

WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION

*Wabash County Court House
One West Hill Street, Suite 205
Wabash, IN 46992
Telephone 260-563-0661 EXT 1252, 1267
Fax 260-563-5895
plandirector@wabashcounty.IN.gov*

WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 4, 2021

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

Board Members: Randy Curless, Jeff Dawes, Patty Godfroy, Sam Hann, 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, Sam Hann, Christian Rosen, Cheri Slee, Susi Stephan, Joe Vogel, Larry Thrush, Mike Howard, Libby Cook, Barbara Sollars, David Sollars, Andy Flinn, Kelly Kerlin, Jay Gillespie, Dan Eads

The March 4th meeting of the Wabash County Plan Commission Board was opened at 7:00 pm by Board Chairman, Randy Curless. Mr. Curless welcomed new Board member Sam Hann, representing the Wabash County Council. The first item on the agenda is election of officers: Joe Vogel nominated Randy Curless for chairman, seconded by Christian Rosen. There being no other nominations Mr. Curless asked for a motion to close the nominations. Mr. Dawes motioned to close the nominations; this was seconded by Mr. Vogel. The nomination was approved unanimously. Mr. Vogel nominated Christian Rosen for vice-chairman, this was seconded by Mr. Hann. There being no other nominations, Mr. Hann motioned to close the nominations. The nomination for co-chairman was approved unanimously. Next was the nomination for secretary. Mr. Rosen nominated Libby Cook; this was seconded by Susi Stephan. There being no other nominations Mr. Vogel made the motion to close the nominations. The nomination for secretary was approved unanimously. It was decided that review of the previous minutes would be done at the end of the meeting, the motion was made by Jeff Dawes, seconded by Christian Rosen, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Curless: the second item on the agenda is Kelly Kerlin with a presentation on cargo containers.

Mr. Kerlin: stated that he is from the N. Manchester area and his business Car Recyclers is within the N. Manchester zoning boundary. He is here tonight to talk with the Board about what they are thinking about doing, adding the sale of cargo containers to his business. There has been some concern about the aesthetics. Mr. Kerlin said that the cargo containers mainly come in two sizes, 20- and 40-foot lengths and that he personally feels that these units are more affordable than a lot of the storage sheds. The cargo containers are super strong, they are water tight and rodent proof, they are stackable, they will support 211 tons stacking weight on the corner. Rock Creek Construction in Markle has constructed a home from cargo containers, Mr. Kerlin shared a video of the home. He stated that he has had farmers contact him about cargo containers, they like the idea of being rodent proof for storage of seed/grain. Mr. Kerlin shared photos of a storage facility made from cargo containers, this is something he would like to do at his business in N. Manchester, he has 14 acres that is fenced in, to make a nice storage facility. Mr. Kerlin said that he just returned from a trip and saw many uses for the cargo containers, storage, housing, concession stands, bath houses, restrooms, small restaurants along the beach. These are what I would call adult Legos, they are made to be stacked, they are made to configure any way you want to. You can cut windows and doors in without really affecting integrity of the structure, houses are a big thing very trendy right now, I watch a lot of television shows about what you can do with shipping containers, even pools.

Mr. Howard: We started talking with Mr. Kerlin last fall, the Plan Commission Board did not meet in person again, the BZA did meet and did come up with some suggestions for cargo container use in the county if we were to move forward. We tried to be pretty restrictive, but we also did leave it open to where you could apply for a Special Exception for other uses such as homes where you could stack them. Mr. Kerlin asked, the 20 foot containers are 160 square feet, what would make this any different from a storage shed ? Mr. Howard said that anything 100 square feet or greater requires a permit whether it is portable or stationery. Mr. Kerlin asked, if someone applies for a permit for one of these what kind of response will they get? Mr. Howard said that at this time the biggest thing I would stress is that it has to be maintained well, that they aren't going to put something rusty out in their yard, one thing that we talked about is that we would like for them to be set on, not necessarily on a concrete pad but stone or something like that. Mr. Kerlin said that he doesn't feel that is unreasonable at all, he is all for the aesthetics. I have a neighbor that has an abandoned house on their property that is falling down, and has been for about 15 years, but if you don't say anything about it then nothing will probably ever happen. Mr. Howard, I would have to look at this to know the property jurisdiction. The Board needs to know that Mr. Kerlin is talking about a storage unit at his current business, this business is outside of the N. Manchester city limits, however it is in the N. Manchester zoning boundary.

Mr. Kerlin asked, if I were to buy a piece of property that was outside of the city limits would that be something outside of your jurisdiction? Mr. Howard reminded him that it would have to be outside of the city zoning for the county to have jurisdiction. Mr. Kerlin: these suggested requirements say shall not be used for housing of animals or pets, would there be anything wrong with using it as a chicken coop? Mr. Howard replied that would have to be something the Board would need to discuss. Mr. Kerlin said that he has some questions about not permitting the cutting of doors into the container.

Mr. Howard replied that he has spent quite a bit of time studying how the containers are being used,

Mr. Kerlin said that he has one cargo unit at his business and told Board members that they are welcome to stop by and see it. Mr. Vogel asked what type of foundation is recommended for the container. Mr. Kerlin said a stone base, digging down and setting blocks at the corners, a 20-foot container weighs about 4,600 lbs. The entire box is made of corrugated steel with marine grade plywood as an interior lining. Mr. Vogel asked if the plywood holds up well, Mr. Kerlin said that it is marine grade so it does. Mrs. Stephan asked if Mr. Kerlin's intent is to sell the units, not just rent them. Mr. Kerlin replied not yet. Mr. Dawes asked if someone purchases a cargo container do you set it? Mr. Kerlin said that he does have a tilt bed wrecker and a tilt top trailer that I can use. At some point I am thinking of building a lake cottage from these. Photo Ville in New York is made from shipping containers, it allows artists to display and sell their work without the expense of a brick & mortar building. A community in Los Vegas called Container Village is made of cargo units. Mr. Kerlin said that he is in talks with the town of N. Manchester right now, he would like to use cargo containers along the boat launch for sales of concessions.

Mr. Curless asked if there were any further questions or comments from the Board or audience. He thanked Mr. Kerlin for his presentation. The Board will discuss recommendations for permitting of the cargo containers.

Mr. Curless: The next item on the agenda is Special Exception #1, Norman and Barbara Sollars for a pond in Liberty Twp., town of LaFontaine.

Mr. Howard: David Sollars, the Sollars' son is here tonight with Barbara Sollars to represent the family. The Sollars have constructed a pond on their property located at 201 Logan St., lot 2, LaFontaine, within the corporate limits of the town of Lafontaine. It was dug in the late summer and fall of 2020, it was brought it to our attention, I then met with them to go over what they should have done. The pond would require three variances, it is 15 feet from the west property line, 45 from the east property line and 55

feet from the south property line. The water surface area will be approximately .03 acres; outlet pipe is to the north; the pond is approximately 10 feet deep; there is no geothermal feed. The pond is located in a platted town, pools are required to be fenced. I have talked with representatives from the town of LaFontaine and they agreed. It is 500 feet from the town wells. Contractors that I have talked with said it should have a liner, typically you would go 1 foot deeper, put the liner in and put dirt back over the liner. My recommendation would be that it needs to be fenced and have a liner. Mr. Howard asked Mr. Sollars if the dirt they removed has been hauled away, he replied that it has been. Christian Rosen asked Mr. Sollars how full the pond is, David replied that it is pretty full. Mrs. Stephan asked about the size of the pond, David compared it to the size of the Commissioners meeting room. Mr. Curless asked if the town of LaFontaine has any ordinances regarding ponds. Jay Gillespie, a member of the Lafontaine Town Board said no. Mr. Hann asked if the liner is to protect against contamination of the city wells. LaFontaine Town Board member, Jay Gillespie said that the pond is on the edge of the well head protection plan for the town. Mr. Rosen asked the Sollars if it would be feasible now to get a liner put in and the fencing taken care of. Mr. Rosen asked Mr. Howard if that is what would need to be done to move forward, Mr. Howard said that the liner and fence would be his recommendation to the BZA.

Mr. Curless: asked if there was a recommendation.

Mr. Dawes made a motion to give the request a favorable recommendation to the BZA with the stipulations of fencing and a liner, this was seconded by Mr. Hann. Passed with unanimous approval. Mr. Howard informed the Sollars of the hearing before the BZA on Tuesday, March 23rd at 7:00 pm.

Mr. Curless: The next item on the agenda is SE #2, Andy Flinn for a business in an ag zone.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Flinn resides at 11315 S 100 W, Silver Lake. The business would be located at 13174 N 325 E, N. Manchester. Mr. Flinn stated that he started the business, Integrity Fire Suppression Systems, the business does have an LLC and certifications. The land I am proposing to use for the business was previously used by my brother for animals. I want to separate the business from my home, I also need more space for an office and storage. There won't be any retail sales at the location I would deliver to the customer, there won't be any storefront. Mr. Howard said when preparing the Special Exception, he thought it was questionable if the buildings would meet the setback requirements so he included a Variance for the existing structure, this way both the county and Mr. Flinn will be covered. Mr. Vogel asked if he does refill of the equipment. Mr. Flinn said that it is set up in a trailer, but I could be doing this on the property, that trailer will be going to businesses and I will be doing it on site too. At this point there will be no system in the buildings, it is just warehouse space. If it works out well, I will move the business billing address to Wabash County instead of Kosciusko County where

it is now. Mrs. Stephan asked about the zoning if it is Ag, Mr. Howard said it is, we would just be permitting this business to be in an agriculture zone. There being no further discussion Mr. Rosen made a motion for a favorable recommendation to the BZA, this was seconded by Mr. Hann. Mr. Curless called for a vote, passed with unanimous approval.

Mr. Curless: The next item is Special Exception #3, Dan Eads for a pond in Lagro Twp.

Mr. Howard: Dan and Brenda Eads reside at 3454 N 600 E, Urbana on 15.78 acres. The request has been reviewed and received no objections from the County Drainage Board. The contractor will be Troy Eads Excavating. No floodplain or flowage easement involved. There is a variance request from the property line setback to the north of 50 feet. The pond will be approximately .5-acre water surface, 6-inch overflow to the west to the wooded lot, 12 - 15 feet maximum depth, emergency overflow goes to the west side, watershed into the pond is approximately ½ acre, no geothermal feed, closest distance to the nearest certified or non-certified drain is Lagro Creek approximately 3,500 feet west, and Peter Schenkel non-certified tile approximately 3,300 feet east. Mr. Curless asked if there were any questions or comments, there being none Mrs. Slee made the motion to give a favorable recommendation to the BZA, this was seconded by Mr. Rosen. Mr. Curless called for a vote; the request passed unanimously.

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

Mr. Dawes said that the proposed one comprehensive plan Imagine One 85 is progressing. He attended the Wabash City meeting the night before. They are wanting public input and wanted people to take a three-part survey, you could either do this on your phone or on paper. Mr. Dawes asked Mr. Howard if he would like to expand on the program after the meeting with Kyle May PC and BZA Board members and members of the Imagine One 85 committee. Mr. Howard said he felt that we got some good feedback from the participants in the meeting either in person or through Zoom. Mr. Howard said that Geoff Schortgen (Purdue Extension Office CED/ ANR) was not able to be present during the meeting but did come over and talk with Kyle May and myself and gave a very strong presentation on his personal feelings of the strength of agriculture in the county. We spent an hour meeting with the group, then afterward Libby and I had the opportunity to talk with Kyle May and felt like it was a really good session. I got to talk with Geoff Schortgen afterward and he felt good about the meeting, he feels he needs to be a strong advocate for agriculture. Mr. Gillenwater stated that when he talks about growth, he isn't necessarily talking about out into the county but infill of areas where homes or businesses have been removed. I shared with Kyle May the data that I have gathered showing how much acreage there is outside of the city limits but still within city zoning that they have control over. Those areas to me are the areas they need to be looking at as far as residential development simply because to me our residential growth needs to stay close to areas where they can get their water, sewage, utilities and

infrastructure, things like that. To go out into the rural county at a random site and just say we want to put in a 20-home residential development here, I don't see it, cost wise or economically it doesn't make sense. Mr. Dawes said that he had a chance to talk with Kyle May after the meeting and shared that one concern that had been voiced to him was that the current county comprehensive plan and proposed zoning ordinance draft that has been worked on for several years, is not going to be jeopardized by something that they come up with and he seemed to understand that. Mr. Howard said that he asked Kyle May if when this one comprehensive plan is done do we toss all of our individual county, towns or the Town of N. Manchester and City of Wabash Comprehensive Plans. Kyle said absolutely not you keep those and use them for your own entity. He said what they are doing is not truly a comprehensive plan. Mr. Dawes said it more of a marketing or branding a community development plan, they are trying to market or brand Wabash County. Mr. Howard told Board members that there is an on-line survey for Imagine One 85, our office can print these off and get these out to you at the next meeting. Mr. Dawes encouraged everyone to take part in the survey.

Mr. Howard gave the following updates:

- Continuing to work with Mr. Downs on the draft review of the County Ordinance.
- Complaints, we have several properties with severe issues, I will get with Larry Thrush on these unsafe premise orders, hope to get resolved without going to court.
- Members were given copies of the 2020 end of the year report.
- House Bill #1381 is a huge concern; it has passed the House. I have been talking with Sen. Zay and Indiana Farm Bureau. The Bill proposes to take away local policies on wind and solar farms and each county to be under state regulations. IFB is taking a stance of opposing this bill. I have reviewed what some the regulations they propose are compared to our ordinance, the solar is not much different, the wind is quite a bit different from our ordinance. Mr. Dawes said that the Commissioners have been talking about the Bill, Representative Snow did vote against it.
- Prosser's Mobile Home Park on St. Rd. 15 South have a request for a tiny home in the park, it would be under the minimum square footage requirement. Do we want to look at just the one unit or do we want to make a variance for the entire park so they can place more of these homes in the mobile home park? Mr. Curless said that Prosser keeps a nice place, and that he would prefer to see these tiny homes in one location. Mr. Vogel asked if the home was on an axel. Mr. Howard said it basically is on a flatbed trailer, we would require skirting and tie downs. Mr. Howard and Mr. Dawes both said they like Mr. Curless' idea of the tiny homes being in one location. Mr. Hann said he likes the idea of the variance for the mobile home park. Mr. Thrush said that could be done with the variance. Mr. Curless asked if there was a motion to give the variance to the mobile home park as opposed to the individual tiny home. Mrs. Stephan made the motion to proceed with the variance request for the mobile home park, this was seconded by Mrs.

Slee, passed unanimously. Suggestions were made to check with other counties to see what their requirements are.

- The Board reviewed minutes of the previous meetings, Mr. Curless asked if there was a motion on the minutes. Mr. Vogel made the motion to approve the minutes, Seconded by Mr. Rosen, the minutes will stand approved as written.
- Motion to adjourn by Mrs. Stephan, seconded by Mr. Hann. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Libby Cook

Secretary, Wabash County Plan Commission Board

nth