healthier.

Kevin Meachum questioned who would be paying for the addition.

Michelle replied that the foundation would raise the funds, either through private donations or grants. No expense to the County.

Kevin Meachum's next question was about who would pay the utilities, do the maintenance, and employ it.

Michelle reported that there should not be any additional employees, worktime, or additional labor involved. Cleaning one big space, we believe would be less work than cleaning 65 individual cages. As far as the heating and cooling, it will add some to the power bill, but we would hope that the County could pick that up. If not, the foundation would discuss that.

Kevin questioned who would be maintaining the addition to the building.

Michelle stated that it would be the County's responsibility. It is a built on to the existing building on the County's property. We have already received several large donations or pledges for this.

Kevin explained that the reason he is asking is because our tax dollars are not growing and we are trying to maintain the services that we do have at the County level now and not try to take on any more expenses and liability. Lights and gas are going up. Who is going to maintain that? We will have to eventually pay the DPBC to maintain this. I have concerns I'd like to know what the estimated cost of maintenance and what the utility bill will be on the additional space. I am not against or for it yet, I want more facts before I make a decision.

Michelle said the building is currently 12,500 sq ft (clarified by Jerry Lord). Percentagewise, it is adding some, a little over 500 sq. ft.

Randy West, BLDD Architect, explained that the costs would be minimal. The building faces south so the sun will help warm it in the wintertime.

Kevin stated that he hoped everyone could understand where he was coming from. We have aging buildings in the County that are costing us a fortune. We have to look at additional insurance cost as well. That is figured on square footage. It sounds good, but like anything else, we have to consider everything. These little taxing districts come in and wonder what raised their taxes a quarter percent of our levy. When everybody in the whole county does that people on fixed income end up paying \$50 to \$60 more on their taxes. They take it out on us and we want to be sure we are doing the right thing with our dollars.

Jay Dunn asked how many cats are currently at the shelter right now.

Michelle informed the committee that there are 65 cages up front and they are almost completely full; There is about 15 in the free roaming cat room; In med, there are 20-30 more. Approximately 100-130 is pretty consistent.

Jay asked if the addition would increase that number.

Michelle replied that the goal is not to increase the population, but it could give them that flexibility, which could increase some food costs. It does give the flexibility to save more lives if that is important to you. Our intention is to improve the quality of life for the cats that are already there – not to increase the number being held.

Jay asked if some of those cats stay caged up quite a bit.

Michelle said that a lot of them are there for a year or more. It is a stressful environment. I've read that the cage free environment leads to healthier animals because they are not as stressed and also adoption rates, we are hoping, will go up because a lot of people do not want to go into the cat rooms. It is stressful and can be kind of depressing. It is a much more natural environment for them.

Amy Stockwell reported on her personal experience and stated that she adopted a cat that had been at the shelter for 3 years. It's a great cat.

Michelle said the employees do a wonderful job with the cats with what they have. They have started leaving the cats in the room out at night so they get a little more exercise. This is going to be a very positive thing. With the roaming room they have now, they get a lot of volunteers and potential adopters enjoy the space. Sometimes they spend hours in there.

Chair Drobisch asked if the committee wanted to put it on hold until figures are available.

Kevin stated that he was not willing to vote on additional expenditures at the county's expense until we know where we are on additional costs to have this room built. That's not fair to the taxpayers. We need some solid data for Jerry Lord to know what kind of maintenance and costs are involved.

Dave Drobisch questioned Jerry Lord and Lt. Scheibly about providing some insight on whether it would increase the cost of operations from his standpoint.

Jerry stated that it would be a little, but didn't think it would be much. Lt. Scheibly agreed that they may have to rearrange some staff, but didn't foresee it creating a need for additional staff.

Jay Dunn stated he would like to move it on to EEHW. The architect can come up with those numbers and take them to the EEHW rather than coming back to the sub-committee. I don't see that much added cost, but will be glad to listen to the numbers. The cost, apparently, is going to be funded by the foundation. They gave us \$600,000+ when the shelter was built. They have been a very good partner in our whole process to make one of the best Animal Control shelters in the state. If they can raise the money to completely pay for the design and erection of it, I think it's a pretty good deal. Gary Minich voiced agreement. Kevin stated that he did not have a problem with that as long as the figures were provided and answers were given at the EEHW meeting. Everyone agreed. Discussion about the wonderful shelter followed and Michelle was thanked. Jay requested that copies of everything along with the figures be brought to the EEHW meeting. Kevin requested the figures cover a 10 year span of what the maintenance and utilities could be. Jay requested that the Lt. and Jerry Lord speak about any concerns.

Jerry Lord said the only concern he had was in regard to whether the power loads on the building were going to be affected. He has been assured that it is sufficient as is. There are 5 breakers not being currently used. I am satisfied.

Lt. Scheibly said he had no concerns and agreed that this will improve the building, the quality of life for the cats and make them more adoptable. It will help socialize the cats. He mentioned that they can take the dogs outside and spend time playing with them and walking them, but it's difficult to do this with cats. The addition has his approval.

CLOSED SESSION

Board Chair Dunn requested the sub-committee go into a closed session to discuss the purchase of real property for the use of the public body (State Statute Section 2(c)(5)).

Chair Drobisch entertained a motion to have a closed session for the purpose of discussion of the purchase of real property for use by Macon County; Kevin Meachum so moved, seconded by Jerry Potts, and motion carried 4-0.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Kevin Meachum made a motion to move the issues discussed in closed session forward to a closed session of the full Board, seconded by Jerry Potts and motions carried 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Jerry Potts, seconded by Gary Minich, motion carried 4-0, and meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham
Macon County Board Office