

WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION

Wabash County Court House

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BZA MEETING MINUTES **AUGUST 22, 2017**

Wabash County Board of Zoning Appeals
Wabash County Court House
Wabash IN 46992

BZA MEMBERS: Dan Dale, Mark Milam, Dave Schuler, Joe Vogel, Jerry Younce, and Attorney Larry Thrush

PRESENT: Dan Dale, Mark Milam, Joe Vogel, Jerry Younce, Attorney Larry Thrush, Plan Director Mike Howard, Secretary Libby Cook, and Deb Conner

Board President, Joe Vogel called the meeting of the Wabash County Board of Zoning Appeals to order at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, August 22, 2017. Mr. Vogel asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2017 meeting. Mark Milam made the motion to approve the minutes as written, this was seconded by Dan Dale. The minutes were approved as written.

Mr. Vogel: The first item on our agenda tonight is Deb Conner. Mrs. Conner is requesting a Special Exception to operate an event center on their property in Lagro Township.

Mrs. Conner explained that she and her husband would like to open the event center in a historic barn on their property located at 2238 N 500 E, Urbana, Lagro Township. She then gave a power point presentation for the Board highlighting the following:

- ❖ History of the barn
- ❖ Types of events, weddings, receptions, reunions, corporate meetings, etc.
- ❖ Statistics on old barns and how quickly they are being destroyed
- ❖ Players in the Project:

Collin Craig, mentor, owner of Legacy Barn located west of Kokomo

Merlie Schwartz, owner of Schwartz Construction

Dann Keiser, Architect (currently working on the restoration of the old Wabash Co. Jail and with the Lagro Canal Foundation)

Troy Eads, excavating

Sheryl Holley, Wetzel Insurance, insurance plans are in place pending BZA Approval

Toni Benysh, Event Planner handling scheduling
Matt Mize, Attorney and CPA, setting up the LLC

- ❖ Parameters of the Rustic Barn at Hopewell,
 - Capacity, planning for maximum capacity of 300 people
 - Parking plans, working with Troy Eads and Dann Keiser on parking layout and estimating for the number of vehicles.
 - Entrance and Exit to the barn, would be kept to one drive in and out of the barn area.
 - Checking into expanding property lines, working with Bunnell Surveying on ways to expand. The property surrounding the Conner's property is owned by an investment company, if the property can be purchased the Conner's property could increase from 3.9 acres to approximately 8 acres.
 - Alcohol, the person holding the event will have to hire a licensed bartender.
 - No hard liquor permitted to be served.
 - Guests may not bring in their own alcohol.
 - One hard and fast rule will be last call would be at 9:15 pm with the bar closing at 9:30 pm.
 - Food, all food will be catered in at this time.
 - Insurance, all clients will purchase single event insurance for their event, which covers general liability for bodily injury. I will have insurance as well, hazard insurance on the barn, liability insurance, as well as workmans comp insurance for my employee/s
- ❖ Building analysis/master plan
- ❖ Building and Fire Codes, checking to be sure we can meet all codes.
- ❖ Preservation and Renovation plans.
- ❖ Seasons and days of operation:
 - Months: April through October, estimated times will be
 - Days and Times: Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
 - Friday and Saturday 9:00 am – 11:00 pm
 - Sunday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm
- ❖ Smoking, none allowed at the barn.
- ❖ Staff member will be present at each event to supervise.
- ❖ Working on renting restrooms (high end portable trailers), clients will be responsible for reservations of these trailers. In the future we would like to add a septic system for the facility.

In conclusion, Mrs. Conner explained that this barn has been in her family for many years, we are trying to preserve the natural beauty of the old barn. Hopefully the event center would be a benefit to other local businesses within Wabash County and will be a draw to local and out of town guests. Pending Board approval the Conner's would like to begin working on the center this fall.

Mark Milam: Would there be any signs along the road or would that be at the barn?

Mrs. Conner: We are planning to put a sign on the silo.

Mr. Milam: Is there a state code on lighting in the parking area?

Mrs. Conner: I am working on security lights.

Mr. Vogel commended Mrs. Conner, this is one of the best presentations we have ever had.

Mr. Howard: We would like to keep it to one point of entrance/exit to the facility, also to be sure that cars are not parking along the roadway, only parking would be on the property.

Mrs. Conner: There will be one entrance/exit.

Jerry Younce: Does the driveway go straight into the barn?

Mrs. Conner: There is an existing driveway, we will be working with Troy Eads Excavating on the driveway.

Dan Dale: Is there an open field across the road?

Mrs. Conner: Yes, our nearest neighbor is between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from our home.

Mr. Vogel, if there are no further questions we will proceed to vote.

Attorney, Larry Thrush, tallied the votes.

Mr. Vogel: The Special Exception request is approved.

Mr. Vogel: The next item on the agenda is the discussion of mowing liens.

Mr. Howard: For the Board to be aware of: the Commissioners Ordinance states that we can enforce mowing platted areas in the county. There have been several properties that the owners don't keep mowed. This has required multiple letters mailed and visits to the properties to follow-up. Starting in 2018 I would like change the current practice and send one letter to the owner in violation. If they fail to comply or remain compliant then we have someone contracted to mow the properties. A mowing lien would then be put on the property, the lien would then be added to the property taxes. I was thinking Indiana Code states that this is the responsibility of the local Township Trustees or can the Plan Commission enforce this? I would like to sit down with some of the local mowing companies and discuss how they would quote mowing these properties. Mr. Thrush can we do this as a Plan Commission and put the lien on the property taxes?

Mr. Thrush: Does our Ordinance direct us to do this?

Mike: I don't think it is in our Ordinance, I think it is only in the Commissioners Ordinance that we are to be the administrator and enforcement authority of the ordinance.

Mr. Thrush: If the commissioner's ordinance appoints the plan commission as the enforcement authority, then the plan commission can act on the violations.

Mr. Vogel: I believe Kosciusko County just adopted a mowing ordinance. First offense cost of mowing for an unkept property would be \$100.00 for the first hour and \$1.00 per minute after that. A property that takes 1 ½ hours would cost \$130.00 to be mowed.

Mr. Dale: Are you talking residences or pasture lots?

Mr. Howard: I am talking about platted areas and subdivisions primarily.

Mr. Vogel: The Board would give you our support to work on this project.

Mr. Vogel: Next on the agenda is solar farm discussion.

Mr. Howard: I just want the Board to be aware that in Decatur County IN the Planning Director has been contacted by a company wanting to put in a 600 acre solar farm. I have shared with them what the Wabash County Ordinance includes on Solar Panels and recommended that they get in touch with Chad Martin from Purdue University.

Mr. Dale shared with the Board that a couple of years ago he was contacted by a Solar Farm Company regarding putting a solar farm on his ground. This company said that their goal is to have a solar field by every substation in Indiana. The company leases the ground and at the end of 30 years they remove the equipment and the ground can be returned to farming.

Mr. Vogel: Next on the agenda is complaint review updates.

Mr. Howard: I will be working with our attorney, Larry Thrush, on four unsafe premises in the Urbana area.

Mr. Vogel: If there is no further business I would ask for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Younce made the motion to adjourn, this was seconded by Mr. Milam. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Libby Cook
Secretary, Wabash Co. Board of Zoning Appeals