



LOUISVILLE METRO COUNCIL

RECEIVED

AUG 01 2016
PLANNING &
DESIGN SERVICES

MARY C. WOOLRIDGE
DISTRICT 3 COUNCILWOMAN
mary.woolridge@louisvilleky.gov

DONNA B. SANDERS
LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT
donna.sanders@louisvilleky.gov

August 1, 2016

Chairman Donnie Blake
444 South 5th Street
Louisville, KY 40202

Dear Chairman Blake:

Many have commented publically on their disdain for the proposed bio digesters and their reasoning's. Below are my concerns and recommendations for your action on this most important community issue.

Chiefly my concern is that the Planning and Design staff could not find any other metro area of similar size, which allows the placement of methane plants within its residential development code. The lack of regulatory plans within similar or larger urban areas should give us pause in deciding to allow these in our own community. Odors, delivery trucks and the potential for an explosion has made other communities hesitate in adopting these methane plants with their community; why should we lead the effort in the United States in placement of these plants in our own backyard.

I would argue that the quarter-mile proximity from neighborhoods, schools, churches, hospital and nursing homes is too short. At the July 26, 2016, public meeting held at the East Government Center, Emily Liu advised that the Louisville Metro Emergency Management Agency/Metro Safe had indicated that a half-mile is the minimum distance for evacuation for a methane gas leak. In addition, Planning and Design staff have stated that they have not studied what the size of a blast radius would be if one of the digester tanks were to explode. Therefore, at worst, I believe the Planning Commission should heed the advice of Metro Safe and propose a rule in which a half-mile radius be the minimum distance forwarded onto the Metro Council.

Another point that needs emphasize is that under the current Land Development Code only the M-3 zoning category allows for the production of methane gas although the recommendations would expand this into M-1, M-3, C-M and EZ-1. Property zoning classifications change all of the time; the Metro Council just recently adopted nine such zoning changes this past Thursday.

Permitting methane plants within all five proposed zoning classifications will not only expand the areas in which these facilities can be built, but will also make us look over our shoulder when reviewing proposed zoning changes in the future. Five zoning categories covers too many parcels eligible for consideration in the future and with all of the angst associated with these proposed methane facilities, why would we expand eligibility into four more zoning categories?

Also lacking in the proposed rules is a comprehensive permitting process for these bio digesters. I agree that we need to tackle new innovative ways to combat our solid waste usage, but planning and permitting where these facilities should be located in order to protect our citizen's safety and health should be priority number one. The Planning Commission should set rigid safety and health standards with any recommendations forwarded to the Metro Council.

Some alternates for your consideration include not only reducing the number of zoning categories eligible and increasing the distance between the aforementioned neighborhoods but also consideration of banning these methane plants within the Land Development Code. Many in the General Assembly worked this past year to address this issue; why not give them more time to deliberate this issue next spring. Many have also asked why the proposed regulations do not delineate between wet or dry materials being digested. Commonsense would tell us that scraps off hogs and corn stalks would emit different odors in a bio digesting process. I urge you to consider the differences in waste being used within your proposed regulations.

I urge you to study the issues I have poised and recommend regulations that will ensure our safety and health before profits and business.

Sincerely,



Mary C. Woolridge
Metro Council District 3

RECEIVED

AUG 01 2016
PLANNING &
DESIGN SERVICES