

EEHW COMMITTEE MEETING
December 9, 2013
Special Meeting
5:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Tim Dudley
Jerry Potts
Kevin Greenfield
Patty Cox
Kevin Meachum
Phil Hogan

COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT

Jay Dunn, County Board Chairman
Mike Baggett, State's Attorney's Office
Jennifer Hoffman, P&Z
Jay Dunn, County Board Chairman
David Williams, County Board Member
Jeannie Durham, County Board Office

MEMBERS ABSENT

Merv Jacobs

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

MINUTES

Patty Cox made a motion to approve the November 21, 2013 minutes, seconded by Phil Hogan, motion carried 6-0.

Citizen's Remarks

None

ZONING

Macon County Board Resolution for Special Use by Twin Forks Wind Farm-S-03-12-13 petition by Twin Forks Wind Farm for a special use permit to construct an electrical substation for electrical lines for an approximately 200 MW wind farm in A-1 Agricultural zoning.

Jennifer Hoffman explained that the property is commonly known as 12622 Glasgow Road located in Austin Township. On December 4, 2013 a public hearing was held and based on finding of facts and the rules in the Zoning Ordinance the staff recommended approval with the following stipulations:

1. This Special Use Permit does not constitute a license issued to the name Petitioners only. This Special Use Permit is intended to "run with the land."
2. This Special Use Permit is assignable and/or transferable only upon the sale or transfer in ownership of the subject property.
3. Building Permits shall be obtained as required.
4. Said property and all operations upon said property shall remain subject to all other applicable local, County, State and Federal regulations.

Jennifer explained that she had proposed that the special use permit shall have a 10 year time limit for all to review at the end of the time. The Special Use Permit will expire on January 9, 2024. With the help of Mike Baggett from the State's Attorney's Office, we have reworked the wording as follows.

5. The Special Use Permit will be voided if construction does not begin within eighteen (18) months of approval of said permit by the Macon County Board. This permit will be reviewed periodically for compliance as frequently as is deemed necessary by the Macon County Zoning Administrator, but not less frequently than once every ten (10) years.

Kevin Meachum stated that he has a problem with the fact that a special EEHW meeting was being held on something that could have been turned in and gotten the paperwork finalized and public meetings held without having to call a special meeting to do so. He said he wanted the company to understand that an emergency on their end does not warrant an emergency on the Macon County Board. They need to start getting their paperwork in on time. He said he understands that this has been relayed to them several times over the last 4 or 5 months and now we are here at the last burning candle to be able to make it to the Macon County Board for Thursday's meeting. If this is the way they are going to do business, they need to make sure they get their permits in on a timely manner each and every time.

Kevin Greenfield said he was at the zoning meeting and wanted to clarify that the County itself has not done any studies whatsoever. He asked Jennifer Hoffman if that was true or false. Jennifer said it was true. Macon County has not hired any outside engineering firms or anything to do studies within Macon County. Kevin Greenfield said that all of our information is coming from within or from other counties and asked Jennifer if that was correct. Jennifer said that was correct. Tim Dudley added that they want to make it perfectly clear that what is being voted on tonight is only a substation that has nothing to do with wind farms. Kevin Greenfield disagreed and said it does. Tim Dudley agreed that it is the ground work. Kevin Greenfield asked why they were not all tied together. He said that we are going to vote on the substation, but, in fact, you cannot have one without the other. Brad King with E-on explained that the reason for the timing is basically because the substation is a known location centralized to a potential future wind farm. We know where that is and how much land is required. The timing is specific to the eligibility for the production tax credit. As the development and siting of the wind farm is worked through which is where the wind turbines would be located, construction can be started on the substation location which is why the substation.

Typically, they are together, if you permit a full project, but because of the PTC and the expiration thereof at the end of this year, we are looking to start construction this year on the substation. The wind farm will have to come forward under a separate special use permit request. Kevin Greenfield said he assumed that they are not going to start the substation construction until there is a vote on the wind farms. Greg Elko, also with E-on, stated that if permits were received from the county, that they would clear and grade for the substation and lay a couple of foundations, put a fence around the substation and build two access roads off of Glasgow Road. Greg said that that is all they are looking to do in the immediate future and later down the road, as they get closer to putting in permits for the wind farm, that would dictate whether the substation is fully built. It is such a large capital investment. Kevin Greenfield then asked that with 118 of the turbines, what the cost of a turbine is. Brad King answered that typically the cost is around \$2 to \$3 million per turbine depending on the pricing at the time. He said that they do not have a set number of turbines. The number will be dictated by the type and size of the turbine that is chosen. Greg added that that is another reason why the wind farm was not permitted collectively. He said that they still do not know what type of turbine will be used and they are still waiting on a final utility study from PJM which will give more information. Kevin Greenfield asked if they had access to 28,000 acres. Greg confirmed that they do at this time. Brad King said that they have seen a lot of great local support and a lot of landowners saying that the project has been a long time in the making. E-on started here in 2009. Kevin Greenfield then asked that if there were 118, how much money would be generated for the county. Brad King said that they had done some initial projections and if you assume a 200 megawatt project over 25 years it generates roughly \$30 million in tax revenue. A lot of that goes to schools and it is split out across the other taxing bodies. The Illinois Department of Revenue has taxing criteria and standards that would have to be stuck to. He said they have 2 wind farms constructed in Illinois and those are the approximate figures that E-on is paying for those wind farms. Kevin asked for the county, in building permits and things like that, what would be generated. Brad King said that was additional and it is basically the total cost of the turbine multiplied by \$7.50 and divided by 1,000 and that gives you the building permit application fee number. Kevin Meachum said that you are looking at about a million and a quarter per year in taxes. Brad & Greg said that's in property taxes and the permit fee breaks down to be about \$2.5 million. Jennifer said her figure was a low figure since she had the cost at about \$2 million tops and didn't realize that they were \$2 to \$3 million. The figure is about \$1.7 million in building permit fees. Special use permit fees will be about \$23,600. Kevin Greenfield asked how long a period of time it would take to build the 118 turbines. Brad King said it would take about 9 to 12 months and that it is actually a pretty

quick process. Crews come in and do the roads and foundation and excavation work. A lot of that work is sourced locally. As soon as they get those in, the foundation is poured and turbines are erected. It is a sequential process as turbines are being fully erected and potentially being to come online, you still have some of the initial foundations being poured. Greg added that it depends on the weather also. Jay Dunn asked when the wind farms have been built in the past, if they are all erected and then turned on at the same time or build one and get it going and then move on to the next. Brad said a lot of that is driven by when you can get back feed power or when the point of interconnect is able to connect us to the grid. When we can get power, then we can energize and start operating those turbines. Typically, we don't wait until the full project is done, but as we get independent circuits or strings of turbines online which consist of 15 or so per string, we can energize those and they can start generating power. Jay asked when the State requires that they be put on the tax roll. Brad said it is based on the commercial operation date, but we work with the Assessor on it. Kevin Meachum said that was what he was getting at also. If you put in 20 in the first 3 months and you get them online and activated, you are going to be bringing in money as you build the rest of them. Brad said that if they are in the ground, built and operating in the previous taxable year, then they are on the roll. Kevin Greenfield said that some safety issues and health concerns were brought up at the zoning meeting. He asked if these gentlemen were aware of any. Brad reported that the gentleman at the meeting was referring to a Superior Judge Ruling in Massachusetts where there was a 4 wind turbine project owned by the local town to help support a treatment plant. The Judge ordered that 2 of the windmills could not run during night time hours because some citizens were complaining about not being able to sleep and the effects of that. Brad said they do noise studies and that they have to adhere to the Illinois Pollution Control Board standards for noise. There are a lot of claims and misinformation. The bottom line is that we will develop this project responsibly in close consultation with the land owners and we have to go through the full special use permit process for the wind farm separate from this consideration of the substation. Kevin Greenfield asked if they have to build a certain distance away from houses. Greg said Macon County has an ordinance which requires a certain setback distance from residences as well as certain set back distances from participating land owners and non-participating boundary lines. He added that another thing about that judge ruling is that the Massachusetts state law on noise for wind turbines was violated in that case, so that was another issue as to why that was shut down. Brad stated that they spend a lot time to make sure that the investment in building the project and being here for the long term, the project will be fully compliant and we will be good neighbors and citizens in the community.

David Williams, County Board Member, asked to make a comment. Several years ago E-on provided the affected taxing districts with some numbers. Two numbers and two taxing districts stick out. The Maroa-Forsyth School District was projected in the \$435,000 range per year and the Maroa Township and Road District was in the range of \$30,000 per year. It is substantial. David stated that as a result of the ordinance, there is or was a study that deals with the effects on wildlife and asked if E-on had it done and if the county had a copy of it. Greg said the County does not have a copy, but it is done. He said they do a full assessment and a number of different trends in endangered species plants and animals. The project area is clean and there are no threatened or endangered species that would be threatened. It was a full four season assessment. David asked if a copy of that would be supplied. Jennifer Hoffman said it is to be turned in with the special use permit as required by the ordinance. Greg said that all the permits they've done in the past have been pretty thick documents with all the studies that have been done and that will be included in this one as well.

Kevin Greenfield made a motion approve forwarding the resolution on to the full board with recommendation for approval, seconded by Patty Cox and motion carried 6-0.

Chair Tim Dudley thanked Brad and Greg from E-on and stated that Macon County stands to be a good partner as long as they are a good partner in return and that the County is looking forward to working with them.

Brad thanked the committee and assured them that the future permits would be submitted well in advance.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

CLOSED SESSION

None needed

NEXT MEETING- Thursday, December 19, 2013

ADJOURNMENT

Jerry Potts made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Patty Cox, the motion carried 6-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Jeannie Durham
Macon County Board Office