

WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION

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WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 3, 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, Geoff Schortgen, Cheri Slee, Susie Stephan, Joe Vogel, Larry Thrush, Mike Howard, Libby Cook, Jay Reed, Bobby Brummett, Gary & Frankie Dawson, Ron Evans

The September 3rd meeting of the Wabash County Plan Commission Board was opened by chairman, Randy Curless at 7:00 pm. Mr. Curless asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the August 6th meeting, there being none he asked for a motion on the minutes. Joe Vogel made the motion to approve the minutes as written; this was seconded by Jeff Dawes. The motion carried; the minutes will stand approved as written.

Mr. Curless: The first item on the agenda is Mr. Ron Evans with a presentation on the planned expansion at White's Residential and Family Services.

Mr. Evans: White's has a history of about 170 years, originally it was White's Institute of Manual Labor, it then changed to White's Institute, and then in the 1970's it went to White's Family Services because of the addition of foster care. The purpose of White's has always been to help children and to help children in need. White's was established by Josiah White who was a Quaker and he bequeathed the money to buy the land. White's started out as a home for orphans and we have ever since then done that. About 10 - 15 years we got a lot of requests from people in the community and throughout the

state of Indiana asking “do we have to get our child in trouble in order to get help at White’s”, because that was the only way to get a place there, through DCS or the Department of Corrections. We have been talking about how do we go back to helping families that have a need to have children be helped more than they can be helped in the home. After a number of years of study, we found that the biggest need was teenage girls. There are three major things that we see teenage girls are having trouble with that they cannot get help with in the home. Almost all of the families that are involved with us in Compass Rose start with just having some strife in the home, then it goes to oppositional defiance, you will see some depression, you will see some suicidal ideation. When that starts happening mom or dad are getting help from counselors and those type of things. There comes a time when mom and/or dad say I am really concerned for my daughter’s future and mental health so they look for a program and there are programs throughout the United States. White’s is one of a few homes in Indiana that offer a residential program for teenage girls who are suffering from depression, anxiety, those type of things. We started this 7 years ago with two cottages that were once used for the residential program. We started with one girl, today we have 17 enrolled, they are generally here for about one year. This is all paid for through insurance or self-pay by the family, there is no funding through DCS. We are licensed through DCS to make sure we are doing everything correctly but they do not place anyone with us the placements are all done privately. Girls come to us from all over the country, we recently had an American girl whose parents were in Saudi Arabia. It is a private pay program, it costs approximately \$10,000.00 per month of services, while they are here, they get 24 hour a day care, we have our own clinical staff, right now we have three full time clinicians, these are master levels trained in counseling. We have our own school, right now we are in the process of getting accredited as a private school. They have school during the day, therapeutic help during the day then they live together in a home. What we have found is it has worked fine using the existing facility, but the demand is growing and the competition for these types of programs, unfortunately the demand is very high. Right now, the demand is very high, we get over 100 inquiries per month. Right now, we have 13 active families trying to get in for what we have left is one slot. It is a great need out there, unfortunately and it is going to grow really quickly especially coming out of all of this isolation from the Covid pandemic that has accelerated the need. Last year White’s as a parent board decided that the private pay is significant, we have a different population, we have a significantly different treatment than our residential program. After about 2 years of study that I did, I recommended to the Board that we make our own campus for this population. From that the Board decided to put our reserve funds, \$4,000,000.00 into that to start it. We hired a fund-raising firm, they estimated that we could raise \$4,000,000.00, today we are at about \$3,500,000.00 already raised of that most in cash and some in pledges. We have already broken ground. Phase One will have the Hub, which is the school building, the clinical building, where all the administrative offices will be. There are three cottages or homes that are about 4,500 square feet that will house up to 10 girls, normally it will be 8, there will be two additional bedrooms for transition for those girls getting ready to graduate we bring another girl into one of the

extra bedrooms so that we can always have 8, sometimes 9 possibly 10 depending on what the demand is. We will start with 3 homes, right now we have 20 girls in the program, that will get us to 24. We assume that will fill up so then we will incrementally build 3 more homes. We have everything laid out on that 8 acres to build 3 more homes one at a time as demand warrants it. We are also building housing for our house parents; the house parents don't live in the home they live in a separate building next to the home. They work a 16-hour shift and we have a night person that comes in and does night work and then they come back in for another 16-hour shift. The house parents work 3 shifts on and 2 off. We would be approximately one of two programs in the country that is both Christian and clinical. There are programs that are either Christian or clinical That is really our niche here, Christian families looking for that basis to work with their girl to help them heal from the emotional trauma that they have experienced. About 60 - 70% of the girls in the program are adopted and have never really bonded well with the family. Mr. Evans went on to address the community impact the expansion will have on Wabash County, this will be about an \$8,000,000.00 investment into the county. An additional payroll of about \$1,100,000.00 per year. What we like from an economic position is that these are positions that won't go away from technology, you can't replace a therapist, a house parent, a teacher with that. Most of the staff we hire most are at the Bachelor level minimum, most are at the Masters level. They will be great additions to our community as we add more staff to support this.

Mr. Dawes asked, the schooling part, will that utilize the existing school facilities that are there now or will it be more on-line.

Mr. Evans: All of our residential students will go through the MSD program. Our girls in Compass Rose, we have our own private school and that is a combination of on hand instructors. We currently have 3 teachers and will be moving to 4 when we get there and moving to some on-line. Our girls don't enter at the beginning of the school year so there is an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) build for each of the girls. Sometimes they are 13, sometimes they are 17, sometimes they are in their Junior year, some need more help than others so an IEP is built for each of the girls when they arrive with the help of their home school district. After the year that they are here they go back with all the educational needs to enter back in. We have 3 that will be coming in the next week or two at the start of the school year, all through the year we will have girls entering so they are leaving a school and you are trying to get them plugged in to the right place. A very challenging way to do school.

Ms. Godfroy asked how is the success of the program measured.

Mr. Evans: The best way to measure our success is in 4 - 5 years later. We have had about 100 girls graduate from the program; we try to track each one of those girls to see how they are doing. We have had some really great success stories and we have had some who continue to struggle. They will come out in a much healthier place than when

they came in. Our parents are our biggest advocates, those who have had a girl here. The parents would also say, because they have family counseling they go through every week, they would probably say that they have grown more through the process than the girls have. Learn about how they are contributing to the problem as opposed to making it better out of good intentions.

Mr. Howard stated that he wants the Board to be aware that next week he will be meeting with the County Commissioners to sign a data share agreement with White's Residential and Family Services. We have been working on addressing the buildings at their facility and we have only about 2 - 3 addresses and there are a lot of structures out there. Through WTH, Think Map Program I will be providing data off of WTH Think Map for them to do addressing for their streets and eventually the utilities and everything they want to put on there. We will provide those layers for them to get started and in return we will get that information back for us to use but it will not be public data access. It will only be available for use by the Plan Commission Office, EMA, Central Dispatch, Police and Fire. Mr. Evans thanked Mr. Howard and said that they have allocated quite a few dollars for that for our campus. each of the structures on the campus.

Mr. Evans invited everyone to come out to visit the 50 East which is our vocational center where we train young people that are in our residential program. We have a great breakfast and lunch and all the garden stuff and great plants. We are open 6 days a week, come out and see our kids and what is going on at the campus. Mr. Schortgen said that the greenhouses are some of the funnest places to go and see what you guys are doing with that production, keep up the good work there.

Mr. Curless: The next item on the agenda is Special Exception # 5, Jarrod McKee for construction of a pond in Paw Paw Township, this item is being continued. The next item on the agenda is SE #11, Gary Dawson for construction of a pond in Paw Paw Township.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Dawson resides at 5381 W St. Rd. 16, Roann. The contractor for the pond will be Kevin Musselman. There are no variances required for the pond and there is no flood plain or flowage easement issues. The water surface area will be approximately 1.0 acres, there will be a dam on the southeast corner the length of the dam will be 75 feet, the base width will be 110 feet, and the top width will be 15 feet. The outlet drain will be a 6-inch riser into existing 6-inch tile. Mr. Dawson said the tile will go over to the neighbors filed which is 75 feet from my property line, so it is 175' from the water edge. The maximum depth of the pond will be 15 feet. The emergency over flow will be to a grass waterway 1 foot below the dam top at the east end. There is 5 acres of watershed into the pond, and there will be no geothermal feed. The distance to the nearest certified/non-certified drain is a private tile which is 175 feet to the south. This pond has been reviewed by the Drainage Board and they did give their approval at their August 3rd meeting. Mr. Curless asked if there were any questions or comments, there

being none he asked for a motion on SE #11. Joe Vogel made the motion to give a favorable recommendation to the BZA for the construction of the pond, this was seconded by Mr. Rosen. The Board proceeded to vote; the motion carried. Mr. Howard told Mr. Dawson that the next hearing will be before the BZA on 9/22/2020.

Mr. Curless: The next item on the agenda is SE #12, Jay and Shelley Reed for construction of a pond in Lagro Township.

Mr. Howard: The Reed's reside at 7061 E 500 N, Urbana, in Lagro Township. They have a 6.889 acre parcel. Eads & Son Bulldozing will be the contractor. There are no variances required for the pond, I want the understanding that the pond may be within the 100 feet range of the adjoining property line but that is their farm land therefore I would not require a variance for it. There is no floodplain or flowage easement involved. The water surface area will be approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ acre, maximum depth will be 10 feet. There will not be a dam. The overflow size will be a 6-inch outlet pipe, the outlet drain will go east to a wooded area waterway. The emergency overflow is 6-inch depression X 20 feet. There is no watershed into the pond, and there will be no geothermal feed. The distance to the nearest certified/ non-certified drain is: Peter Young Drain is approximately 4,100 feet northeast; and Silver Creek approximately 1,200 feet northeast. The Drainage Board will review the information at their meeting on 9/8/2020. Final approval by the BZA would be subject to a favorable recommendation from the Drainage Board. Mr. Curless asked if there were any questions or comments, there being none Mr. Curless asked for a motion on the request. Mr. Rice made the motion to give a favorable recommendation to the BZA, this was seconded by Mr. Vogel. The Board proceeded to vote; the motion carried.

Mr. Curless: The next item on the agenda is SE #13, Bobby Brummett for construction of a pond in Waltz Township.

Mr. Howard: The Brummett's reside at 10560 S 600 W, Amboy, in Waltz Township on a 5-acre parcel. The contractor has not been determined at this time. There are no variances required, no flood plain, and no flowage easement. The approximate water surface area will be 1.0 acres with a maximum depth of 12 feet. The dam will be 120 feet in length, 105 feet base width, and 90 feet top width. The over flow is an 8-inch pipe that will drain into a natural water way going to the reservoir. The emergency over flow will be from the northeast corner and will drain to a natural waterway. The watershed into the pond will be approximately 30 acres. There is no geothermal feed. I did not find any certified or non-certified drains south of the Mississinewa Reservoir. The pond still needs to be reviewed by the Drainage Board. The final approval from the BZA will be subject to a favorable recommendation by the Drainage Board. Mr. Curless asked if there were any questions or comments, there being none he asked for a motion on the request. Mr. Rice made the motion to give a favorable recommendation to the BZA, this was seconded by Mr. Rosen. The motion carried.

Mr. Curless: The next item is an update from Mr. Dawes on Imagine One 85.

Mr. Dawes: The committee met by Zoom last week with the representative of the company that is working on this, he basically had questions for us on what we want from it. I relayed the concerns of the Plan Commission Board about the new Comprehensive Plan that they have been working on for a couple of years and want to be sure that it goes forward without totally changing what they had spent 2 years working on. He assured me that would be the case, they are just trying to bring everybody together and want people from the community to be involved in it. We all agreed that if community has ownership in it, it will be a lot more successful as far as a marketing program than if it was just a Board or a group of individuals that were behind this. There is another meeting next week, they try to rotate the meeting around the different areas of the community, the next meeting will be at Lagro. It is moving kind of slowly with Covid, but they are moving forward.

Mr. Rice asked how the County Attorney's review of the Ordinance was coming along. Mr. Dawes said that he knew that Mr. Downs had been on vacation and had a knee surgery and not much progress has been made the last few months.

Mr. Howard gave the following updates:

- Reminded the Board that if the Extension CED/ ANR educator does not live in the county the work in they can no longer be a voting member of the Board as of 10/01/20220. They will remain on in an advisory capacity. We are working with Mr. Downs on writing an ordinance that will continue to give Geoff Schortgen voting rights through the end of this calendar year. Randy Curless will be appointed by the Extension Board and will become the voting member for Purdue Extension program. A new representative from the County Council will need to be appointed.
- Grow Wabash County has asked for the e-mail addresses of our Board members. I would not give out personal e-mail addresses without your consent. Mr. Rice was the only Board member who had not been asked about giving this information, he gave his approval to give his e-mail address to Grow Wabash Co. All members of the Boards have now given their consent to give their e-mail addresses to Grow Wabash County.
- The Doyle Silvers property in the town of Lafontaine, the extension of the permit for the construction of a new home will expire on 9/21/2020. At that time the BZA will have to make a determination.
- Mr. Howard asked Mr. Thrush if he had any new information on the Bullard property in the town of Lafontaine. Mr. Thrush replied they filed a motion to dismiss, we will have to address that, but the court has not ruled on that yet.

- There continues to be a stack of complaints, some that we would file an unsafe premise order on, but the majority of those are in the tax sale so we can't do much about those until after the tax sale.
- There being no further business to discuss Mr. Curless asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Rice made the motion to adjourn and Mr. Rosen seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Libby Cook

Secretary, Wabash Co. Plan Commission Board
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