

WILL COUNTY BOARD
DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS MEETING
MINUTES

February 17, 2011

8:45 a.m.

Will County Office Building
Auditor's Office Conference Room
302 N. Chicago Street
Joliet, IL

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Adamic called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present were: Babich, Brooks, Deutsche, May, Seiler, Stewart, Traynere, Wilhelmi, Winfrey and Adamic.

Absent were: None.

Also Present: County Board Chief of Staff Bruce Friefeld, Land Use Director of Development Review David Dubois, County Executive Chief of Staff Nick Palmer and Richard Kavanagh.

Present from State's Attorney's Office: ASA Melanie Manning.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Stewart, second by Ms. Seiler, to approve the minutes from the January 20, 2011 meeting as amended to include Sharon May as being present at the meeting. All in favor. MOTION CARRIES.

DISCUSSION OF FEBRUARY 17, 2011 COUNTY BOARD AGENDA

PROCLAMATIONS

Mr. Adamic noted there would be two proclamations: one honoring former County Board Member John Anderson for his years of service, and one recognizing February as Black History Month.

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Mr. Dubois stated case 5934 was on the agenda again. Emerald Properties, the applicant, had met with many of the neighbors and agreed to 31 conditions. One of the conditions involved the testing of some fill. The Land Use Department believed the testing would be adequate and also would meet IEPA requirements. If there was a recommendation to change the testing, the Department believed it should remain the same.

Ms. Seiler stated she had some concerns. At one time, the property was residential but it later became commercial. The neighbors had wells and were concerned about the possibility of water contamination.

Mr. Dubois explained he did not have specific information about the testing, but the Resource Recovery and Energy Division is an arm of the IEPA and enforces the state's rules and regulations.

Ms. Seiler stated her underlying concern involved the results of the testing. If there was some kind of problem, what were the next steps?

Mr. Dubois stated if the initial testing reached any IEPA thresholds the Department would follow the state's requirements.

Mr. Adamic asked who would be responsible if the testing indicated there were problems at the site.

Mr. Dubois stated the owner of record ultimately would be responsible.

Mr. Adamic asked if the owner would be required to post a bond to pay for any environmental problems.

Mr. Dubois explained the county did not have a requirement for a construction bond in this type of case.

Ms. May noted the case had been considered by the Land Use and Development Committee. The neighbors on both sides of the property and other area residents agreed to the conditions.

Ms. Seiler stated she would approve the case but would prefer more testing if there was any contamination.

Mr. Kavanagh stated he represented Emerald Properties. An additional condition had been added, and it required the testing of soil at the site with a Photon Ionization Detector. Emerald Properties would pay for the testing, and the equipment had been approved by the IEPA.

Mr. Adamic asked what Emerald Properties would do if the site was contaminated.

Mr. Dubois replied the state and county regulations would apply.

Mr. Dubois stated the next case involved Springbrook Community Church of Naperville. At the Commission level, there were quite a few comments from neighbors, and a set of conditions would be presented at the County Board meeting. One condition concerns access to the proposed church from Route 30. The current access is at Heggs Road, and the residents of the subdivision to the south are concerned about how the traffic flowing into the church could affect them. As part of the condition, the church would agree to pursue access from Route 30. IDOT would decide if the church could have access to the property from the state route, so the church is not guaranteed access from that point.

Mr. Dubois stated case 5958 concerned a special use for a second residence to bring the property into compliance with the ordinance. The property is in an older part of the county, the subdivision dates to the 1920s-1930s, and the lots are small. There are two houses on the lot. Before the owner can refinance the property, the lot must be in compliance with the zoning ordinances.

Mr. Dubois explained there were several resolutions on the agenda, including a text amendment to the Water Resource Ordinance outlining an update to special service areas. There also was an appeal to a decision from the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding a side yard setback. During the Committee meeting, the applicant explained how there might be some hardships resulting from the Commission's decision and asked for a variance. The Committee recommended approval. There also was a temporary use permit for food and alcohol sales for the rodeos held at the Munoz property on Gougar Road. The operation has an approved special use permit.

Ms. Traynere asked how the neighbors felt about the food and alcohol sales and if they had been notified by the county.

Mr. Dubois answered the temporary use permit process does not require notice to the neighbors. The Sheriff and the Health Department were notified, and the County Executive's office had to issue a permit.

Mr. Adamic asked if information was posted explaining what would happen on the days the events were held on the Munoz property.

Mr. Dubois replied there was no notice posted of the events; the Land Use Committee annually approves the dates of the rodeos.

Mr. Friefeld noted the Munoz's neighbors probably know about the events. If securing the permits for the food and alcohol sales became too difficult, the rodeos might be staged without any permits. Under the current system, there at least is some advance notice. The members of the committee might want to consider creating a notification system for the residents -- but that would be a policy issue.

Mr. Dubois noted there is a task force working on recommendations for addressing the various issues associated with the rodeos.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Wilhelmi stated there were two issues on the agenda: the annual cleanup of some shortfalls in the budget and the Diageo tax abatement.

PUBLIC WORKS & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Babich provided an overview of the resolutions.

Ms. Traynere asked if Brent Hassert had been hired in January to work as a lobbyist on the quick take issue at Weber Road and Renwick Road in Resolution 11-70.

Mr. Stewart replied yes.

Ms. Deutsche stated she would vote against the resolution because she is opposed to quick take legislation. Eminent domain is acceptable in some circumstances but quick take shows disrespect to land owners.

Ms. Traynere asked if land owners still had the ability to fight over the price in quick take legislation.

Ms. Deutsche answered yes.

Ms. May asked if the county had used quick take legislation in the past.

Mr. Stewart replied no.

Mr. Howard stated his understanding was this land was property that was in the utility easement. Nothing could be built there anyway. The county needed between one and 10 feet for a turning lane. Everything must be considered item by item and case by case.

Ms. Seiler stated if quick take was approved by the legislature, each piece of property would be considered individually by the County Board, and there would be a separate vote on each parcel.

JUDICIAL COMMITTEE

Ms. Traynere stated the members of the Judicial Committee talked about the proposed adjudication process. Much work remains to be done on the ordinances related to the adjudication process.

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

Mr. Babich stated the members of the committee discussed the animal control agreements with various municipalities and the amendment to the sewage treatment and disposal ordinance.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Friefeld stated the federal and state agendas were discussed during the committee meeting.

Mr. Palmer indicated a representative from Michigan is trying to force closure of the locks along the canal because of the threats posed by Asian Carp. There also is a proposal in the House to eliminate all WEA funding as of July 1, a move that would shut down Will County's Workforce Services Division.

Ms. Traynere asked how a federal government shut down might affect Will County.

Mr. Friefeld answered there would not be an immediate impact. Most of the county's federal funding came in the form of grants.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

Mr. Brooks stated Jason Dwyer of Wight & Company gave an update on the proposed master planning for the county. Deputy Chief Marty Nowak also talked about a proposal for a new headquarters for the Sheriff on the old Joliet Arsenal property.

TECHNOLOGY AD HOC COMMITTEE

Mr. Brooks indicated the meeting was cancelled because of the Feb. 2 blizzard.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mr. Adamic stated Resolution 11-77 authorized a professional agreement with the McKibbin Group to handle the process of negotiating the terms of the employees' health care package. The replacement hires for the Highway Department and the County Executive's Maintenance Department were discussed during the committee meeting. If the county is not going to fill open positions, the decision should be made before the job is posted.

Ms. Traynere asked what happened to the open position in the Land Use Department.

Mr. Palmer replied it was not on the agenda this month but it probably will be at a later date.

Ms. May stated Chairman Moustis made some good points during the discussion about replacement hires. When someone is going to be hired, the County Board members don't see that person's credentials.

Mr. Friefeld indicated more information about each hire is available in the County Board's offices. It is considered personal information so it is not included in the packets.

Mr. Adamic stated Resolution 11-82 was to execute a professional agreement with Smith Dawson Andrews.

Mr. Friefeld indicated Mr. Dawson is the federal lobbyist and he is taking a 20 percent reduction in pay from last year.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Brooks, second by Ms. Winfrey, to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 a.m. All in favor.

MOTION CARRIES.