

# Wabash County Plan Commission

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## Wabash County Plan Commission Board – Meeting Minutes

Board Members: Randy Curless, Jeff Dawes, Sam Hann, 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, July 3, 2025

#### 1. Call To Order

Mr. Randy Curless, PC Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

#### 2. Roll Call

Jennifer Hicks, PC Secretary, called roll:

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

#### 3. Approval of Meeting Minutes – June 5, 2025

##### Motion:

Mr. Vogel made a motion to approve the minutes as written.

Mr. Hann seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The motion passed.

#### 4. Monthly Report

Mr. Campbell presented the monthly financial and permitting report for June.

No action was required; the report was presented for informational purposes only.

Mr. Campbell also presented a mid-year report with financial and permitting information from January – June 2025. Mr. Hann asked if there were enough funds left in the legal ads. Mr. Campbell answered that with the restructured fee schedule, we no longer use the funds out of that account to pay for the legal ads.

## 5. Old Business

Mr. Curless asked if anyone had an issue with changing the agenda to hear from Ms. Gahl regarding the Unsafe Premise Order 140 W Sims St, Servia. There were no objections to the agenda change.

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

Mr. Campbell provided a summary regarding a request for extension on the completion date for the Gahl property at 140 W Sims St, Servia. The Plan Commission granted an initial extension until July 1, 2025. Mr. Campbell provided pictures showing the changes to the property from the time of the initial unsafe premise order along with pictures showing progress through July 2, 2025.

Ms. Gahl stated they were needing to get another dumpster to continue to work on the cleaning the property, but the cost of the dumpster made it difficult. Mr. Rice asked how much longer Ms. Gahl felt they would need in order to get the property cleaned up. Ms. Gahl responded saying she felt they could have it done in 60 days.

Mr. Rice made a motion to grant an extension until September 3, 2025. Mr. Vogel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The motion passed.

### **Unsafe Premise Order – Miriam Linkenhoker, 57 E Geary St, Ijamsville**

Mr. Campbell provided a summary regarding the current status of the property at 57 E Geary St, Ijamsville, owned by Ms. Linkenhoker. Mr. Campbell pointed out the property is mostly cleaned up. Ms. Linkenhoker stated she didn't want to demolish the foundation, as she would like to eventually rebuild on the existing foundation. She also stated she feels as though the property is cleaned up to the satisfaction of the unsafe premise order. Mr. Campbell stated there are just a few items around the property.

Mr. Hann asked for clarification on whether or not there is a residential structure on the property. Mr. Campbell state the residential structure was demolished. Ms. Linkenhoker clarified that the barn that is on the property was originally a home years ago. Mr. Hann asked if Ms. Linkenhoker is living on the property. Ms. Linkenhoker stated she is not currently, but hopes to be able to return to the property.

Mr. Vogel stated he was pleased with the speed in which they cleaned up the property.

Mr. Vogel made a motion to close the complaint on the property at 57 E Geary St, Ijamsville. Mr. Hann seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

- ✓ Sam Hann - yes
- ✓ Doug Rice – yes
- ✓ Mike Ruse – yes
- ✓ Joe Vogel – yes

The motion passed.

#### **Unsafe Premise Order – Mary Chandler, 25 N Perch Dr, Twin Lakes**

Mr. Campbell provided the board with the 4 proposals that were received to clean up the property at 25 N Perch Dr in Twin Lakes. Mr. Campbell stated the PC Office sent out 9 requests for proposals and received back the 4 included in board packet.

Mr. Vogel asked if all utilities will be capped. Mr. Campbell stated he believed so as it was included in the documents sent to the contractors for demolition. Mr. Campbell explained the significant difference in proposal costs is partially due to Chuck Shane Excavating being located approximately one quarter mile from the property in question.

Mr. Rice asked if there was anything in the proposals different from what was requested to justify the additional cost. Mr. Campbell stated that everything listed appears to line up with what was on the request for quote.

Mr. Ruse made a motion to accept the bid from Chuck Shane Excavating in the amount of \$6,800. Mr. Vogel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The motion passed.

#### **Zoning Ordinance Update – Banning Engineering**

Mr. Campbell provided a summary of the recommendations from Mary with Banning Engineering regarding the ordinance review. Mr. Campbell asked for the board to give direction on approaching the ordinance change recommendations and where to start. Mr. Ruse noted that there is a lot of redundancy in the ordinance. Mr. Campbell confirmed there is a lot of redundancy in the ordinance and that has caused confusion and some errors. Mr. Campbell continued by saying that it would be preferred to do the entire ordinance at once rather than having to have multiple public hearings.

Mr. Campbell stated that the PC Office can work on a redline version of the ordinance and provide updates at the next meeting. Mr. Rice asked if the Plan Commission is bound by their recommendations. Mr. Campbell stated no they just are reviewing for areas that we should look at and prioritizing them.

## **6. New Business**

### **SE-25-006 – Heath Tackett – Request to operate an automobile detailing business in an R1 zoning district.**

**Address:** 150 W 200 N, Wabash, Noble Township

Mr. Campbell gave a summary of the request. Mr. Campbell continued by saying this started as a complaint regarding traffic and parking on the roadway. Mr. Tackett stated the business has been there for 7 years and only has 2-3 cars a day. He continued by saying that there is a parking lot for the customers to park in when people drop their vehicles off.

Mr. Ruse asked what the hours the business is open. Mr. Tackett responded with Monday – Friday 8am – 5pm. Mr. Ruse followed up by asking if cars stay overnight on the property. Mr. Tackett stated occasionally, but there is 2 acres there with a parking lot so they are off the roadway.

Mr. Hann asked if the zoning had changed with the 2023 ordinance. Ms. Hicks answered that the property has always been zoned residential.

Mr. Ruse made a motion for a favorable recommendation. Mr. Rice seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

The motion passed.

### **New Plan Commission Board Member**

Mr. Campbell provided the board with a list of names that have been recommended, but now needs the board's direction on which person to contact regarding the position. Discussions were had regarding the proposed members locations within the county, the general location of the current board members, and the location of the member being replaced. Mr. Hann stated his top recommendation would be Mr. Brian Bechtold and Mr. Chris Hickman has shown his passion for the county. Mr. Campbell stated that Mr. Hickman has always been respectful in every meeting he has attended. He continued by saying the final choice is the County Commissioner's. Mr. Campbell stated that he will check with the choices and get the names to the County Commissioner's for their next meeting.

### **2026 Budget**

Mr. Campbell provided a summary of the proposed 2026 budget and asked for the Plan Commission approval or change recommendations.

Mr. Rice made a motion to accept the proposed budget as written. Mr. Ruse seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

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

- ✓ Doug Rice – yes
- ✓ Mike Ruse – yes
- ✓ Joe Vogel – yes

The motion passed.

## **7. Other Business**

### **Complaints Update**

Mr. Campbell provided the complaints update

84 total complaints worked in 2025

49 unresolved complaints

33 active complaints

2 unsafe premise cases

14 with legal counsel

18 complaints resolved in 2025

59 complaints were rolled over from 2024

28 new complaints received in 2025

3 initial investigation

17 properties being monitored for compliance

### **Complaint Inquiry**

Mr. Campbell asked for the board's opinion on a complaint that was received regarding potentially unmaintained trees/weeds bordering a parcel outside of Urbana. Mr. Campbell stated he wasn't sure it was a complaint or that anything could be done, so he is seeking the direction of the Plan Commission. The property is within an agriculture zone. Discussion was had whether or not there was anything in the ordinance that would allow the PC Office to initiate a complaint. It was decided that unless there were noxious weeds or something along those lines nothing could be done. Mr. Campbell will contact the field's owner and see what the intent is.

### **Carbon Capture & Sequestration Committee**

Mr. Vogel asked if there were any updates on the Carbon Capture and Sequestration committee. Mr. Campbell stated that he would be getting with Mr. Curless regarding the committee. He also stated that he has begun working on a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) ordinance as well. Mr. Rice mentioned the new federal budget appeared to make changes to the 45Q tax credits, but there are no details yet on if the changes will affect the companies currently in process.

### **Fee Schedule**

Mr. Campbell brought up that in the fee schedule review and change for the special exception and variances, it was not considered what should be done with non-profits, churches, schools, etc. He asked the board how they would like those entities handled since in the past they have not been charged application fees, only the cost of the legal ads and mailers. Mr. Campbell recommended a discount on the fee, such as 50%, so that the mailers and legal ad costs are still covered. Mr. Hann asked if the petitioners needed to prove their non-profit status. Mr. Ruse asked if we could request their tax id. Mr. Frantz stated that it is easy to check an entity's IRS status.

Mr. Rice made a motion to charge non-profits/tax-exempt entities \$50 for variances and special exceptions. Mr. Dawes seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Randy Curless - yes

- ✓ Jeff Dawes – yes
- ✓ Sam Hann - yes
- ✓ Doug Rice – yes
- ✓ Mike Ruse – yes
- ✓ Joe Vogel – yes

The motion passed.

**8. Adjournment**

Mr. Vogel made a motion to adjourn.

Seconded by Mr. Ruse.

Meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

**Also Present:** Ezra Gahl, Loretta Sue Gahl, Steve Hicks, Heath Tackett

**(bac)**