

**MACON COUNTY BOARD
ENVIRONMENTAL, EDUCATION, HEALTH & WELFARE
COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Macon County Office Building
141 S. Main Street, County Board Room #514
Decatur, IL 62523**

January 28, 2021 5:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Linda Little, Chair
Jim Gresham
Jeff Entler
John Jackson
Kevin Greenfield

COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT

Lt. Jeff Scheibly, Animal Control
Tracy Sumpter, Env Mgmt
Jennifer Gunter, P&Z
Jessie Smalley, HR

Jeannie Durham, County Board Office

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Brandi Binkley, Health Dept

MEMBERS ABSENT

Helena Buckner

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes from the prior meetings, 12/17/2020 & 1/12/2021 special meeting, was made by Mr. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Gresham, and roll call vote showed the motion carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF THE CLAIMS

Motion to approve the claims report was made by Mr. Entler, seconded by Mr. Jackson, and roll call vote showed the motion carried 5-0.

ZONING

Macon County Board Resolution Regarding Case R-01-01-21, A Petition for Rezoning Submitted by Highpoint Ventures LLC, Purchasing Contract for Deed from ENR, LLC

Ms. Gunter explained that this is for approximately 8 acres currently zoned as M-1 Light Industrial. The request is to change it to RE-5 Single Family Estate zoning. The property is located at 5680 N. Country Club Road in Oakley Township. The Oakley Planning Commission and the Oakley Township Board met on 12/21/2020 and both boards voted to recommend approval for the rezoning. On January 6, 2021, the Public Zoning Board of Appeals Hearing was held and based on the finding of facts and staff recommended approval, the Zoning Board of Appeals voted 5-0 for approval of the rezoning.

Ms. Gunter was asked about the location. She pointed it out on the map, saying that on Bender where it takes a 90 degree turn on Country Club, it is the property she pointed out. She was asked about an adjoining property to which she replied that that one has already been rezoned to RE-5 a couple of months ago.

Mr. Greenfield asked about the reason for the rezoning. Ms. Gunter explained that there was originally a house there. It was all junky and a dumping ground. The new owners came in and tore the house down and cleaned up the property. At that point, Tony wrote the building permit. That was when Big Brothers / Big Sisters was going to build a barn and take kids out there. He wrote the building permit. The zoning did not match up then, but Ms. Gunter said she thought it was more of a "it's going to be better than what is out there" and so it got written when Tony was here. So, this is to clean up the property on the zoning because if they ever want to sell it, even though they currently do have horses, it is not a permitted current use. So, when they go to sell it at RE-5, they can market it with the ability to have horses on it.

There was discussion about whether the property wouldn't be worth more as currently zoned. It was decided that it probably would not be because of location and roads.

Motion to approve forwarding this on to the full board with recommendation for approval was made by Mr. Greenfield, seconded by Mr. Jackson, and roll call vote showed the motion carried 5-0.

SUBDIVISIONS

Thacker Estates – 3 lot minor

Ms. Gunter explained that this is located in Mr. Zion Township. The owners are Richard and Julie Thacker. The property is located at 9025 Sefton Road. It is zoned RE-5 Single Family Estate. Lot 1 is 3.71 acres, Lot 2 is 4.26 acres and Lot 3 is 2 acres for a total of 9.87 acres. Staff has reviewed all documents and recommends approval.

Mr. Greenfield commented about possible water issues in that area. Ms. Gunter explained that when it comes to a building permit, they have to work with the Health Department on the septic and water issues.

Chair Little asked about agencies signing off on it. Ms. Gunter explained that this committee is the only ones necessary since it is not within a mile and a half of a municipality.

Motion to approve made by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Mr. Jackson, and roll call vote showed the motion carried 5-0.

REPORTS

Animal Control

Lt. Scheibly reported on shelter statistics.

The annual Home for the Holidays Foster event finished up and will probably net between 50-75 animals being adopted. Some are still being finalized.

Numbers are still extremely good at the shelter. There are only about 4 adoptable dogs and maybe 20 cats at the shelter. This is the lowest it has been. There are rooms that have been shut down and not used which has never happened. Chairman Greenfield commented that the shelter should be “spic & span”. Lt. Scheibly agreed.

The February special will be all adoptions @ \$40 sponsored by the Shelter Foundation. The only difference is that the normal open house Speed Dating Event with the dogs and cats will not be held.

Veteran’s Assistance – no report

Planning & Zoning – no report

Health Department –

Ms. Binkley reported that the Health Department continues to provide essential services throughout the building and within all of their services with the exception of the STI clinic due to staffing restrictions & not having enough people available to staff that clinic.

As for COVID, the positivity rate is looking good. That is good, but she said they found out today that Macon County is moving from blue to orange which does not affect the restrictions, but it is obviously not good. It is due to the number of deaths in the County. It is something they are keeping an eye on. Contact Tracing efforts continue and are going very well with the newly trained team.

There are several partners assisting with vaccinating the public. A very limited supply is coming in as pretty much everyone is throughout the country. That is a struggle because people are very upset that they cannot get vaccinated as soon as they want to be. Ms. Binkley said they want them vaccinated as soon as possible too. Vaccine is going out as soon as the Health Department gets it. Allotment numbers are not known until the week they get it. So, clinics cannot be planned out very far in advance. Information is going out as quickly as they can. The number of people trying to register, whether it is being done via the phone or online, are filling up the spots within minutes. People are very frustrated. Quality improvement updates are being done. A brand new system has been adopted this month from the state that is an online registration portal for people to get registered for appointments. Messaging systems for people who do not have computer access or internet or who do not feel comfortable using that are also being updated. There are a lot of people who are very angry pretty much across the country because they cannot get vaccinated as quickly as they want. Ms. Binkley assured everyone that the Health Department is doing everything they can and they have a sub-committee with the hospital, the FQAC, HSHS medical group since they are also getting part of the allotment for Macon County. As an example, last week 1200 first doses vaccines were received and split up between 5 different providers. That does not give much to any one provider.

The team is working countless hours. The healthcare system in general, including the Health Department, is getting treated very poorly. There are a lot of hate attacks and abuse. Ms. Binkley explained that she is trying to mitigate that with her team so she doesn’t lose them due to the negative attacks and all the hours they are having to work. She encouraged anyone that

knows a healthcare worker to check on them because they are not being treated very well right now. She said she is extremely proud of her team.

Mr. Jackson told Ms. Binkley that her team is doing a wonderful job. He said the board had gotten an email asking about how ADM with healthy employees get in line ahead of the elderly in Macon County and asked for some insight on that issue.

Ms. Binkley explained that 1B includes a lot of people, tens of thousands of people just in our county. Groups include 65 plus, law enforcement personnel, first responders and front line workers. 65 plus is a huge group, especially here in Macon County where there is a large senior population. Some of those front line essential workers who do have higher risk or are in manufacturing or agriculture settings where they will be very close to other people and have higher risk. She said they follow the CDC and IDPH guidelines like other Health Departments do. That determines who is eligible in 1B.

The sub-committee has made a plan in 1A & 1B where each takes a lead on a certain group. Everyone has a part that they play. HSHS Medical Group is working through front line essential business workers. They have a lot of pre-established relationships with many of the businesses in Macon County. That is a lot of legwork another agency was not going to have to do. Crossings was asked to concentrate on the educational sector. All of the agencies are serving the 65 plus group. Clinics are being held at HSHS Hospital, HSHS Medical Group, Crossings and the Health Department. SIU is going to be holding clinics. DMH is giving their allocation to Crossings for their clinics. She said they do not decide how the categories are determined, but they do have the sub-committee to develop plans on how each sector is concentrated on.

Ms. Binkley went on to explain that there have been a lot of people angry that there are people in long term care, skilled nursing & assisted living facilities that were not vaccinated before communities moved into 1B. Those facilities are enrolled in a federal pharmacy program across the nation and state. All of the Macon County facilities are enrolled in that program. Those pharmacies that are handling those vaccinations pick the dates that they are going out. They had some scheduled out so far as March. They have been approached by government officials to move those dates up so there are not facilities that are waiting for those vaccinations. The date that these facilities should now have vaccinations completed is now February 15th. It has been confirmed that Macon County should be compliant with that date. That allotment is completely separate from what Macon County providers are getting. It comes off the top and cannot be touched by other providers. That information has been communicated as well as possible, but there are many people that are very angry thinking that the Health Department is shifting the blame, which is not the case. Ms. Binkley said that they had taken care of the Centers for Independent Living and Centers for Developmentally Disabled before moving into 1B. They were not in the Federal Pharmacy Program, so they were prioritized before moving into 1B.

Chair Little asked if it is safe to assume that those who have received the first vaccine will get the second. Ms. Binkley said yes. They've been asking that question of the state as well and

they have been assured that they will and last week, they did get a shipment of second doses. She said she and her team are nervous each week, but last week went really well.

Ms. Little asked about when the Health Department hears that they will be getting more doses, what is the first avenue of contact to the community. Who is notified first? Ms. Binkley said that a press release is sent out every weekday and communicate updates that way. Information is also put out if any change, update or new clinic is announced. She said they do not know how much vaccine they will be getting until the week they get it. They've been told it will become steady, but not what the number the steady number will be. The good news is that they have been informed that sometime this week they should be getting 1200 doses for Macon County and that is the same number they got last week. She said she is thinking that that may become the steady number, but there are no guarantees. They are saying, at the federal level, that more vaccine more quickly and the allotments could go up. Right now, they have tentatively assigned dates for clinics but have not signed people up for the spots because they don't want to sign them all up and then have to cancel if the allotment doesn't match. When they know how many they have, they green light the clinics that have penciled in and notify the public. She repeated that a brand new online registration portal is being implemented that the state wants people to use. When people are complaining that there are technical difficulties, they are right. When a clinic is planned, the company that publishes everything wants 72 hours notice of the clinic. An example of what happened this week is that that company could not get the clinic dates on their website in time. There are also a lot of seniors out there who cannot get on the website to register or don't feel comfortable doing it. She said that they had then decided to open the phone banks again for people who can only call. People can call in until the spots are full. The 200 spots were gone within a matter of minutes. People were frustrated. Ms. Binkley said that as soon as they have something scheduled, a press release is put out to local media and it is posted on the website as well as Facebook. Because of that and the speed at which people get info on line, especially on Facebook, people see it there first. That was the reason that they gave notice that the phone banks would open the next day so people that are only getting the info via the media will have equal chance to see it. A phone team effort has also been implemented since the phone system basically crashed the first time that was attempted due to the number of people trying to use it. Now more lines are available, but then that phone system did not work correctly. It was supposed to open at 8, but due to the technical difficulty, it was about 8:30. Again, people were very upset. Everything was done as quickly as possible to remedy the issue. She said they are doing everything they can to grow and adapt every day.

Chair Little commented that no one at the County is doubting the efforts or integrity of the Health Department team. She said the hard work is appreciated. She told Ms. Binkley not to ever assume that she needs to be defensive.

Ms. Little asked if there is any possibility that the 65 plus age group could be narrowed for prioritizing the 80 or 90 age group. It seems that people at age 65 are in the same pool of vulnerable population as someone who is 90. Ms. Binkley explained that that is an IDPH thing. The national guideline actually says 85. The reason that IDPH changed that to 65 is because of the impact of COVID-19 on people of color. They have seen more severe cases as well as a higher rate of deaths in people of color who have COVID-19. In order to insure equity for those

groups and insure that this impact is being addressed, IDPH made this call to lower the age in Illinois to 65. This conversation has been had, internally, at the Health Department. Some health departments have done it. Ms. Binkley said she feels conflicted to change guidelines that they have committed to following. She said she respects and concur with both sides. A 90 year old is not necessarily the same as a 65 year old.

Ms. Little asked about when they get notified of shipments and phone lines would be opened, which is the smarter, better way of making an appointment. Ms. Binkley explained that the primary, preferred method is to go online. Online registration also makes communication and notifications of 2nd doses better as well.

Mr. Gresham asked about the 1200 and if it includes all providers other than the nursing homes. Ms. Binkley said yes, except they are now starting to send out to local pharmacies. They started with Walgreens and the Walgreens in South Shores is getting vaccines. Those are also separate. Other than that, the 1200 includes all the other providers. Mr. Gresham asked, at the rate of 1200, what is the anticipated timeframe that people can think they will receive it. Ms. Binkley said it looks like months, but they are hoping that the supply will increase soon. As more come in to the local pharmacies, they will be able to assist as well.

Environmental Management – no report

Regional Office of Education – no report

Mental Health – no report

Historical Museum – no report

U of I Extension – no report

CITIZEN'S REMARKS –

There were no remarks submitted via email prior to the meeting
There were no citizens present to make comments.

Closed Session – None needed

NEXT MEETING Next regular meeting – 2/25/2021

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made & seconded & the meeting was adjourned by Chair Little at 6:05 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham, Macon County Board Office