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# SIMPSON

As waste is broken down, biogases and compounds known as digestates are produced. Biogases created can be used for different energy needs and are composed of methane at a high percentage, between 50 and 75%, the EPA says. While methane gas can be used to produce renewable natural gas, many know it for its pungent odor.

Vanguard Renewables, a company that constructs biodigesters, was reported to be looking at building a facility in Simpson County, namely in the Prices Mill area.

A group of concerned residents of Prices Mill and other rural areas around the county gathered at a February planning and zoning meeting and expressed concerns over what the digester would mean for rural life, from concerns over high truck traffic volume on two-lane roads to odors in the air to lowered property values around the digester.

Two options were presented to fiscal court. One would allow biodigester facilities to operate in areas zoned “industrial” or “agriculture” with some conditions. The conditions would not allow biodigesters within 1,500 feet of residential properties and would have required the facilities to be built with access to major roads that have the capacity for 5,000 vehicles per day, along with some other restrictions.

Option two, the one chosen by fiscal court, makes biodigesters “expressly prohibited” in Simpson County.

The recommendation originally allowed small farms to build biodigesters for agricultural uses, but fiscal court removed this exemption.

“If we’re sued over (the prohibition), so be it,” Barnes stated in the meeting.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Carter Munday said ordinarily, changes made to zonings come back to his department for public hearing. However, if an ordinance is made and approved by fiscal court in this case, it bypasses this process.

Munday said since he has not received anything from the county since April 1, he’s “inclined to believe” an ordinance is on its way.

During the fiscal court meeting, Simpson County Attorney Sam Phillips expressed worries that outlawing biodigesters could lead to legal action against the county.

“I do not think the recommendation is a good idea,” Phillips said. “The law backs you restricting something, (but) the law frowns upon prohibiting something.”

Phillips pointed to different action from Simpson County and the City of Franklin in the past. He said while businesses and projects such as solar farms and adult entertainment are legal to construct in the county, they have been restricted by different rules.

He said while he does not like the biodigester idea, from a legal standpoint, he thinks restricting is a better option than banning them outright.

“I know that’s not the popular position ... but I think I’m not doing my job if I don’t point out a problem.”

Around 20 members of the public were at the fiscal court meeting. Simpson County Jailer Eric Vaughn, speaking in his words “as a taxpayer,” said during the meeting that action needed to be taken by the fiscal court.

“At which point do we take control of our community,” Vaughn asked magistrates. “We’re a farming community ... that’s what keeps us going.”

Vanguard Renewables did not respond to an email seeking comment by press time.

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# WKU

The plan, which focuses on preserving the hall’s most recognizable interior features, will build collaborative spaces and replace the restrooms, which have been in place since 1937, according to WKU. A large second-floor classroom will serve more than 100 people and function as an auditorium. The building will also feature updated audio-visual technology, add faculty and staff offices, and include sensory relief spaces for neurodiverse community members.

While the number of students served will depend on curriculum, the number of instructional spaces will probably stay around the same and accommodate more students through means such as larger classrooms, said Terrance Brown, WKU Dean of Potter College of Arts & Letters. The Faculty House, which has long exceeded its lifespan, will be removed, with its history honored in the new building, WKU President Tim Caboni said.

“Cherry Hall is not just a classroom building – it is a symbol, and it represents WKU in many ways,” Caboni said. “Our alumni have memories of walking up the marble stairs and carving their footsteps into the institution’s history, so we had to both preserve that and think about what the possibilities were for the building’s future.”

Students will move from Grise Hall to the new College of Business building in the fall, and WKU plans to move classes and faculty from Cherry Hall to the emptied-out Grise Hall during the construction, according to WKU.

The project will be conducted by the architecture, design and planning firm Gensler, which designed The Commons at Helm Library and the upcoming Gordon Ford College of Business facility. While the firm worked on the WKU Campus Master Plan, research identified Cherry Hall as one of the campus’s most highly utilized buildings, Gensler Senior Associate Janette Scott said; students across nearly every major attend at least one class at the hall, Brown said.

A unique aspect of the project is that due to the



GRACE MCDOWELL / Daily News

Western Kentucky University faculty, students and members of the community check out the renderings of the renovation plans for Cherry Hall as they walk through the building during an open house event on Thursday.

building’s historical importance, the outside will not fundamentally change, said political science Professor Jeff Budziak, the representative of the college dean’s office on the committee involved in the building design process. This, he said, means they’re redesigning the interior in a fixed space, which limits changes compared to projects where buildings can be expanded.

“The people from Gensler have been really, really responsive, and the faculty and staff that I worked with have been very helpful,” Budziak said. “They’ve been constructive, and we’ve had a really good opportunity to think about what the future of this building should look like.”

The new building in its next phase will entail an additional degree of consideration for inclu-

sivity through choices surrounding factors such as lighting and color choices.

“Some of it is as obvious and direct as a sensory room space, but a lot of it is going to be in those kinds of choices that we make about, how do we lay out a classroom for a student who maybe struggles with ADHD or concentration?” Budziak said.

“I think for students, it’s about building a space that meets their needs for the future, gets them prepared, but also space they can come to be in and be comfortable in, and for our faculty, they want to see our students succeed, and, of course, they want to have spaces that allow them to do their research and scholarship effectively.”

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# JONESVILLE

under WKU President Tim Caboni in 2022 to assess how to address remaining issues from Jonesville’s dismantling – carefully interweaves historical documentation as it maps the neighborhood’s history and pertinent context: the Civil War, what Jonesville was like, WKU’s history, a key lawsuit, a neighborhood church’s opposition to the dismantling, the razing itself, the national context of urban renewal, the impacts of the dismantling on generational wealth, why it matters to know what happened, and more.

An audience of nearly 100 – students, faculty, administrators, around 10 Jonesville descendants and other community members – responded with a standing ovation lasting longer than most.

“I loved it,” said lifelong community organizer Johnalma Barnett, a Jonesville descendant. “Made me even happier when they kept zooming in on my mother when she was 13 years old.

“I grew up listening to the stories. I heard everything, kind of like Akisha. When I was like 6 years old, I started hearing the stories. I wasn’t living in Jonesville – it was gone – but my family talked about it constantly, the things that happened. So it’s like I lived there too through my family.”

PBS WKU gave community members more agency over the story than is normal. It acquired funding through the nonprofit The Peace Studio to train Jonesville descendants Townsend Eaton and David Greer as well as Alice



GRACE MCDOWELL / Daily News

Alice Gatewood Waddell, a Jonesville descendant and co-producer of the “Jonesville: When Sunflowers Fall” documentary, answers questions during a screening of the documentary on Thursday in the Jody Richards Hall Auditorium.

Gatewood Waddell, whose family grew up in the neighborhood, in film production so they could oversee the film as producers.

“We tried to push the boundaries beyond (...) presentation, to agency,” film director Josh Niedwick said.

A standout comment in the evening Q&A with producers came from Greer. He noted how much the university has grown and benefited the region, citing last September’s report that found WKU brought \$528.4 million in income in fiscal year 2022-23 – and advocated, to much applause, for Jonesville descendants to be a part of WKU’s strategic plan.

“All of these companies, the university itself, has received a very large return on this investment – what return on investment have

the peoples, the descendants of Jonesville, received when we talk about reconciliation?” said Greer, making clear that his comment meant nothing harmful toward leadership, and was directed at institutions as a whole, such as WKU. “It is fair for everyone else: individuals, small businesses, large businesses, the university. Why is it not fair for the people who had set foot on this soil in 1880?”

WKU President Tim Caboni, in attendance, told the Daily News that he “think(s) there are opportunities as we think about revising” that 10-year plan, which was established in 2018.

“What’s the role of us talking about the history of the institution, how that influenced who we are? And Jonesville is an important part.

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# SENTENCE

May 2, 2020, to Jan. 17, 2023, with Jennifer Huff selling or trading the controlled substances in exchange for cocaine, methamphetamine and marijuana.

All told, around 45,000 doses of prescription medication made their way to the street.

In U.S. District Court in Bowling Green on Thursday, as dozens of family members and supporters looked on, Joseph Huff took responsibility for his actions while addressing U.S. District Court Chief Judge Greg Stivers.

“Once I learned the depth of it, I was scared, I felt like I was already going to lose everything,” Huff said. “I guess somewhere along the way, I got too scared to do anything about it other than try myself to fix it ... There were points in my life where I did things I’m ashamed of simply to have a relationship with my wife.”

According to federal court records, Jennifer Huff developed a dependency on opioids after giving birth to her youngest son, and family members who spoke on her behalf at Thursday’s sentencing

hearing said that a history of addiction was present in the family.

In addition to the medications that illegally left the controlled pharmacy system, investigators gathered evidence that Joseph Huff falsely billed Medicaid and other health care benefit programs, doing so in some instances for medications that were dispensed to Jennifer Huff without a prescription.

On Dec. 29, 2022, Joseph Huff faxed official paperwork to the DEA in which he reported an armed robbery at his pharmacy resulting in the theft of narcotics from the business, but no such incident had taken place.

Joseph Huff’s attorney, Alan Simpson, argued for his client to be placed on probation, saying that it was unclear at the outset whether Joseph Huff had knowledge of the diversion of drugs from the pharmacy.

When the pharmacist eventually learned about the extent of his wife’s addiction, Simpson said Joseph Huff sought unsuccessfully to encourage Jennifer Huff to cut off ties with people enabling her substance abuse.

“I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again – good people make bad choices and they should not be defined by their mistakes for the

rest of their lives,” Simpson said Thursday. “But for Mrs. Huff’s addiction, I don’t think Mr. Huff would be here ... I can tell you that Mr. Huff begged his wife not to be around certain elements that ultimately brought them down. He fought to keep his marriage together and became an accomplice of sorts.”

Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph Ansari filed paperwork asking Joseph Huff to be sentenced to 48 months in prison and for Jennifer Huff to receive 36 months.

Federal sentencing guidelines, which take into account the nature of a defendant’s crimes and any prior criminal history, recommended a range of 57-71 months of incarceration for Joseph Huff and 51-63 months for Jennifer Huff, who both now reside in Florida.

During Joseph Huff’s sentencing hearing, Ansari argued against placing the former pharmacist on probation, saying that his actions were “an abuse of public trust.”

“(Probation) doesn’t promote justice and doesn’t reflect the serious nature of the offense,” Ansari said. “When a medical professional is sentenced and that lands in the paper, I do think other doctors and pharmacists find that to be a deterrent. Sentencing medical professionals has a deterrent effect that is

good for society.”

Stivers said the situation was “heartbreaking,” but added that probating Joseph Huff would “promote disrespect for the law.”

“Other pharmacists should know that you’ll go to prison if you start selling your drugs out the back door to street dealers,” Stivers said when pronouncing the 26-month sentence.

Scott Huff, Joseph’s brother, addressed the court and said that he admired his younger brother and that his extended family would continue to offer moral support.

At her sentencing, Jennifer Huff said that the case was “the hardest and most humbling chapter of my life” and that she had been wracked by guilt and remorse for her actions.

“My descent into this situation didn’t begin with malice, it began with unhealed wounds, with emotional pain I didn’t know how to face,” Jennifer Huff said, reading from a written statement in court. “When someone offered me what felt like relief, I made a terrible choice. I sought escape in the form of numbness, and I didn’t understand how quickly and powerfully it would consume my life.”

Her attorney, Dennie Hardin, argued unsuccessfully for probation.