

WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION

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WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION **BOARD MEETING MINUTES** **OCTOBER 1, 2015**

**Wabash County Plan Commission Board
Wabash County Court House
Wabash IN 46992**

PC Board Members: Curtis Campbell, Randy Curless, Scott Givens, Doug Rice, Sue Ridenour, Lowell Rosen, David Schuler, Cheri Slee, Joe Vogel, Attorney Larry Thrush

Members present:, Randy Curless, Scott Givens, Doug Rice, Sue Ridenour, Lowell Rosen, David Schuler, Cheri Slee, Joe Vogel and Attorney Larry Thrush.

Mr. Givens opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Vogel motioned to approve the September 3, 2015 minutes as written.

Mr. Curless second.

Motion Carried.

First agenda item, Farm Bureau's Proposal. Scott Dawes presented documentation, mapping and a proposal for the ordinance draft. Mr. Dawes spoke on IDEM setbacks as they currently stand. Maps created by ISDA showing different setbacks in the county were presented. Mr. Givens asked if the setback points excluded farms that already have livestock. Mr. Dawes does not believe it does. The maps presented illustrated setbacks of 400 feet, 660 feet and 1320 feet from each address point. Each map listed total county acreage, total acreage available for CFO, percent of Agriculture Zoned land available and total Ag parcels available for each setback distance. Mr. Dawes provided copies of the ordinance draft Chapter 6, Section 6.25F with edits as proposed by Farm Bureau.

Mr. Dawes also addressed the fee schedule as proposed. No other business has the same level of permit fees as CFO structures.

Herb Ringel spoke about the use of grains for feed in the county and the economic advantages livestock can provide to grain farmers. 50% of corn goes to livestock production.

Bob Krouse explained the family operation started in the North Manchester area in 1875. They are now a 6th generation family operation. They have been in egg business now for almost 50

years, starting with 2000 layers and 12 employees. They currently have 5.5 million laying hens and employ 300 people.

The feed mill produces 500 million lbs. of feed a year. 60% of that feed is corn which translates to approximately 5 million bushels. At an average of 63 bushel per acre it takes approximately 80,000 acres to produce the corn.

They currently expect the demand to double over the next 5 years. For Midwest Poultry, growth in the future will need to be in a new location which will need to be approximately 80 to 120 acres.

Under the current setbacks there is a lack of available land at an affordable price.

Midwest Poultry has spent 75 million in the last 10 years in buildings in Wabash County.

Mr. Krouse supports the reduction of setbacks where appropriate.

Craig Langley First Farmers Bank and Trust representing the Ag industry explained that one of the best ways to bring the next generation back to the farm is through the livestock industry. There is just not land available at an affordable price for the younger generation to get a start in crop farming alone.

Packers are increasing capacity and new packing plants are on the horizon so the demand for buildings is increasing. The cost of fertilizer makes manure a valuable commodity and the demand for manure continues to increase throughout the crop industry.

Mr. Langley also spoke on the engineering that goes into a CFO structure and the durability of these structures.

Jeff Dawes born and raised Wabash County wants to provide opportunities for future generations including his own family to come back to the farm if they choose to do so. Current setbacks restrict available land to a point it is extremely difficult to find a location that is affordable to build a structure. The limiting factor is finding a place under current setbacks.

Mr. Curlless noted that a new packing plant is proposed to be constructed in southern Michigan.

Scott Dawes spoke about the demand for pork is increasing rapidly with expansion of existing plants and building of new packing plants. The new facility will process 16,000 head per day. This will require 320 new quad buildings and 20 sow units with 5000 head per unit. Of course not all of these would be located in Indiana, but there are opportunities there if the land to build is available.

The Broiler industry is also looking to expand which provides opportunities for the current generation to expand and provide opportunities for future generations

Mark York is a 1st generation farm in Wabash County. Mr. York came from the Peru area. His first confined feeding operation was built prior to the county CAFO Ordinance. Today he has concerns for future growth and expansion for his two sons because of the current setbacks. The revenue from a quad creates tax base revenue of approximately \$11000 per unit annually. Livestock operations provide employment opportunities. Mr. York wants policies that will provide opportunities for next generation.

Since the 2007 Ordinance went into effect there have been no major spills or violations in the county. Owner /operators want to be good neighbors.

Mr. York spoke on pit design and the mechanical distribution of waste which is required. Livestock expansion is a solution to help generate revenue and improve tax base in county. Science needs to be the major thought when considering setbacks.

Mr. Howard asked for clarification. The setback data from ISDA was created using the address point in the county? I believe so stated Mr. Dawes. Mr. Dawes would like for ISDA to create maps by township so a better view of what is and what is not available can be seen. This will be more specific and not quite so generalized.

Board members were presented a copy of the letter from the Wabash County Chamber of Commerce Director, Kim Pinkerton stating the Chambers position on setbacks for confined feeding operations. The letter asks the PC to consider reducing the setback to 660 feet.

Mr. Howard advised board members that West Plains Mining has requested to be moved to the November docket. They are working on agreements and would like to have them in place before appearing with S.E application.

Mr. Howard went over previous discussion and proposed changes to the draft ordinance which included: Drive ownership or easement, Road access to Subdivision, County road right of way policy, Group Home definition, Livestock definition and the addition of 6.10 D.

Board was updated on process of defining "Farm" or "Farmer". Working with FSA and ISDA to obtain a definition suitable for draft. Board may also consider stipulations as part of the process for determining Ag 1 residential permits.

Board members received a copy of the permit fee schedule for surrounding counties to make comparisons with the proposed fee schedule draft.

Board members continued discussion of the Farm Bureau proposal for changes to the ordinance draft. Members asked for additional information on a few issues to aid in discussion at next month's meeting.

Hearing no further business Mr. Givens called for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Vogel motioned to adjourn.

Mr. Rice second.

Meeting adjourned. 8:25 PM