

# *WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION*

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## **WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION** **BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**MAY 5, 2022**

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

Board Members: Randy Curless, Jeff Dawes, Patty Godfroy, Sam Hann, Mark Milam, Doug Rice, Christian Rosen, Geoff Schortgen, Cheri Slee, Joe Vogel  
Attorney Larry Thrush, Plan Director Mike Howard, Secretary Libby Cook

Present: Randy Curless, Jeff Dawes, Patty Godfroy, Mark Milam, Christian Rosen, Cheri Slee, Joe Vogel, Larry Thrush, Mike Howard, Libby Cook, Chelsea Boulrisse, Patty Grant, Jim Smith, Julie Garber, Keith Gillenwater, Bob Schultz

The Wabash County Plan Commission Board met on Thursday, May 5, 2022. Board Chairman, Randy Curless called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Mr. Curless asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the April 14, 2022 meeting, Mr. Curless asked for a motion on the minutes. Mr. Vogel made the motion to approve the minutes, this was seconded by Mr. Dawes. The minutes will stand approved as written.

Mr. Howard informed the Board that the Plan Commission Rules of Procedure require that when a member misses 3 consecutive meetings the Board would need to reaffirm that appointment. At this time member, Doug Rice would need to be reaffirmed as he missed 3 meetings due to the loss of his mother and the Board held two meetings in the month of April. Mr. Rosen made the motion to reaffirm Mr. Rice, this was seconded by Mr. Vogel, the motion carried.

Mr. Curless then introduced Mr. Mark Milam as the new Board member, Mark has agreed at minimum fill the vacancy and complete the term of Susi Stephan the term ends on May 1, 2024.

Mr. Curless: Next on the agenda is discussion of the Imagine One 85 plan. Patty Grant and Julie Garber from the Community Foundation along with Keith Gillenwater and Chelsea Boulrisse from Grow Wabash County are present to address any questions or

concerns from the Board members. Mrs. Grant thanked the Board members for their service to the county, their leadership and thoughtful approach to things. We were here two weeks ago to discuss our intentions and to try to clear up any misunderstanding about what the plan is. At that time, I reiterated that we are hopeful that this will become the official countywide comprehensive plan for Wabash County aimed at reversing our population decline. Tonight, we are here to answer concerns or questions, we are prepared to make changes if necessary and to accommodate your changes or concerns. Mr. Gillenwater addressed the time and labor that have gone into the plan, each of the cities and towns and the 3 Plan Commissions and the volunteers that came to the meetings over the course of two years to get us to this point, we are excited to present it to you. We have gotten some written feedback. We are here if you have any questions or concerns that we can address, any changes or omissions that we may have missed somewhere along the line so far. We met with the Wabash City PCB on Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup> and the N. Manchester PCB on Monday May 2<sup>nd</sup>, the plan was approved by unanimously by both, hopefully we can get a joint meeting of the Plan Commissions and do the adoption. Mr. Howard told Board members that Appendix A is the endorsement part of the plan you would be signing or looking at, that is not provided to us at this point. Appendices B & C is mostly the data collection, I have a printed copy if anyone wants to reference that. Mr. Dawes said the question he keeps hearing is confusion on zoning issues, the separation of what the comprehensive plan means and the zoning duties of the three districts. Has this come up in your meetings with Wabash and N. Manchester, I have explained to people contacting me but I still think there is some confusion in the public Mr. Gillenwater said this comprehensive plan is not intended to replace any zoning ordinances, your zoning ordinance will still apply. The biggest section of the comp plan that even starts to touch on that is the land use section on page 65 that says here is what current land use is and here is where we see things going. What we tried to do was work with the cities and towns for the most part around their boundaries, where they saw their communities growing, what we are seeing where existing industry is going. One area that Mr. Howard had pointed out to me is 1100 North and State Road 13, just south of N. Manchester's boundaries is currently zoned Industrial and in the draft of the new ordinance it has that ground is zoned as AG. We and the town of N. Manchester would like to see that area kept as Industrial zoned. Nothing that we can't have that conversation and fix. We are not attempting to replace any kind of zoning. Typically, a comp plan is done before you do zoning and you use that to form how you are doing things. All of the cities and towns have zoning ordinances in place now and the county as well, this is not intending to replace it. It is an attempt on our part and the community's part, we have this challenge that we are facing as a community, a whole generation of population decline over 40 years. How do we want to see the communities to grow and to get everybody on the same page and thinking in the same direction, how we are going to go into the future? Mrs. Grant stated that the comprehensive plan is not legislation, not regulations, is it certainly is not an ordinance, someone could say is it enforceable, no. It is a guideline a list of strategic options that both, a technical analysis through the appendices, a technical analysis married with community members ideas that get put into 85 recommendations for growth.

Mr. Dawes stated that things will change as time goes on, it is not anything that is set in stone that can't be changed at some point. Mr. Gillenwater said that is right. Despite everyone's best efforts, we brought in the Mayor and yourself, all of our elected officials and that kind of thing, inevitably, we are going to get three years down the road and there is going to be something that comes up that is not in this plan. We know five years down the road something is going to come up that isn't in this plan, then we are going to say we haven't made progress on this and then we are going to say it isn't relevant any longer. I think that is just the nature of how things go. Mr. Dawes asked if down the road something needs to be added or changed, say it was a major change, how would that be handled, would that go back to the three Planning Commissions to ok that? Mr. Gillenwater said you are going to have things in your zoning ordinance that are probably different than the comprehensive plan, ultimately you guys have the say on that, I would also say that if you were going to make a substantive change to the comp plan there is nothing that says you can't adopt a new comp plan and make whatever those changes are. The goal would be, we went through this whole process to try to get everybody on the same page, getting to all of the communities and the county and see how we can make the county grow together. If you were wanting to make a substantive change I would think we would want to go back to the city and the town of N. Manchester for that, if we are all still operating from the same play book we should consider that.

Mr. Thrush said the commissions would have to agree to it. Interplay between the comprehensive plan and the zoning ordinance, the only thing I would be concerned about is if you turn down a subdivision for example and they took it to court and the aggrieved party said that you acted conversely to the master plan, this comprehensive plan, that could happen with the one we have now, but it could be used by a party taking you to court that could say you acted improperly because you didn't follow the plan. Mr. Gillenwater said I guess that would be where I would ask, where you guys looked through it over the last couple of months that you have read through it is there anything that stands out that is absolutely in opposition to where you are at? Mrs. Grant stated that a comprehensive plan isn't enforceable, it is to be a guideline, the expression that anybody can sue anybody for anything, that they would point to anything that isn't law. This felt to us to be so high level, 55,000 feet to be a guideline, it would be unfortunate that someone would point to the ideas that are in here to, I am curious to it being enforceable, to having standing in something that isn't regulation or legislation. Mr. Thrush replied that any time you get involved in litigation you use whatever you've got and that is something that would be available to argue to the judge that you acted arbitrarily and capriciously which is the standard, because you didn't follow the plan, I am not saying that it couldn't happen with the plan we have now. Mr. Howard said that what you are saying that the comprehensive plan is not enforceable, technically I understand that, but at the same time we do enforce the comprehensive plan through the zoning ordinance. I would not disagree with you that technically as a stand-alone by itself it is not enforceable, but we do use it with our zoning ordinance. If we use the zoning ordinance and enforce the comprehensive plan then that would be the issue as I understand it. It could happen with any of the comprehensive plans in the county.

Mr. Gillenwater asked Mr. Howard, in your review have you found anything that stands out starkly in opposition. Mr. Howard said nothing that stood out starkly, I think there are a lot of good things in here. Mr. Howard, on page 70, GP 4.1, Expand Agritourism, what liability does that open a farmer up to. Mr. Gillenwater said we have an ag heritage here in the county that we are trying to acknowledge in the plan, this is geared toward things like the Hawkins Family Farm or something like the Fair Oaks farm, it would have to be a willing entity, there has to be that family that is open to welcoming people onto their farm. Mr. Dawes noted that the new MPS facility could fall into that category.

Mr. Howard, on page 75, PR 2.4, develop a robust business and industry retention program, this is marked as a priority, meaning we need to get on that. We are hearing of businesses and industries that are for sale or looking to move to another county, how are situations like this addressed? Mr. Gillenwater said at this time he could not speak to the one company relocating. Mr. Gillenwater said he would agree on that, BRE (Business, Retention and Expansion), there is a study done from 1987 that shows the statistics that economic developers use is that 8% of the new jobs in a community come from existing industry, I went back and looked at the projects that I have worked since I have been here since 2015 and it is about 66% of the new job commitments that come in that we have been a part of have been from existing businesses. A robust business and industry retention program is absolutely critical for our efforts, you support the people you have here. What we are trying to do is keep the businesses we have here, keep them growing and expand and be supportive of them.

Mr. Howard brought to attention that the Parkview Hospital addressing issues, they have their own mapping system which does not match our system and there have been issues with 911 services. They are using road names instead of the county road numbers. The guests present said they were not aware of this and would check into it. Mr. Howard informed them that the county E911 system uses the WTH Think Map program.

Mr. Rice asked if the existing Plan Commission Boards as they exist today, they will stay and operate as is, and the comprehensive plan brings a commonality, almost like an umbrella over the county to bring them all together to operate as one, is that what you are asking to happen? Mrs. Grant said I would say common aim, common focus, I wouldn't say operating as one. Mr. Rice said common guidance.

Mr. Gillenwater said one of the city's key changes is the GDZ (General Tire) property is zoned Industrial for a long time, that is not what we are looking at now, we are looking at doing other things with it that aren't industrial, mixed use is what the city has been looking at for that site. The future land use map reflects a change there will be a change in the zoning.

Mr. Thrush asked if there are any discussion about converting the three Plan Commissions into an Area Plan Commission Board. Mr. Gillenwater said they have not had that conversation; we have not tried to weigh in on that discussion.

Mrs. Grant stated that the Community Foundation has received grant applications from communities that wanted a \$50,000.00 grant to do their own comprehensive plan. We think that this is a more efficient way, comprehensive plans are expensive, they take a lot of time and if we can all do one together as opposed to everyone doing their own comprehensive plan. Our goal is to row in the same direction, the same focus.

Mr. Gillenwater noted there were two representatives from each town, the county was represented by Barry Eppley, Kyle Bowman, and Mrs. Garber added from each of the Plan Commissions, Jeff Dawes was on the committee. Everybody brought their own things to the table, such as Roann wants a city park, N. Manchester wants riverfront development.

Mr. Milam asked for clarification, it says that Wabash County must increase the tax base to grow its revenues, and it lists a few "the county could" items, a Wheel Tax and a County Food and Beverage Tax, who denotes where that money goes, what it is used for, and how it is used? Mr. Gillenwater explained it would be up to each of the different taxing entities to ultimately adopt that. , if it's a food and beverage tax usually that is a countywide thing.

Mr. Gillenwater said that on a municipal wheel tax option, I believe that you have to have over a certain population. Mr. Milam asked how many counties in IN have these taxes, Mr. Gillenwater said 58 counties. Part of this plan was we wanted to do a fiscal analysis of each of the communities, each of the entities. What we didn't want to do is hand everybody a list of 85 recommendations that have some sort of cost associated with them and not say here is a way you could pay for it, here are options, we are not saying you have to do a wheel tax or a food and beverage tax, what we are saying is here is a list of 85 recommendations and ways you could pay for them. Municipal tax - part of the plan was fiscal analysis. We are not saying you have to enact these taxes, they are only options, the only way to increase funds is to grow the tax base. Mrs. Garber said the chief aim of this plan is to grow the population which raises the tax base. Mr. Dawes said that the County Commissioners and the County Council don't want to add taxes at this time, Wabash County Local Option Income Tax is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in the state, we just took away a few of your property tax relief credits to help fund the new jail project, I don't see either one of those bodies having an appetite to add a new tax at this point in time. Mr. Gillenwater said we understand that, we were just trying to show, here are 85 recommendations and here are the options that you legally have available to you what you choose to do with them is up to each of the entities. Mr. Dawes said that he is excited about some of the projects that are coming to increase the tax base, I think they will be very beneficial to the county.

Mr. Howard, looking at page 83, CO 2.5 Create countywide blight abatement guidelines. One thing that would truly help the county on tax sales having to allow the property sit for a year before you can touch it, that is a killer, those houses get destroyed, they get ransacked. That is something I would like to see pushed on a state level to change those. Mr. Gillenwater said he would never argue that. Mrs. Grant asked what was the thinking behind that? Mrs. Garber said that gives the owner 1 year to come back and pay the taxes.

Mrs. Grant said related to revenue, there are no expectations that the county would pay for all of these. If you go to the section called the Implementations, people have said "I've done comp plans before and they just sit on a shelf, in the Implementation section there are partners that might choose to help fund some of these so that there won't be a need for us to come back to the Commissioners and Council and say here we go, how are we going to get this done? There isn't that expectation.

Mr. Howard asked relating to CO 3.5 on page 84, Create a model employment-residence policy. Are you seeing people continuing to work from home and do you see that being an issue going forward? Ms. Boulrisse said she thinks it is an opportunity personally. We have had quite a few people come in simply because they lived in cities and they had to go to an office everyday but now that they are able to have that quality of life and those amenities that Wabash has while also keeping their jobs, for us it has been more of an opportunity more than an issue, to show them that essentially they can have it all here in Wabash County. Mr. Gillenwater said that we have a couple of companies in town, we are trying to encourage as many employers here to have their people buy homes here, they pay property taxes, and they pay income tax and obviously the benefit to the schools of a new family moving in. We have some large employers that have these policies. Mrs. Grant said that in the St. Joe, Benton Harbor areas they have a program to attract younger people to move the city and work there, whether their office is in Detroit, or Chicago, or Lansing. They put together packages of things like a YMCA membership, banking services, etc., to move here and work from wherever. They don't really care if they work there, they just want them living here because we gain more from you living here. Mr. Rice noted a concern that especially came to light during the pandemic is in the rural area's adequate internet service. Mr. Gillenwater said they are trying to address that.

Mr. Howard noted that on page 70, 5.1, it reads that the Salamonie Reservoir is located in the western part of the county, this should read the eastern.

Mr. Milam asked Mr. Howard if he was involved in how the zoning changes in the new plan were created. Mr. Howard said no, I have no objections to anything on the Wabash, LaFontaine, Lagro and Roann maps, there were no changes made to those. The N. Manchester future land use map is pretty much a mirrored copy of what our zoning map is now, took it out of Ag zoning and put it in Industrial zoning, this is showing pretty much a mirrored copy of our current map. Mr. Milam noted that the future maps are pretty much mirrored to what we have set, just the N. Manchester. Mr. Howard said just in N. Manchester, it is different than what our proposed map would be, everything else is pretty much the same. Mr. Gillenwater noted that the swath along St. Rd. 13 south and east from 1100 N, the future land use mirrors what the current land use is now, we like it for industrial use potentially and so does the town of N. Manchester. Mr. Gillenwater said that he didn't realize that the proposed ordinance would change it from Industrial to Agriculture, the current use of it now is farming. Mr. Howard said in the new county zoning ordinance there will be Ag 1 and Ag 2 zones, we worked on this going through a program. Ag 2 ground allows for more residential and business structures. Ag 1 ground

would strictly be for agricultural related use, we do realize that there may be parts of the land in Ag 1 that would be usable for those things permitted in Ag 2 land, we have a program that we can work through to determine those parcels.

Mr. Gillenwater said they are open to discussion; we are only talking about 3 parcels out of the area. Adam Penrod liked the current zoning because of the potential for future growth once the business park fills out. I assume your zoning starts at 1100 N and goes south. I think that would be a discussion between you guys and the town to figure out how the town is planning to grow and what makes sense there.

Mr. Milam asked, this is an aggressive focus for growth in Wabash County, Mr. Gillenwater said we have been losing population for 40 years, we should probably be aggressive about trying to arrest and reverse that. Mr. Milam asked if it can be adjusted and changed at any time throughout the course of the future? Mr. Gillenwater said any plan you adopt is subject to any process that you go through to change. Mr. Milam asked to adjust for any situation or change would require all of those town Boards and the county Boards to make that change in unison. Mr. Gillenwater said if you all want to stay on the same plan, if you adopt this plan and want to make a change to it next year, there is nothing to stop you from making a change to it, if every entity wanted to stay on the same plan if you made a change to it then you would probably go back out to the city and the towns and say we've been going this way and we have taken a turn we and you want to stay on this plan you would you want to adopt this new plan?

Mrs. Grant said it doesn't prohibit you from doing something that isn't here. A new idea, a new project, there is nothing here that would prohibit you from having an 86<sup>th</sup> recommendation that would address population loss or whatever you would want to address. I think what you are suggesting is if there is one of these recommendations that you would grow uncomfortable with there is nothing to prohibit that sounds to me like something you would have to take out and something you would have to discuss with others. The Plan Commission members in Manchester asked if a new idea came up, if there was something else that they wanted to pursue could they do that, and the answer is yes. Mr. Gillenwater brought up an example a property recently came up along the riverfront with a willing seller, my organization was in a position and was able to acquire that land and turned around and donated it to the city, we struck while the iron was hot, it will get cleaned up, the buildings will be taken down, there is an environmental remediation that the city will have to go through. This doesn't stop them from doing that because it is a traditional neighborhood our hope is to put a park in there and eventually build some condos or something.

Mr. Milam noted that coming up with the money to do these things is a struggle. Mr. Gillenwater said the city basically made changes to their comp plan in 1995 which was some minor tweaks from the 1975 plan and so on, but there was never a major overhaul. What they called for how things should be zoned for in the 1970 plan for is not what we want today, like the General Tire plant. I would say we are looking toward the future with the 85 recommendations.

Mr. Rice asked, just looking at this Board and our current plan as we operate month to month with our current zoning plan, if we come up with opportunities to enhance our plan as long as it doesn't contradict what we are trying to do with Imagine 85 to grow the population there are no issues or restrictions, we can continue to do business as usual? Mrs. Grant said that's right. Mr. Gillenwater said you are within your rights to make changes to the plan any time you want to.

Mr. Rosen asked if we agree on this tonight are we opening ourselves up to more problems if we make a decision and it goes to court? Mr. Thrush said that he was just trying to address that there is some interaction between the comprehensive plan and the zoning ordinance, they are not completely divorced, and that could happen with our current plan, I don't know that it would increase the vulnerability.

Mr. Dawes noted that there are a lot of acres of ground available within city zoning that could be developed. Mr. Curless said within the 2 mile buffer zone for the city that is within their jurisdiction. Mr. Gillenwater said on page 20, there have been little physical growth and development between 2000 and 2019 fewer than 600 acres transitioned from agriculture or undeveloped to developed, about 30 acres a year or about 8 blocks in downtown Wabash. Compared to other areas in the region it remains small, it represents two tenths of the total land mass in Wabash County. 82% of the total land mass in the county is agriculture.

In discussing existing and future land use 1100 N, we are cognizant of the idea that agriculture is a core driver in the community and to not try to transition lots of land, really the land that we looked at was where growth and industry are already at, not to go out to find a new spot. Smart growth is important too, not just because of the character of our land and our industry base, but it makes sense to stay where the infrastructure is at. Mr. Howard said one place that comes to mind is Riverwood Estates, there were so many potential building sites, but because they didn't have infrastructure out there they ended up with several 5 or 10 acre parcels that could have been 1 1/2 acre parcels. Septic was the issues. A lot of development was lost out there, these are things to learn from.

Mr. Howard was asked by a Board member who would be involved in doing these things, on page 92 it says appoint a director and that person would probably have a committee? Mr. Gillenwater said we are very cognizant that there are 85 recommendations, that is a lot of work. So, we get this plan and what we are trying to avoid is a year from now everybody coming in saying what happened to that plan that you were super excited about and spent a lot of money on, what happened to it? Our intention all along has been let's get to this point, and we talked to the steering committee, the other organizations, now it is time to put our money where our mouth is. This plan can't succeed 1<sup>st</sup> thing a year from now, what happened to that. Each of the towns, Grow Wabash County, the Community Foundation have budgeted for this, we will ask cities and towns to buy into the plan and hire a director and move forward with this plan. Mr. Milam asked if each Board or Council will have to pay into this plan.



Mrs. Grant said that every town and city did contribute to getting this done and again we have representatives from each group. On the implementation plan, pages 94 – 97, there is this list of parties interested in developing these, so we need somebody to call Manchester University and say, there is this initiative to create a better connection between Manchester University students and the town, to have them stay if you potential partners

Mrs. Grant: no go to steering committee and there is a budget to support the individual. Mr. Gillenwater, hopefully get the 3 Plan Commissions to adopt this then go to the cities and towns.

Mr. Smith, President of the N. Manchester Town Council and former Wabash County Council member read a statement he prepared in support of the Imagine One 85 plan.

Mr. Schultz asked Mr. Gillenwater, if this plan is approved by this Board tonight and you have all three Boards on board, what is your next step, is there a flow chart as far as authority? You are talking about a steering committee, does that give you the power to have a steering committee that is over everybody else? Mr. Gillenwater said each of the three Plan Commission still have the authority that they currently have. If this Plan Commission or the N. Manchester commission approved this plan this week and then in two weeks they wanted to remove page 38 of this plan because we don't like something that is on there, there is nothing that stops you guys from repassing a new plan omitting any of those things. Mr. Schultz said I see that you guys are already doing a lot of this and a lot of good things are happening, there has been some concern in the community that this is an authority grab. Mr. Gillenwater said this is not an authority grab, ultimately our steering committee was volunteers that came together from every community and said we want everybody operating on the same play book. There is no authority to our steering committee at all. Mrs. Garber added that the steering committee ends when the plan is adopted.

Mr. Rice said he felt there was some confusion at the March meeting, is there talk of one Plan Commission for the county? Mr. Gillenwater explained that there has been no mention of a joint Plan Commission, just a joint meeting of the three Plan Commission Boards, and the 5 local governments, if we are trying to get everybody to adopt the plan. We would like to hold a joint meeting to address concerns and do a public hearing and to vote to adopt or not. Mr. Curless asked Mr. Gillenwater, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Garber what they would like from this Board tonight. Mr. Gillenwater said there has to be a public hearing to adopt the plan. Mr. Howard asked, since the incorporated towns operate under our jurisdiction shouldn't the plan have been approved by them before it came to our Board? Mrs. Grant said that on January 25<sup>th</sup> we called all of the steering committee members together and they approved the plans to be forwarded to the Plan Commissions. Mr. Gillenwater said what he would want is are there things in this document that would make you not want to approve it when we go to a joint public hearing to have all three Plan Commission Boards adopt it? Mrs. Garber asked if the Board would give a recommendation to approve the plan. Mrs. Grant said that as she

understands it as a public hearing, that ends and each of you would open your meetings and vote to adopt it and that means to recommend it to your legislative bodies and close your meetings, each of the Plan Commissions are opening and closing their meetings at the same time after a public hearing and after the public hearing it is permitted to make comments regarding the plan. I think what Keith is saying is there anything that would stop you from moving to the public hearing and then opening and closing a meeting to adopt the plan? Mr. Curless asked the Board if they would be comfortable with giving a recommendation, are we leaning toward adoption?

Mr. Rice asked, you are not asking for any funding for the director from the County Boards? Mr. Gillenwater said the Plan Commission, no. Mr. Gillenwater and Mrs. Grant said no, typically when we start something we start with the Commissioners to see if this is something they would want to spend money on then they could do that. Mr. Milam said I don't know if this is something we can vote on without knowing where the money is coming from. Mrs. Grant said we are not asking for money. Mr. Gillenwater said ultimately we will get to that to allocate money towards that, the towns if they choose not to then they choose not to but we still believe in it, other organizations have committed to it.

Mrs. Slee, you appoint this director or is this someone who would be picked by the Plan Commissions? Mr. Gillenwater said we envision hiring a person to get up and live and breathe the plan every day. Mrs. Slee asked if you will appoint that person? Mrs. Grant said I don't think that would be just Keith and I, I think that would be representatives from the towns and the steering committee which is exactly how we hired the consultant to write this plan everyone on the steering committee had input. Mrs. Slee asked if this person would answer to the Plan Commission Boards? Mrs. Grant said she would see them answering to the steering committee but coordinating and working with you. Mr. Gillenwater said they would have to work alongside Mike, Jim Straws and David McVicker, because they don't have the authority you do, right? Mrs. Slee asked, so the steering committee stays in place? Mr. Gillenwater said I would anticipate the steering committee potentially coordinating hiring the director with all the cities and towns to come in. I anticipate they would still want to see us to report back to them periodically to make sure that their investment is still solvent and that their plan is actually moving forward. Mr. Curless asked if there is anything that Board members see that would keep you from approving this, anything you would say you can't live with that.

Mr. Vogel said in the county we have tried to keep agriculture strong. Up on St. Rd. 15 we permitted a subdivision, Cherry Springs, it is in a wooded area, not prime farm ground. Every time you put in a sub division you potentially restrict some agriculture as far a confinement feeding operation, they have to stay away from those. I have no problem, you folks have done a great job. Speaking for myself, I am from N. Manchester and along the railroad south to 1050 N, I don't think we want to see you all the way up and down St. Rd. 13 on big tracts of land, and put something in there and take out big tracts of prime farm land the best in the county, Ag 1. We really need to preserve our good farm ground, do you agree Mrs. Grant, she replied yes, you bet. We need to protect

the farmers so that they can raise livestock and not have people encroach around them and threaten your business. Mr. Gillenwater said we don't disagree and we have tried to be intentional on this plan to talk about the importance of agriculture. We look at future land use, we tried to keep to around existing infrastructure.

Mr. Curless asked if there is no action tonight? Mr. Howard asked if the Board members have any objections to it, they need to speak now. Mr. Curless asked the Board if anyone is leaning towards not approving the plan. I feel confident that the Board is leaning toward approval. Mrs. Grant thanked Mr. Howard for the detail and effort he has put into it. We really appreciate that you took our work seriously.

Mr. Curless asked if there was a date for the joint meeting of the Boards, Mr. Gillenwater said not yet but that they would be in touch with Mr. Thrush, Mr. Lehman, Mr. Howard, Mr. McVicker, Mr. Penrod, and work out a date.

Mr. Howard gave the following updates:

- Continuing to work with Mr. Downs on the County Ordinance draft, nothing new to report.
- The Robert Kowalczyk property in the town of Lagro, Mr. Kowalczyk notified Mr. Howard that there is a pending sale of the property. A motion to file an Unsafe Premise Order on the property was made by Mr. Vogel, seconded by Mr. Rice, the motion carried.
- Court hearing on Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup> on the Matthew Miller property at Sandy Beach.

There being no further business Mr. Curless asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Rosen made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Vogel. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Libby Cook

Secretary, Wabash County Plan Commission Board

MTH