

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

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

July 22, 2021 5:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Linda Little, Chair
Kevin Greenfield
Jim Gresham
Helena Buckner
Jeff Entler

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jason Comer
Kristen Larner

COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT

Brandi Binkley, Health Department
Greg Collins, VA
Tracy Sumpter, Env Mgmt
Jennifer Gunter, P&Z
Jessie Smalley, HR
Lt. Scheibly, Animal Control
Karl Coleman, County Board member

Jeannie Durham, County Board Office

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 meeting, 6/24/2021 made by Chairman Greenfield, seconded by Mr. Gresham, and the motion carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF THE CLAIMS

Motion to approve the claims report was made by Mr. Gresham, seconded by Mr. Entler, and the motion carried 5-0.

ZONING –

Macon County Board Resolution regarding R-01-07-21 filed by Phillip Pugsley to rezone approximately 6.25 acres from (RE-5) Single Family Estate Zoning to (M-1) Light Industrial District Zoning

Ms. Gunter explained the property is commonly located at 802 N. Moffett Lane in Decatur Township. On July 7, 2021, a Public Zoning Board of Appeals hearing was held and based on the finding of facts, staff recommended approval, the Zoning Board of Appeals voted 5-0 for approval of the rezoning.

Motion to approve forwarding the resolution on to the full board with recommendation to approve made by Chair Little, seconded by Mr. Gresham.

Mr. Gresham asked what this would allow to happen on the property. Ms. Gunter explained that on the 6.25 acres, he is going to cut it out about here (pointed it out on the map) and is going to accept organic matter and incorporate that into his farm fields. He is already doing it

and has been doing for the last 20 years. All this is is that ADM says theirs has to go to an approved facility and so he has to get his spot approved. Mr. Gresham asked if this has been in violation all this time. Ms. Gunter said no, he is not in violation. It is an agricultural piece of ground he has been using and he has been hauling in crop residue.

Mr. Pugsley explained that in Illinois, farmers are allowed to incorporate crop residue from corn, beans, lawn collections & leaves into their fields. This is through the Illinois Department of AG and is acceptable by the IEPA as well as the Champaign Bureau of Land. In order to use the material that comes from ADM specifically, their rules say it has to go to a permitted facility. Whereas any farmer that does this, it is just done under an ag exemption. But, in order to get the material that ADM has, such as once the corn has been wet, currently it has to go to the landfill or to a permitted facility. He said that his plan is to, once it is rezoned, get a composting license for that 6 acres so that he can receive crop residue from ADM. Mr. Gresham asked where the composting license comes from. Mr. Pugsley said the IEPA.

Chairman Greenfield asked about tree limbs and things like that and if he has plans to eventually take that sort of thing. Mr. Pugsley said he has the equipment to grind tree limbs, but it seems that everywhere you see a mess that is related to a composting facility, that is what you see. He said he has a half million dollar roto chopper that will turn it into dust. He said they were doing some shingle recycling on Eldorado St. and bought the machine for that purpose. But, the actual, real purpose and original design was for composting. It is a horizontal grinder that continually belt feeds into a grinding chamber, reduced in size for composting. But, at this time, it is not really the intention to take any amount of that. Leaves and grass clippings are one thing, but . . . Chairman Greenfield said that, if that is the case, Ms. Sumpter and the Environmental Management Department would be involved at that time. Ms. Gunter added that he is not selling anything of the land. He is just using it to put on his crop fields that he owns. Mr. Pugsley said that hauling for the park district is what got him started in this. He said he had a soil sample on 98 acres he had purchased to the north and after 100 years of bad practices, the ground was depleted of organic matter. As of last year's crop year, he was asked by his farmer to quit putting anything on it because all of the chemicals are at the high end, which means no fertilizers. The only thing being done is a pre-emergence spray for weeds and a post-emergence spray for weeds. No fertilizers are being added because the soil has been built up just like your garden.

Chairman Greenfield asked how much ADM would be bringing in in a year's time. Mr. Pugsley said that right now about one semi load a day is going to the landfill. So, that is about what is being looked to be brought in. The rules are, you are allowed 20 tons per acre on each farm acre per year. Even when 400 loads was hauled out of the stables for the park district, it never met that 20 tons per acre. It composts down so much that the volume is so much less, but the quality is there. Chairman Greenfield asked if ADM would be paying him to dump that. Mr. Pugsley said yes, there will be a tip fee and that is how they propose to pay for the 3 jobs that will be created with this. Mr. Entler asked about if there is an odor associated with it. Mr. Pugsley said if you stand on top of it, you will smell it, but in 20 years, he said his closest neighbor has never noticed that this was being done. The new owner actually asked if it would smell. Mr. Pugsley asked him if he could tell it is there now. He could not. Mr. Pugsley said that the committee members are welcome to come out any time they want. He said that

typically, what they do is, in order for you to add corn to the soil, you want to pre-germinate it. Once it is pre-germinated, you don't get volunteers for it and you don't have to turn it down in the field. That is the only thing they have to do, is to get that temperature and moisture level up in the corn kernel. Once it is germinated, which is usually 8 to 10 days, it can be land applied right away and incorporate it.

Mr. Greenfield asked how long it sits in that 6 acres before it is taken out and spread. Mr. Pugsley said the longest it has been, was back about 15 years ago when there was a lot of water. They had to wait for the fields to dry to bring it in. That was about 3 months, but that was on the bottom ground on Center Street. Now, the ground is higher. He pointed out on the map where the 6 acres is and then pointed out hay fields where after one cutting of hay, it is applied to and incorporated into for the rest of the year. There is 92 acres all around that to buffer.

Mr. Greenfield asked if Mr. Pugsley had a plan to put a building up. Mr. Pugsley said there is no building there currently. The rule to put a building up is that, under RE-1, there has to be a residence before you can put a building. Under M-1, he would like to have something for equipment maintenance. He said that what they are doing is storing at the shop and bringing it out on a semi when needed. It's just too expensive to leave out for vandals to get at.

Mr. Gresham asked if Mr. Pugsley has a property on Center Street. Mr. Pugsley explained that he had 98 acres on Center Street when the bike trail came through and they imminent domained 43 acres and so he now has 55 acres more or less left. Mr. Gresham asked what that is used for. Mr. Pugsley said row crops, corn and beans. Mr. Gresham said that he had lived across the street from it for a while and it was rather annoying. Mr. Pugsley said that there is not anybody living across the street from his remaining 55 acres. Mr. Gresham said they were a little west of it. Mr. Pugsley said that no material is being kept there. All they do is land apply it. Mr. Gresham said he has been gone from there for about 4 years. Mr. Pugsley asked what Mr. Gresham had found annoying about it. Mr. Gresham said odor. Mr. Pugsley said that what they had done there was on-farm composting at that site. The reason for doing it there was because, it was legal to do it there, but also because it was being directly applied to that property. Now there are no neighbors to be concerned about.

The motion carried 5-0.

SUBDIVISIONS – None

REPORTS

Animal Control

Lt. Scheibly distributed statistical reports for June for this current year and last year for comparison purposes. He noted that with last year's COVID numbers, it does look quite a bit different from the current year. Everything is going well at the shelter. The numbers are still fairly good, but they are starting to see an increase in intakes, but there are also still a large number of adoptions.

The current special for July is the Red, White & Blue special where all adoptions are \$25. The Foundation pays the difference between the \$25 and the normal cost so that the Shelter does not lose any revenue on the specials.

Mr. Gresham commented that some of the news has been about people who adopted pets during the pandemic and now don't want them anymore and asked if they have seen any of that sort of thing here. Lt. Scheibly said if you are looking at the statistics, in June, there were 33 owner surrenders. It is difficult to look back at last year because it was so different, but it has probably at least doubled. It ebb & flows, goes up and down. He said they have seen a little bit of that, but they have also seen a lot of adoptions. The adoptions have definitely outweighed the number of surrenders and things coming back in.

Veteran's Assistance – Mr. Collins had no report

Planning & Zoning – Ms. Gunter had no report

Health Department –

Ms. Binkley reported that, as said before, the services have been up and running throughout COVID except for the STI clinic which could not be run due to a shortage of nurses to staff it. She said they are working on getting that back open. They do have the Phoenix Center coming in and providing some services at this time. That is really great because the community needs that.

The new phone system equipment is now in house and they are going through the process of having them installed and that whole system implemented which is very exciting.

Everything else is business as usual throughout the building.

COVID 19 numbers have been lower, but now they are starting to tick up again. The number of hours the Contact Tracers were working had been brought down, but now they are shifting them back up a little bit because there has been an increase over the last 3 weeks. In Region 6, we are at 2.9% positivity rate and in Macon County, we are at 2.1%. For the region, we are within range of all the ideal number indicators except we have 9 days of COVID patient increases at the hospital. She said they are keeping an eye on that for the region. For Macon County, specifically, the case rate is 29 per 100,000 and at the time of the last report from the state, the total number of variant cases for the county was at 245. They don't do a test to sequence it for every single specimen, so it is probably more than that. But, they don't do all of them. We do have the Delta variant here in Macon County. A press release went out about that. That spreads 2 to 3 times faster than some of the other strains and is about 70% more transmissible. The state is expecting that that is most of what we will be seeing in the Fall and Winter and as school sessions reconvene. She said they are keeping a close eye on that as well.

School guidance came out from the CDC and IDPH. She said they will be putting something out about that once they get a little more information from the state because they are going to add some more to what has been in the guidance so far. She said they have met with

superintendents and will continue to follow the IDPH & CDC guidance. Masks should be worn in the schools for anyone that is not vaccinated. If the variants are spreading around, that could get very dangerous very quickly in the fall and throughout school. Hopefully, they will implement that rule in the schools.

Mr. Gresham asked what the percentage of totally vaccinated in Macon County was. Ms. Binkley said 38.something percent. Mr. Gresham said that seems awfully low. Ms. Binkley agreed and said it is pretty low. The goal is to get up to 70%. So, we have obviously been doing this for months and months and are still significantly away from that. She said that they had gotten a number for children, since schools are something they are really focused on right now in keeping the children and staff safe in the schools. The numbers given for Macon County specifically for ages 12 to 17 vaccinated was about 21.7%. That is even lower. Children under 12 are not eligible to get the vaccine. Mr. Gresham asked if Ms. Binkley could see any way to fix it. To him, 38% is horrible. Ms. Binkley agreed that it definitely is not where we want to be, but people cannot be forced to get vaccinated. They just continue to promote it as much as possible. It has been made extremely accessible to the community. She said they have been all over and continue to offer vaccination clinics, not just in the building, but at other community locations so that if someone does not want to come into the Health Department building or doesn't have transportation, they can be served at a different location. Just this week, vaccination clinic times are being increased a little bit because a little bit more interest has been seen. Ms. Binkley said she did not know if people are getting more concerned about the Delta variant and some of the other variants or what. She said she is hopeful that they will get more. If someone is not wanting to get vaccinated, they probably have their mind made up at this point. They are just trying to get the people who may be on the fence or were unsure and wanted to see how it went. She said they are definitely not stopping. They vaccinate all week. If anyone wants it or changes their minds about not getting it, they can certainly be served. Mr. Gresham commented about reading about some of the places in the country and the reluctance to vaccinate and how far behind they are, but their numbers are comparable to what we are doing. Ms. Binkley said the thing that they continue to do because some people are just not going to get vaccinated – that is their personal choice – but if they can take the other proactive measures, if not for themselves if they are not concerned, then for other people to protect those that are immuno compromised and especially when it comes to schools, sports or locations where there would be children under that 12 years old. If they would take those precautions to keep those children safe that do not have the choice to be vaccinated at this time.

Environmental Management -

Ms. Sumpter reported that paint and electronic collections continue through September. One of each of the collections is done monthly. They both fill up very quickly. Usually after they stop in September, calls still come in every day on this stuff. Each collection has about 160 appointments during the 8 a.m. – noon timeframe.

After Monday, when Ms. Sumpter said she has an inspection to go out on at a permitted facility, she will be certified by the EPA to do the inspections.

Regional Office of Education – No report

Mental Health – No Report

Historical Museum – No Report

U of I Extension – No Report

CITIZEN’S REMARKS –

Mr. Karl Coleman, County Board member, said he appreciated Mr. Gresham’s comment and definitely agreed that it is an issue that we have a vaccination rate of 38% in this county, but he said he would like to remind this body, that they are the same ones that voted to limit their authority in regard to indoor dining during the midst of the pandemic and all these different things. So, Mr. Coleman said, as an entity they have not put their best foot forward to the community to show that they are serious about this pandemic. He said he is sure the members of their caucus who voted against or for that measure would . . . He said he is sure Ms. Binkley and the Health Department would enjoy you partnering with them in some fashion to incentivize and / or propose that the City and County work to increase vaccination rates – so . . . that is what he wanted to say. Thank you.

OFFICEHOLDER’S REMARKS - None

Closed Session – None needed

NEXT MEETING Next regular meeting – 8/26/2021

ADJOURNMENT The meeting was adjourned by Chair Little at 5:55 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham, Executive Secretary, Macon County Board Office