

**MACON COUNTY BOARD
ENVIRONMENTAL, EDUCATION, HEALTH & WELFARE
COMMITTEE MEETING
Macon County Office Building
141 S. Main Street, County Board Room #5
Decatur, IL 62523**

March 28, 2024 5:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair Linda Little
Mary Scott
Vivian Goodman
Jeff Entler

COUNTY PERSONNEL PRESENT

Edward Yoder, County Board
Tracy Sumpter, Dir. of Planning & Zoning
Amy McKinney, Adm.-Environmental Mgt
Tamara Wilcox, County Administrator
Deborah A. Blair, County Board Office

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jacob Horve

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes from the prior meeting on January 26, 2024, made by Mary Scott, seconded by Jeff Entler. Motion carried 4-0.

APPROVAL OF THE CLAIMS

No Claims submitted for this meeting.

Zoning:

Tracy Sumpter presented S-01-03-24, a petition filed by Scott and Claudia Cassidy requesting renewal of a special use permit to allow the operation of a dog kennel in (R-1) Single Family Residential Zoning. This property is commonly known as 2285 Crossroads Road in South Wheatland Township. On March 06, 2024 a public Zoning Board of Appeals hearing was held and based on the finding of facts, the board recommended approval. The Zoning Board of Appeals voted 5-0 for approval of the special use permit with the stipulations listed on the resolution.

Chair Little inquired if this was a new petition.

Mrs. Sumpter stated this was a renewal. The original special permit was issued in 2009. The most recent permit was issued in 2014 for 10 years. Planning and Zoning Office has received no complaints on this property.

Chair Little inquired as to where this property is located.

Mrs. Sumpter stated the property is commonly known as 2285 Crossroads Road in South Wheatland Township.

No further questions or concerns from the committee.

All of those in favor say Aye, those opposed same sign. Motion carried 4-0.

Tracy Sumpter presented S-02-03-24, a petition filed by Prairie Power, Inc. requesting a special use permit to construct and operate an electrical power substation in (A-1) Agricultural Zoning. The property is located on Hilvety Road in Pleasant View Township. The substation is needed to continue the reliable transmission of electricity to its coop members that distribute electricity to rural property owners throughout central Illinois. Under the Illinois Public Utilities Act Sec. 3-105, electric cooperatives are not defined as a Public Utility. Therefore, a special use permit is required. On March 06, 2024 a public Zoning Board of Appeals hearing was held and based on the findings of facts, the board recommended approval. The Zoning Board of Appeals voted 5-0 for approval of the special use permit with the stipulations listed on the resolution.

No questions or concerns from committee

All of those in favor say Aye, those opposed same sign. Motion carried 4-0.

Mrs. Sumpter provided all in attendance a spreadsheet that shows the building permits that were issued for January 2024 and February 2024.

No questions or concerns from committee.

REPORTS

Animal Control: *No Report*

Veteran's Assistance: *No Report*

Planning & Zoning: *No Report*

Health Department: *No Report*

Environmental Management:

Amy McKinney reported the Paint and Electronic Recycling Collections will begin on April 01, 2024. We will follow the same schedule as last season. Tuesdays 8:00 a.m. until noon, Thursdays noon until 4:00 p.m. and one Saturday each month from 8:00 a.m. until noon. It will run until the end of September. It seemed to work out really well last year. I have checked our schedule and we already have 20 people signed up for our first Saturday collection. I already have a paper shred event scheduled for May, which a lot of people have been calling about.

Chair Little stated that in the last year plus the way you have scheduled the appointments has gone so smooth. I have had much better feedback from the community. I really appreciate it.

Ms. McKinney stated that this schedule has worked out much better than years past. If anyone needs additional copies of the flyers, please let her know and she can make more copies.

Regional Office of Education: *No Report*

Mental Health: *No Report*

Historical Museum: *No Report*

U of I Extension: *No Report*

Mrs. Wilcox stated that we are partnered with U of I Extension on the Broadband project and Jamie Boaz has been a dream to work with. She has done a lot of things for that program like hosting our press conference. Her team that she has working for her are very creative and have made our logos and flyers. I would like to get her here someday to speak to the board about all of the things they are doing.

Chair Little stated it would be nice to have her here at a full board so that everyone can hear about it.

CITIZEN'S REMARKS:

Abeer Motan expressed her concerns.

Beth Wallace, a long term volunteer at the animal shelter, recently banned. Mrs. Wallace wanted to share some issues and concerns she has about the animal shelter. Beth was a public servant for over 30 years and her employer would have never allowed her to treat the public as she has been a witness to some of the staff treating the public that comes into the shelter. There is no structure, no accountability, and it is like a free-for-all with no boundaries. Idle hands standing around playing on their phones, soiled kennels for two or more hours at a time during business hours, empty water bowls (yes, sometimes the dogs empty the bowls, many times not). No enrichment toys in their kennels, which can lead to destructive and/or aggressive behavior. She has seen it many many times. Countless times she has witnessed dogs tear up their blankets because they are frustrated. They have nothing in their kennel. Nothing to do. When a person walks through the kennels and sees no toys or blankets it can be quite a discouraging site. Just in early December, if her mind served her correctly, the shelter pups were gifted several boxes of unassembled Kuranda beds (elevated beds that can go in kennels). She sees that as kennel enrichment. The beds set in boxes for weeks in boxes. My husband and another volunteer offered to assemble those beds for the dogs and they were given with a myriad of reasons why they couldn't do it. They were finally assembled after weeks of sitting and given to the pups. Such a big deal for some of the pups to have something in their kennel to call their own. This past year by far has been the worst year since she has been volunteering over 17 years ago. She was excused of creating a hostile work environment along with being a hostile person. She felt the staff could do that on their own. Since she was expecting accountability from the staff in terms of care of the animals she assumed that is why she was creating a hostile work environment. She just wanted the animals cared for. Back in December Beth exercised her first amendment rights by creating a post for a senior dog named Palo. She was told he was shutting down by a staff member. After she and another volunteer spoke to the shelter vet is when her post was created. The vet mentioned nothing to that affect that Palo was shutting down. The

only thing she mentioned was that Palo had some arthritis that was his main issue. Palo was a happy soul in the volunteers company. It was another story when he was in the company of the staff. Her staff mentioned no names, just my opinion. She doesn't know why anyone was worried about her post instead of minding their own business. The staff made a video of Palo in retaliation of her post. How cruel was that of grown adults belittling a senior dog to get back at her.

At this time Tamara Wilcox, County Board Administrator, made Mrs. Wallace aware that she only had three (3) minutes to speak.

Cindy Thomas stated that she has also been banned from the shelter. Mrs. Thomas thinks it is horrible that the board will not let her finish speaking. Mrs. Wallace has given 17 years to that shelter and then you are going to limit the time she can talk. This is terrible and everyone should be ashamed of that.

The crowd seconded Mrs. Thomas' comments and said let her speak, it's ridiculous. The crowd said the board doesn't want to hear it.

Chair Little stated the board rules dictate citizen's comments to three (3) minutes. Chair Little stated "please don't tell me that I don't want to hear what she has to say".

Mrs. Thomas asked once the Chair cracks the gavel will you listen to her then.

Chair Little stated for a little while.

Jeff Wallace stated that they were here a couple of months ago to request the board investigate what's going on out at the shelter. She was told that they would. Still has not heard anything back from several months ago.

Chair Little stated Animal Control falls under the jurisdiction of the Sheriff and there have been investigations done.

Mr. Wallace asked if the Sheriff answers to the county board.

Chair Little stated that he is a duly elected officeholder, yes and no. It is a jurisdictional thing. Chair Little believes the issue has been handled. She also stated that they are able to make citizens remarks.

Mr. Wallace stated if anyone knows his wife and she is guilty of one thing it is caring too much.

No further citizens remarks at this time.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

Closed Session: None needed.

NEXT MEETING: Next regular meeting – April 25, 2024

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned by Chair Little at 5:45 p.m.

Chair Little reopened the meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE CLAIMS

Motion to approve Claims made by Mr. Entler, seconded by Ms. Goodman.

No questions/discussion.

Motion carried 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned by Chair Little at 5:47 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Deborah A. Blair, Executive Secretary, Macon County Board Office