

WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION

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WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION **BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

JULY 2, 2020

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

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

Present: Randy Curless, Jeff Dawes, Patty Godfroy, Doug Rice, Christian Rosen, Cheri Slee, Susie Stephan, Joe Vogel, Larry Thrush, Mike Howard, Libby Cook

The Wabash County Plan Commission Board met on Thursday, July 2, 2020 at 7:00 pm. Chairman, Randy Curless called the meeting to order and introduced new Board member Susan (Susie) Stephan. Mr. Curless then asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the March 5th meeting, there being none he asked for a motion on the minutes. Joe Vogel made the motion to approve the minutes of the March 5th meeting; this was seconded by Doug Rice, the motion carried. Due to the corona virus pandemic and social distancing requirements in place the Board has not been meeting in person for meetings scheduled for April 2nd, May 7th and June 4th. Information was forwarded to all members regarding the following Special Exception requests for construction of ponds during this time period: SE #2, SE #3, SE #4, SE #6, and SE #8. Board members were asked review information, submit any questions, and return vote sheets for each application to the Plan Commission Office; all requests received unanimous approval to give a favorable recommendation to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Mr. Dawes made the motion to approve the minutes of the April 2, 2020 meeting; this was seconded by Christian Rosen, the motion carried. Mr. Rosen made the motion to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2020 meeting; this was seconded by Mr. Dawes, the motion carried. Mr. Rice made the motion to approve the minutes of the June 4th meeting; this was seconded by Mr. Dawes, the motion carried.

Mr. Curless: The first item on the agenda is a presentation on the proposed expansion of White's Family and Residential Services.

Mr. Howard: The presentation will be by conference call as the representative could not attend tonight's meeting. Ethan Yoder of Engineering Resources Inc. the civil engineers representing White's Residential and Family Services will be discussing the plans and answering questions. Mr. Yoder gave the following summary of the project: Whites Family and Residential Services is a community based service organization helping children and families across Indiana. This project is to expand the existing Compass Rose Academy campus in Wabash. It is dedicated to helping teenage girls between the ages 14 to 18 and their families by providing emotional healing, personal development, and exponential growth through prevention services and residential treatment. The campus design aims to provide therapeutic healing for its patrons in a tranquil rural setting. Buildings and outer spaces are appropriately sized, spaced, and designed for various future expansions involving social recognition of privacy and community throughout the site. The farmhouse style gable roof is designed to mesh with the rural setting. The buildings on the campus include the educational/therapy building, called The Hub; six 8 - 10 bed households for teenage residents; staff apartment building. The Hub is kind of the anchor on the campus and provides essentially located therapy and daily schooling for the individuals with group classrooms, group therapy, art therapy, a fitness room and multipurpose spaces that encourage wellness and family involvement. The teens will reside in the 5,000 square foot cottages. Each cottage will have 8 - 10 bedrooms surrounding a large common living room and kitchen and dining area. The staff housing building will include 1 bedroom apartments with kitchenettes and common living area and laundry services. Mr. Yoder then offered to answer any questions that the Board might have.

- Mr. Howard asked if there is a timeline you are anticipating for this project from start to finish.
Mr. Yoder replied that they hope to start phase 1 fairly soon, not sure on the completion date. In the next couple of months.
- Mr. Dawes asked if they are planning on completion of phase 1 before starting phase 2.
Mr. Yoder replied yes he thinks that is the intent to kind of grow into it and see what is necessary in phase 2, it might not be everything.
- Ms. Godfroy asked who owns the land.
Mr. Howard answered that White's owns the land, they have 574 acres. Susie Stephan stated that it is currently in row crop.
- Mr. Rice asked if this will be like a separate campus or will it be integrated into the original campus.
Mr. Yoder replied that it is part of the campus; they just wanted it to feel like it is separate.
- Mr. Rice asked if it will serve a different population, will this be the Compass Rose facility or is it separate. Mr. Yoder replied that he is not certain how to answer this as our client is White's. I was just wondering if they are building something that will service a group of youth that they don't service today. Mr. Rice asked who we would go to ask that question.

Mr. Yoder asked if the approval of this plan includes the phase 2 portion or would that come as a separate approval, my assumption is that it would take another approval. Mr. Howard said that is why I was questioning what the timeline for the phases would be, I would think that if you were looking at an extension of over one year before you started phase 2 I think the best thing for us to do would be to issue a permit for phase 1 and then when you are ready to start phase 2 we would issue the permit for that. We do not have an engineer on staff or anybody that does inspections therefore I wanted to present this to the Board and once the drainage plan is finalized and approved and you have your permitting that is required from the state I would be willing to go ahead and issue your first permit at that time. We would like to have a copy of the prints at that time and our Board would sign that print verifying that we have reviewed it and approved it. Mr. Yoder stated that they will also be applying with IDEM for the permits for the sanitary and water, is that something you will also need? Mr. Howard replied yes and that we would also need a copy of Rule 5.

Ms. Godfroy checked with a staff member from White's and stated that Compass Rose Academy will move to the new campus.

Mr. Vogel said that he feels we need to have someone come to a meeting to explain the plans.

Ms. Godfroy stated that the families pay for the child to attend the Compass Rose Academy.

Mr. Curless said that his understanding is that the expansion would be for older kids that have reached a certain age and have to leave the campus, this program would take those kids, they are running the program now but have to turn kids away. It is a transition type program.

Ms. Stephan said that the phase 1 area is not in crops at this time.

Mr. Howard stated that he feels we should have someone from White's come to a meeting to explain the program. That was actually the plan for this meeting.

Mr. Vogel asked what the zoning is for the area; Mr. Howard said that it is AG.

Mr. Vogel asked if it would be issuing a building permit.

Mr. Howard, yes I intend to complete a permit for each phase, we will obtain documentation from the state on anything that would be required. The state would actually do inspections.

Mr. Curless: The next items on the agenda are Special Exception #7 Donald Parsons to construct a pond in an Ag zone. Mr. Howard informed the Board that the two Special Exceptions #7 and #5 (Jarrod McKee) have asked for a continuation. SE #7, Mr. Parsons and his contractor, Treska Bros. Excavating will meet with the neighboring land owner, Tim Ranck and another contractor to make sure everyone is comfortable with what they would like to do. Their overflow and emergency overflow would run out onto the neighboring field and basically free flow to a surface drain nearly 1500 feet away. When I saw that, it set off an alarm right away. I told them they would have to have approval of the adjoining property owner before they could do anything like that. It would be similar to the Vigar pond, which was already constructed and basically free flowed onto Herb Ringle's ground. We did get Herb Ringle to come to the meeting to discuss it since the pond was constructed before receiving approval from the county. Mr. Ringle and the Board agreed that pond could stay as constructed but if it created a wet spot in the field and caused a problem Mr. Ringle was to come and let us know and the landowner would be required to put in a tile so that the water didn't just run over the farm ground. I think this would be the same type of thing on the Parsons pond. The McKee pond is at 7579 N 200 W, Bear Grass Creek, the first drawing

they submitted had a lot of the pond in the floodplain and really close to the floodway, I said no, so they moved it south and sent it in again, I said no again, The third time they have it out of the floodplain. I have told Mr. McKee that I will require a certified survey to reassure us and show that no part of the pond or the dam is in the floodplain or floodway. They don't have the survey completed for that. Mr. Dawes stated that the Drainage Board has discussed the Parsons pond, we thought there would be the question of it free flowing over into the neighbors ground. We felt that at least that neighbor should give approval. Mr. Howard stated that in the information that he had sent to County Surveyor, Cheri Slee, that he felt that the neighboring property owner should be in agreement. Ms. Slee said that she has talked to the owner of the surrounding farmland and he is not in favor of the pond and the possibility of it free flowing over onto his land. Mr. Vogel said that he feels if the contractor says that he is willing to correct any problems that come up after the pond is constructed they should just do that to start with.

Mr. Rice asked, on a previous pond that was constructed prior to having approval from the BZA there was the potential of overflow onto the neighboring farm ground it was agreed between the contractor and the owner of the farm ground that if any problems came up the contractor would make the corrections, if the owner of the parcel with the pond would decide to sell his property would the new owner be liable for having any corrections made?

Mr. Howard said that he questions the location of the pond. Ms. Slee said that the neighbor has told her that that area tends to be a wet area anyway.

Ms. Stephan questioned if the McKee's had enough ground for a pond. Ms. Slee stated that she is not sure it would hold water. Ms. Stephan stated that Bear Grass floods. Mr. Howard stated that we want to make sure it is not in the floodplain.

Mr. Curless: The next item on the agenda is an update from Mr. Dawes on the Grow Wabash County one comprehensive plan.

Mr. Dawes: Mr. Keith Gillenwater and the steering committee have met and have 8 proposals; the committee is going through those applications to select a firm to be in the process of guiding this committee on what they should do as far as the development of the comprehensive plan. Mr. Dawes shared an e-mail from Mr. Gillenwater explaining that recent meetings have been held via Zoom due to the Covid 19 restrictions. We have developed and issued an RFP out to several firms and have received back 8 proposals from across the country, our full steering committee selected an interview and review committee that included one member from each town, city or county as well as a member from Grow Wabash County and the Community Foundation of Wabash County. Members of the steering committee are: Barry Eppley (Wabash Co.), Jim Reynolds (Wabash City), Adam Penrod (N. Manchester), John Krhin (Lafontaine), Bob Ferguson (Roann), Kristie Bone (Lagro), Brian Howenstine (Community Foundation), and Keith Gillenwater (Grow Wabash County), they were assisted by the Grow Wabash County and Community Foundation staff as well. We received 8 strong proposals and narrowed it down to 4 firms to interview; we conducted the interviews in April via Zoom with our full selection committee and representatives of the firms and consortiums that were selected to interview. From these we narrowed our choice down to one clear favorite with whom we are negotiating a contract. The selected firm is led by Planning Next based out of Columbus OH and includes collaborative partners Burgess and Niple and Engineering firm, One Lucky Guitar Marketing and Branding Firm and Policy Analytics for the fiscal analysis firm. The timeline for this process is approximately 14 months; we are expected to kick this off in the month of July

with an initial meeting with the full steering committee and a familiarization tour for the team around the county and to each community. We have a steering committee meeting next Wednesday, July 8th, 2020; we will be formulating additional committees and a more structured timeline to roll this out. We expect to initiate public engagement and data gathering in the fall. We anticipate formal additional committees to structure and administer the engagement and plan that members of the commission will participate. Mr. Dawes stated that is where they are at and he feels the Covid 19 has slowed the process down. It is Mr. Dawes understanding from talking with Mr. Gillenwater that a lot of this will be how to market this whole thing. He doesn't feel the committee is going to try to combine all communities they will just all be under this one umbrella, just the marketing and the branding of it. Mr. Rice asked Mr. Howard if he knows where the county attorney, Steve Downs, is at in working on the new County Ordinance, Mr. Howard said that chapter 6 is what he has been working on. Mr. Rice asked if the steering committee would take into account the new County Ordinance. Mr. Howard said the he would want them to look at the new ordinance even if it is in the draft stage.

Updates from Mr. Howard:

- Asking the Board for recommendations on creating a position in the Plan Commission Office of Part time Salaried Deputy Director. The office administrator position would remain as a position, but not be filled. The pay scale would change approximately \$3.00 per hour and would be based on 21 hours per week If the Board approves I would submit to the PAC and budget for 2021 accordingly. In the budget currently the administrator position is \$15,471. 00 if we added a deputy director position it would be \$19,279.00. I checked with Mr. Thrush for requirements to create that position. Mr. Dawes asked if Mr. Howard had talked with PAC, they will want to give a recommendation to the Council as they begin to work through budgets. Mr. Howard stated he submitted a request to Mr. Dils to meet with the PAC. Mr. Rice made a motion to create the new position; Mr. Vogel seconded the motion, the motion carried.
- Reviewed the proposed budget for 2021. Mr. Vogel made a motion to approve the budget proposal; this was seconded by Mr. Rosen, the motion carried.
- Senate Enrolled Act #20, as of October 2020 if the AG/CED Extension Educator does not reside in the county they are employed in they cannot hold a voting seat on the Plan Commission Board. They can serve on the Board in an advisory capacity and the local Extension Board can appoint a county resident to fill the seat as a voting member. At the end of this year Randy Curless can no longer hold the seat on the PCB as the County Council representative, we will have a new council appointment starting in 2021. I would like to recommend to the Extension Board that Randy become the voting member representing the Extension Office. We would need approval from the Extension Board. Board members agreed with the proposed plan.
- Midwest Poultry Services is talking about an expansion of their facilities; there may be the possibility of requiring a Variance along with the Special Exception request depending on their plans. Ms. Slee asked if they (MPS) know that they need a drainage plan, they have not submitted anything in the past. Mr. Howard, they were advised to contact your office. Mr. Dawes reminded the Board that MPS employs between 500 – 600 people.
- The Todd Custer campground in Liberty Mills, the parcel drawings now match the deeds, we all understand that no one owns the river. Mr. Custer has been working with Mr. Don

Meyer, they provided a new survey and the deeds are being rewritten. They have been having problems with people jumping into the Eel River from the pillars that remain in the river from the old train trestle. Mr. Custer has been working with the DNR making sure they have no liability in this.

- I have been working with FEMA on the Howard Draving property at 3050 S Old St. Rd. 15. The property is under the jurisdiction of Wabash City. In 1997 a new home was put on the property. The permit for the home should have been issued by Wabash City; they can't find any permitting for the house. The problem is that FEMA has determined that it is in the floodplain. When I started working with FEMA on this they told me they didn't care whose permitting jurisdiction it is in, as Floodplain Administrator it is a county problem and if we don't correct it they could go back and pull Wabash County off of the FEMA program and those with flood insurance could see premiums skyrocket. I contacted the IN DNR and started working on this. On the 1997 maps that house was not in the floodplain when it was put in. The problem is that when FEMA created new flood maps in 2013 it put it in the floodplain. John Stephens has been working on an elevation certificate for it, the crawl space is about 4.8 inches lower than the outside backfill dirt, 4.8 inches too low. The owner would like to refinance and it is being held up because of this. I have been working with surveyor John Stephens and Anita Nance from the State DNR office. The FEMA director in Chicago was pleased with the information we gathered and submitted, however LOMA (Letter Of Map Amendment) review committee sent it back saying that they had different mapping. I asked for a copy of their mapping, they did an overlay of Google Earth and determined that it is in the floodplain and needs corrective measures. Mr. Dawes asked, if they redrew the maps in 2013 and the house was put in 1997 wouldn't they have to grandfather it. The 1997 map has old 15 located different than the 2013 map so FEMA says it is in the floodplain and according to the google overlay it is. The problem is the Google overlay doesn't match the road placement on the 1997 map. It's FEMA, you have to go with what they say.
- Complaint updates:
Bullard property at 204 W. Kendall St., Lafontaine, the attorney representing the family has asked for an extension.
Doyle Silvers, 3 E. Parker St., Lafontaine. Mr. Silvers is building a new home at this address, the last extension on the permit expired on June 26th. Mr. Silvers sent a letter stating that due to the Corona Virus restrictions he was not able to meet the deadline and requested another extension. The BZA discussed the matter at the June 23rd meeting, it was decided to give Mr. Silvers another extension with the following requirements: he must apply for a new permit and pay the required fee; the permit will expire at midnight on September 21, 2020 at which time the exterior of the structure, as presented in the plans, must be completely finished including the following: any masonry, overhangs, soffit, fascia, guttering, porches, exterior lighting, painting, roofing, siding, windows, all doors, stucco, backfill, leveling and seeding. Failure to meet the requirements can result in a penalty of up to \$250 per day until the project is completed as required. Mr. Howard suggested that if there is a fine to make it payable when the exterior of the house is completed so as not to be taking from the funds to complete the exterior of the structure. Mr. Silvers will be notified by certified mail of the conditions of the permit.
- Zoomers – County Attorney, Mr. Downs, is working on this.
- Servia, property to the north of the old post office I will have Larry Thrush file an Unsafe Premise Order.

There being no further business Mr. Curless asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Vogel made the motion to adjourn; this was seconded by Ms. Godfroy. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Libby Cook
Secretary, Wabash County Plan Commission Board
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