

Wabash County Plan Commission

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Wabash County Plan Commission Board

Board Members: Randy Curless, Jeff Dawes, Sam Hann, Mark Milam, Doug Rice, Christian Rosen, Geoff Schortgen, Cheri Slee, Joe Vogel

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

Meeting Minutes of Thursday, August 1, 2024

Roll Call was taken with the following present:

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

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

Board Members Absent: Christian Rosen

Others Present: Suzanne Peebles, Roger Peebles, Steve Hicks, Cheryl Ross, Nicky Burnsworth, Letheda Metzger, Dan Metzger, Chris Hickman, Tami Hickman, Andrew Rossell

The Wabash County Plan Commission Board met on Thursday, August 1, 2024 in the Commissioners Meeting Room at the Wabash County Courthouse. The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Board Chairman Mr. Randy Curless.

First on the agenda was approving the minutes from the Tuesday, July 2, 2024 meeting. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Joe Vogel, second by Mr. Mark Milam. Roll call vote was taken, motion passed 7-0-1.

The next agenda item was Special Exception #5, Tree of Life Christian Academy, request to open a school in existing church building, Pleasant Township, tabled from the July 2, 2024 meeting. Mr. Brian Campbell stated that he had received a phone call from a representative from Tree of Life wishing to withdraw their application. No further action was required.

Planned Development, Eel River Enterprises, LLC/AR Engineering, Roann Dollar General was next on the agenda. Mr. Brian Campbell notified the Board that in the current Zoning Ordinance there is a chapter regarding Planned Development for anything that is new and considered commercial. Mr. Campbell continued that the ordinance is more geared toward larger commercial developments with a new subdivision, new streets, new utilities, etc. Mr. Campbell requested that the Plan Commission Board to forego the majority of the rules and regulations spelled out in the Planned Development ordinance. Per chapter 16.9.1, "if in approving a development plan, the Plan Commission finds it desirable that exceptions be made to this Zoning Ordinance, it may recommend those exceptions. The Commission shall set forth the reasons for its recommendations and the suggested limits to the exceptions." Mr.

Campbell continued by saying that as the Plan Commission Office, he is respectfully requesting the Board to approve the exception due to the commercial development being within the corporate town limits of Roann, the town of Roann Town Council has reviewed and approved the plans along with the utilities in a public hearing. The Plan Commission Office has received a letter from the President of Roann Town Council in support of the development and expressing their approval. Additionally, the development is smaller scale than what the Zoning Ordinance is geared towards. The development is only 1.6 acres, 1 single building, and a parking lot. The plans have been reviewed by the Plan Commission Board already during the rezoning hearing. The Wabash County Drainage Board will be reviewing the plans as well at their next meeting. The Plan Commission Office does not see a reason to delay the approval process for the Dollar General by adhering strictly to the Ordinance as outlined in Chapter 16. The Ordinance requires excessive procedural requirements for development projects and waiting periods in excess of 6 months for approval of small-scale projects. Mr. Campbell went on to say that some of the provisions in Chapter 16 are irrelevant to this development, such as, street standards, parking, sidewalks and lighting, all of which have been addressed by the Town of Roann or in documents that have already been submitted. The current property owners were unwilling to continue with the parcel split until the approvals for the development are complete. As the Plan Commission Director, Mr. Campbell requested waiving the requirements of Chapter 16, Planned Development, contingent on approval by the Wabash County Drainage Board. AR Engineering will still have to go before the Board of Zoning Appeals for the detention pond setbacks from the roadway. The Plan Commission office did also check with INDOT regarding the proposed location of the Dollar General sign. INDOT stated that due to the location not being on one of their control routes, they did not have an issue with the location. The sign is too close to the roadway per the Wabash County Zoning Ordinance; therefore, the developer will be required to file a variance for that as well. Mr. Doug Rice made a motion to approve the request by Mr. Campbell, Mark Milam seconded. The motion passed 8-0.

Reviewing the recommended changes to the Zoning Ordinance for Commercial Solar Energy Systems was next on the agenda. Due to having an interest in the solar project, Mr. Randy Curless abstained from this portion of the meeting. Board Co-Chair Mark Milam presided over the meeting at this time. Mr. Brian Campbell advised the board that the Solar Committee has reviewed the current solar ordinance since the Wabash County Commissioners approved a temporary moratorium, 2023-85-02. The Solar Committee made several recommendations for changes to the current ordinance in an interest to preserve and protect Ag1 zoned districts. All members of the Plan Commission Board received a copy of all recommended changes. Mr. Campbell went thru each item of the Solar portion of the ordinance that has a recommended change by the Solar Committee. (See attached insert for entire list of items) Per a request from Ms. Cheryl Ross, a member of the public, a copy of the recommended changes was also made available on the Area Planning portion of the Wabash County Government website after the meeting. Mr. Mark Milam asked what is the next step in the process. Mr. Mark Frantz stated that the Plan Commission could accept it as it is or move forward with recommending changes with a special hearing in a public meeting. Mr. Brian Campbell stated that there is a tentative date of September 12, 2024 for a special hearing with a backup date of September 10, 2024 at 808 Manchester Ave, Wabash. Mr. Mark Frantz will draft a legal ad notice for the public hearing. Mr. Doug Rice made a motion to hold a special meeting/public hearing to review the proposed changes. Mr. Sam Hann seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0-1. Mr. Mark Milam turned the meeting back over to Mr. Randy Curless.

The next agenda item was a review of the fee schedule pertaining to shipping containers. Mr. Brian Campbell requested adding shipping containers to the fee schedule at \$0.05 per square foot. This pricing puts shipping containers in line with utility sheds, carports, and other accessory structures. Mr. Brian Campbell stated that he had reviewed past minutes regarding the fee schedule and could not find any discussion regarding the fee for shipping containers. Mr. Jeff Dawes made a motion to approve shipping containers be added to the fee schedule at \$0.05 per square foot. Mr. Mark Milam seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

An update on county complaints was next on the agenda, Mr. Brian Campbell informed the Board that there are currently 55 open complaints, including those from 2023. 43 total complaints were rolled over from 2023 with 15 of them being closed this year. In 2024 we have received 52 new complaints, of which 25 have been closed. Therefore, we have worked 94 complaints in total so far this year with 40 having been resolved.

Mr. Brian Campbell informed the Plan Commission Board that Roann Town Marshal, Steve Hicks, has asked for assistance with a non-compliant subject in the Town of Roann. He has attempted to gain compliance from the individual with no success, so he is asking for the assistance of the Plan Commission office. Mr. Brian Campbell requested approval to turn the case over to Board Attorney, Mr. Mark Frantz. Mr. Brian Campbell let the board know that the Town of Roann has passed several ordinances to assist in taking complaints off of the Plan Commission. No motion was needed for this request.

Mr. Randy Curless asked if there was any other business, there being none brought up, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Jeff Dawes, second by Mr. Mark Milam. The meeting was adjourned at 7:38pm.

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