



MINUTES

Carbondale Planning Commission
Wednesday, April 13, 2022
Room 108, 6:00 p.m.
City Hall/Civic Center

Ms. Litecky called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Members Present: LeBeau, Sheffer, Hamilton, Love, Litecky, Carrier and Doherty (ex-officio)

Members Absent: Burnside and Lilly

Staff Present: Lenzini, Maxwell

1. Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Sheffer moved, seconded by Dr. LeBeau, to approve the minutes for February 2, 2022 and March 2, 2022.

2. Citizen Comments or Questions

There were none.

3. Report of Officers, Committees, Communications

Mr. Lenzini introduced the new Commissioner Philip Carrier.

4. Public Hearings

PC 22-08: Ameren Illinois Company is requesting a Special Use Permit to expand their existing substation at 1599 North Wall Street.

Ms. Litecky declared Public Hearing PC 22-08 open and for Ms. Maxwell to review PC 22-08.

Ms. Litecky asked Ms. Maxwell to read the staff report. Ms. Maxwell read parts A, B and C of the staff report.

Ms. Litecky asked if the Commissioners had questions for staff.

Mr. Sheffer stated that Ameren will not be disturbing any part of the brownfields bordering the property. Ms. Maxwell agreed.

Mr. Sheffer also asked if Ameren is aware of the test wells and to make sure they will not be disturbed. Ms. Maxwell stated they are aware and that Ameren has been in contact with Beazer East, the owners of the property to the North, to make sure there is no disruption with the test wells.

Mr. Hamilton asked what the coordination would be between the Carbondale Fire Department and the Carbondale Township volunteer Fire Department. Ms. Maxwell stated that if the Commission and City Council supported the Special Use Permit, the City would ask Ameren to annex the expanded area the entire substation would have the resources of the City. He also asked since the access road is narrow, would there be an issue getting fire trucks and equipment to the substation. Ms. Maxwell stated that she and the Building and Fire inspector visited the site and he didn't see any issues with access to the site.

Mr. Carrier asked if there will be any changes to the electrical lines leaving the expanded and upgraded substation. Ms. Maxwell stated that the Ameren representative would be able to answer the question best.

Ms. Litecky asked if the applicant was present and wished to speak.

The applicant, Chris Stritzel with CMT Engineering, is present and is available for questions.

Ms. Litecky asked if there were any questions for the applicant.

David Koenig replied to Mr. Carrier's earlier question stating this is just to upgrade the existing substation and there will not be any new construction leaving the site going into town.

Mr. Sheffer asked if the area for the Special Use Permit is the area in black on the map of Exhibit D and not the whole Parcel. Mr. Stritzel explained the new purchased area and the area where the upgraded substation will be with updated maps. Mr. Sheffer also asked if there will be any construction in the flood plain. Mr. Stritzel stated that the improvements will be outside of the flood plain.

Mr. Carrier asked if this site been tested for contamination due to the close proximity to the brownfield. Nathan Briggs of Ameren stated that the environmental team would have reviewed the site before purchase but does not have the information on hand.

Mr. Carrier asked if there is a record of when and how often the brownfield soil site is tested. Ms. Maxwell stated that Beazer East does remove the soil per EPA standards and there is monthly testing that is recorded on the City's website. There was further discussion on if the proposed site has been tested due to the close proximity to the Koppers' site.

Mr. Sheffer asked Ameren to go into more detail the map in Exhibit B, to explain what the extra lines on the map are. Mr. Stritzel stated that the lines show a contour to contain water to slow rain water run-off. Mr. Sheffer also asked to clarify the letter in Exhibit G, making sure he understands the area has been cleared. There was further discussion on the testing of the wells on the Kopper's site.

Ms. Litecky asked if anyone wished to speak in favor.

There were none.

Ms. Litecky asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition.

Marilyn Tipton read a statement from the northeast community stating they would be fine with the upgraded substation as long as the soil is tested for contamination before construction begins.

Pepper Holder also expressed concern over contaminated soil and wants to have the soil tested before construction.

Rodney Morris also expressed concern over the soil contamination and asked if the expansion is in conjunction with Beazer East or Brightfield.

Margret Nesbit also expressed concern over contaminated soil and wants to have the soil tested before construction.

Raydeane Woods asked Ameren what the odor or emissions that come from the substations, what the noise level would be, if there will be any security at the property and if there will be area lighting at night. She also express concern over the decrease in property value when there is a substation in the area. Ms. Woods also wanted to have the soil tested for contamination. She also asked how close the site is to Lowes.

Daryl Webber asked if Ameren purchased the property without the knowledge that the ground has been contaminated. He also asked if there are reports of the testing done on the soil. Mr. Lenzini stated the reports for the Koppers' testing is on the City's website.

Mr. Holder expressed concern over any removal of contaminated soil being properly removed by the EPA. Mr. Stritzel stated that any soil that is going to be moved will stay on the property and not removed from the site.

Mr. Lenzini stated the distance from the proposed site to Lowes is about 4,000 feet.

Ms. Litecky asked if the Commissioners had questions for staff.

There were none.

Ms. Litecky asked if there were questions from anyone to anyone.

Ms. Litecky asked Mr. Holder and Ms. Tipton to clarify if they are asking Ameren to test all of their property or just the property the new substation will be on. Ms. Tipton stated she would like the property with the new substation to be tested. Mr. Holder stated he would like a third party to do the testing of the soil as the City and the owners of the property cannot be trusted.

Mr. Lenzini stated that Ameren will be required to get a NPDS permit from the EPA if more than one (1) acre of dirt will be disturbed, that will prevent any soil that has been contaminated to be removed by way of a public street. Mr. Stritzel stated that is correct as the permit has been filled directly with the EPA and they will know right way if the soil has been contaminated.

Mr. Sheffer asked with the NPDS permit, the EPA will come and test the soil before any dirt is moved. Mr. Stritzel stated the permit restricts the contractor from polluting the downstream water ways in neighborhoods from soil, water and wind erosion. The permit does not require contamination testing, it is to limit dust in the neighborhoods and dirt on roadways.

Mr. Sheffer asked if there was any testing done on the purchased property. Mr. Stritzel stated no but Ameren has legal teams to look into such issues before the purchase of the property. There was then a discussion on protecting the testing wells around the road.

Mr. Sheffer stated he would like to make two (2) additional conditions to the recommendation, that there will be testing to the soil before construction begins and guard rail be installed around the testing wells to protect.

Rodney Morris expressed concern over not testing the soil he feels is contaminated and wants to make sure that the property is tested before construction begins.

Ms. Woods asked what the service area for the proposed substation is and what the benefits of the substation to the City is. David Owuor from Ameren stated that with the original substation there is only one line services all of Carbondale and there has been interruptions from that line which affects the reliability of power. He also stated that the service line for the substation is over seventy years old. Currently if there is a need to service the current substation, there is a loss of power and with the upgrades substation and additional transformer, there will be no loss of power to the area. Mr. Owuor stated during the purchase of the property, Ameren in a desktop analysis and due diligence where the environmental team evaluate the site and there was no cause for concern as the land has been used as farm land. He also stated that the access road will be sufficient and the testing well will not be disturbed. Mr. Owuor stated that Ameren will be able to do the testing of the soil and if the soil is contaminated there are procedures as a company to remediate the soil.

Mr. Owuor stated that there is no new equipment being added to the property, just similar items to what is already at the site. He also stated that it site is considered low level security and there will be a security fence and monitoring cameras starting with the construction.

Mr. Owuor stated the sound levels will be minimal and there will be no odors coming from the site. There should be no fire hazards on site but there is fire mitigation services in place for every substation. He also stated that there will be an upgrade to the lighting in the area and when there is nobody at the substation, the lighting dims similar to motion controlled lighting. Mr. Owuor stated the upgraded substation will supply reliability and more ways to supply power to the local community.

There was a discussion on notices sent to the community.

Ms. Woods asked if there would be a decrease in property values around the new substation. Mr. Lenzini stated that the property values would diminish if there wasn't an upgrade to the electrical grid.

Ms. Tipton stated again her concern over the contaminated soil and any construction on the site.

Ms. Maxwell read Part D of the staff report for PC 22-08, with a recommendation of approval.

Ms. Litecky declared PC 22-08 closed and asked for a motion on the findings of fact.

Mr. Sheffer moved that the Commission accept as findings of fact Part A & B of the staff report for PC 22-08, the applicant was present, zero spoke in favor, seven (7) spoke in opposition, and zero letters/emails were read in opposition or support, and seconded by Mr. LeBeau.

The motion was passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Sheffer moved to accept the three (3) recommendations and to add two additional recommendations, that the soil be tested for contamination by and EPA approved testing company before construction and to protect the testing wells so they will not be destroyed, seconded by Dr. LeBeau.

There was a discussion and clarification on the recommendations from staff and the Commission. David Owuor stated he will have the Ameren Environmental team look over the recommendations and any feedback will be ready by the next City Council meeting. Mr. Owuor stated he has no concerns over the recommendations.

The motion was passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Love moved that the Commission vote on all seven criteria as one, seconded by Dr. LeBeau.

The motion was passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Sheffer moved that the Commission recommend approval of the PC 22-08, with the recommendations that all dust or mud on the road shall be controlled during the construction project, that there be no disruption to any remaining contaminated soil at the Koppers Plant brownfield site, that the Commission request the applicant petition for annexation of this property into City Limits as a condition of their approval, that the soil be tested for contamination by an EPA approved testing company before construction and a plan is submitted to protect the monitoring wells adjacent to the proposed construction site and access road, seconded by Dr. LeBeau.

Roll Call Vote:

Yes – 6 (LeBeau, Sheffer, Love, Carrier, Hamilton, and Litecky)
No- 0

Mr. Lenzini stated that the item will move forward with recommendation for approval of PC 22-08 for the April 26, 2022 City Council meeting.

5. Old Business

There was none.

6. New Business

There was none.

6. Adjournment

Ms. Litecky adjourned the meeting at 8:41 p.m. seconded by Dr. LeBeau.