



# Wabash County Plan Commission

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## Wabash County Plan Commission – Meeting Minutes

Board Members: Randy Curless, Jeff Dawes, Sam Hann, Chris Hickman, Mark Milam, Doug Rice, Mike Ruse, Geoff Schortgen, Cheri Slee, Joe Vogel

Staff: Mark Frantz, Board Attorney; Brian Campbell, Plan Director; Jennifer Hicks, PC Secretary

**Thursday, October 2, 2025**

### **1. Call To Order**

The Wabash County Plan Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Randy Curless.

### **2. Roll Call**

Ms. Hicks, Plan Commission Secretary called roll:

- ✓ Randy Curless – *present*
- ✓ Jeff Dawes – *present*
- ✓ Sam Hann – *present*
- ✓ Chris Hickman – *present*
- ✓ Mark Milam – *absent*
- ✓ Doug Rice – *present*
- ✓ Mike Ruse – *present*
- ✓ Geoff Schortgen – *present*
- ✓ Cheri Slee – *present*
- ✓ Joe Vogel – *present*

### **3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes – August 7, 2025**

The minutes from the August 7, 2025 meeting were presented for approval.

Mr. Dawes made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Hann seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Randy Curless – *yes*
- ✓ Jeff Dawes – *yes*
- ✓ Sam Hann – *yes*
- ✓ Chris Hickman – *yes*
- ✓ Doug Rice – *abstain*
- ✓ Mike Ruse – *yes*
- ✓ Cheri Slee – *yes*
- ✓ Joe Vogel – *yes*

The motion carried.

### **4. Approval of the Meeting Minutes – September 4, 2025**

The minutes from the September 4, 2025 meeting were presented for approval.

Mr. Hann made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Ruse seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Randy Curless – *yes*

- ✓ Jeff Dawes – yes
- ✓ Sam Hann – yes
- ✓ Chris Hickman - yes
- ✓ Doug Rice - *abstain*
- ✓ Mike Ruse – yes
- ✓ Cheri Slee – yes
- ✓ Joe Vogel – yes

The motion carried.

## 5. Old Business

### **Unsafe Premise Order – 25 N. Perch Drive (Mary Chandler)**

No action was needed, pending further action, on hold until further notice. Mr. Campbell did note that the site has been cleaned and the contractor paid. Seeding is on hold due to weather. Plan Commission Office staff will coordinate with Mr. Shane for final seeding of the lot. No neighbor complaints have been received.

### **Ordinance Review with Banning Engineering**

Ms. Mary Strawder from Banning Engineering presented a findings summary and a two-phase approach on the zoning ordinance update that she proposes would focus on formatting and usability, authorized uses/land use matrix, development standards, reorganizing chapters 7, 11, 12, & 13 with tables and graphics, consistency with the comprehensive plan, and incorporate state statutes/case law updates. Banning would assist with the public hearings and County Commissioner approvals/adoption.

Mr. Campbell requested additional information and proposed contract prior to making any decision on the next step of the process. No vote was taken. Ms. Strawder will send a written proposal and plan for board consideration.

### **Unsafe Premise Order – 140 W Sims, Servia (Ezra & Loretta Gahl)**

No action was needed, pending further action, on hold until further notice. Mr. Campbell noted that he is waiting on Mr. & Mrs. Gahl to finish cleaning up the recycling and he has no concerns with compliance.

## 6. New Business

### **SE-25-009 – Addison Wiley, Lagro Township**

**Request:** *Special Exception to allow the construction of a pond exceeding 400 square feet in an A2 zoning district, with associated variance request for setbacks.*

The petitioner requested approval to construct a pond at 1666 N 600 E. The pond is located partially in a classified forest and wildland designated area; however, we have received communication from Ms. Amanda Smith approving the construction of the pond providing the portion within the Classified Program remains wildlife friendly. Additionally, Ms. Wiley requests variances from the property lines due to being less than the required 105 feet. The Drainage Board approved the pond at the September 15, 2025 meeting.

No remonstrators were present.

Mr. Hann made a motion for a Favorable Recommendation. Mr. Ruse seconded the motion. Ms. Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Randy Curless – yes
- ✓ Jeff Dawes – yes

- ✓ Sam Hann – yes
- ✓ Chris Hickman - yes
- ✓ Doug Rice - yes
- ✓ Mike Ruse – yes
- ✓ Cheri Slee – yes
- ✓ Joe Vogel – yes

The motion carried.

#### **SE-25-010 – Aaron & Lexus Frahm, Paw Paw Township**

**Request:** *Special Exception to allow the construction of a pond exceeding 400 square feet in an A1 zoning district.*

The petitioner requested approval to construct a pond at 532 W 500 N, Lot #13. Mr. Campbell provided a summary of the request. A portion of the proposed pond is within a flood zone (fringe, not floodway); however, Mr. Campbell confirmed with DNR that the construction of a pond within this area is allowed. Mr. Campbell notified the Plan Commission that the Drainage Board has not yet approved the pond as their meeting is not until Monday, October 6, 2025. No variances are required with the proposed location of the pond.

No remonstrators were present.

Mr. Hann made a motion for a Favorable Recommendation contingent on Drainage Board Approval. Mr. Dawes seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Randy Curless – yes
- ✓ Jeff Dawes – yes
- ✓ Sam Hann – yes
- ✓ Chris Hickman - yes
- ✓ Doug Rice - yes
- ✓ Mike Ruse – yes
- ✓ Cheri Slee – yes
- ✓ Joe Vogel – yes

The motion carried.

#### **2026 Meeting Calendar**

The 2026 meeting calendar was provided to all of the Plan Commission Members. It was proposed to move the January 1, 2026 meeting to January 8, 2026 due to a holiday. July and spring break dates will be monitored for a quorum; staff will send reminders and adjust if necessary. No action was needed.

#### **Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Ordinance**

Mr. Campbell introduced a draft of the BESS ordinance, modeled on other Indiana counties. Mr. Campbell stated BESS may support wind or solar and that water and energy demands and siting need to be considered. It is the goal to be able to complete and implement the ordinance without needing to do a moratorium.

### **7. Staff Reports**

#### **Monthly Report**

Mr. Campbell presented the monthly permit activity and financial reports.

#### **Complaints Update**

Mr. Campbell reported 47 total open complaints, including:

- 33 active confirmed complaints

- 12 in legal proceedings
- 2 unsafe premises
- 18 on monitoring status
- 59 complaints were rolled over
- 36 new complaints have been received in 2025
- 30 complaints have been closed

**8. Adjournment**

With no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Ruse moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by all members voting “aye.” The meeting adjourned at 7:52pm.

**Others Present:** Edgel Hicks, Addy Wiley, Lexus Frahm, Aaron Frahm