

WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION

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WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
BOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 3, 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 Amanda Lyons

Roll call was taken with the following Board members present: Joe Vogel, Sam Hann, Randy Curless, Jeff Dawes, Patty Godfroy, Cheri Slee, Geoff Schortgen, Christian Rosen. Those absent were: Mark Milam and Doug Rice.

Others present: Chris Neff of NextEra Energy, Jim Fanin of Hoosiers for Renewables, Latheda Metzger, Josh Petruniw, Jim Reynolds, Joe & Libby Cook, Steve Downs

The Wabash County Plan Commission Board met on Thursday, November 3, 2022 in the Commissioners Meeting Room of the Wabash County Courthouse. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Board Chairman Mr. Randy Curless. Mr. Curless asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the October 6, 2022 meeting. Mr. Vogel made the motion to approve the minutes as written, this was seconded by Mr. Dawes. Roll call vote on the motion was taken with 7 voting members present in favor. The minutes will stand approved as written.

Mr. Curless: First on the agenda is Special Exception #14, J.M. Reynolds Oil Co for LP Storage facility in Noble Township. Mr. Curless stated that the property is located at 3477 W. 500 S., Wabash on a 3.96 acre parcel, currently owned by Bob Lundquist. Mr. Reynolds of Reynolds Oil and Mr. Petruniw from Downs, Tandy, and Petruniw presented their plan to the board, stating they are looking to add storage as the propane business is expanding. The plan includes removing a 18,000 gallon tank from downtown and placing

it on the new site next with a new 35,000 gallon tank, with the potential to add up to four more tanks in the future (possibly 10 years + in future). The facility will have a gravel drive, with their trucks running from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday – Sunday. They will be using a 220 electric service to power pumps, with lighting, Wi-Fi security cameras, and a fence to meet DOT security specifications. The facility will not include any structures, just storage tanks. They are aware of flood plain area, and will not be using that area of the property. Mr. Howard reviewed with the board that the current ordinance requires 300' setbacks. For this project they are seeking a variance to be 100' from the road and 200' from adjoining property lines at the back and sides. The setbacks they are requesting are within the setback parameters of the new ordinance slated to take effect January 1, 2023. Mr. Vogel asked if the fence would extend behind the tank. Mr. Reynolds indicated the fence will run to the front saddle of the tank where the valve and piping of the tank will be, with nothing being behind it. It will be fenced like their current storage facility on the north side. Ms. Slee stated that there is a county drain in the flood plain. That drain would require a setback if future expansion is near it. Mr. Reynolds indicated even in the expansion plans they will not be near the flood plain. Mr. Curless asked for any questions or concerns from the public. There being none, Mr. Hann made a motion to give a favorable recommendation to the Board of Zoning Appeals for the LP storage facility. Second by Mr. Rosen. A roll call vote was taken of the 7 members present with all 7 voting in favor of the motion. Mr. Howard advised Mr. Petruniw and Mr. Reynolds that the Special Exception will now go before the Board of Zoning Appeals on Tuesday, November 22 at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Curless introduced Mr. Chris Neff, Senior Project Manager at NextEra, to provide an update on the solar project in Noble, Waltz, and Liberty Townships. Mr. Neff shared the following project timeline updates:

- Field testing will begin next week
- Preliminary site plan and detailed engineer plan will be available Spring 2023
- Anticipate filing for Special Exception in Spring 2023
- Final site plan available Winter 2023-2024
- Construction process will be 18-24 months to complete after the final site plan

Mr. Neff explained to the board that the project is for 200 megawatts, which would power 60,000 homes. The project will be a \$250 million dollar capital investment. The project will utilize approximately 200 - 250 construction jobs and 2-4 long term maintenance positions will be a part of the Economic Development Agreement. The panels being used will track the sun to optimize their efficiency and will be 95% recyclable. There will be a vegetation management plan to maintain the ground. There will not be large amounts of pesticides or insecticides sprayed at the location. At the end of the life span of the project (estimated 30-35 years) the ground can be returned directly to ag. Mr. Howard shared with the board that he and Mr. Neff had discussed excavation and agreed that the top soil from any excavating being done cannot be removed from the premises. Mr. Curless asked if NextEra would maintain ownership, Mr. Neff responded that their preference is to own and operate on these projects. Mr. Howard indicated to Mr. Neff that the

ordinance requires NextEra to own property if any battery storage facilities are built. It is not stated in the ordinance, but at the end of the project Mr. Howard would like the landowner to have the opportunity to buy that property back. Mr. Neff indicated at this time he was not sure if battery storage facility would be a part of the project, but he would check into it. Mr. Dawes and Mr. Hann asked about the acres being used for the project, Mr. Neff reports total acres will not be known until late spring when preliminary site plan is completed, but approximately 2,000 acres. Ms. Slee asked who would be in contact with the Surveyors Office for the county regulated drain plans, Mr. Neff indicated he will be in contact. He indicated they will locate private drains as well. Mr. Hann asked about mowing the ground. Mr. Neff indicated they usually take bids for the mowing. Mr. Neff introduced Jim Fanin of Hoosiers for Renewables. Mr. Fanin shared that he was present to represent the concept and help answer questions about what the project means for the community. Mr. Howard and Mr. Neff discussed the possibility of the Board visiting a project. Mr. Neff is interested in having the Board visit a site in Jasper County. Mr. Curless asked for any questions or concerns from the public, none given.

Mr. Curless: The next item on the agenda is the Ordinance Review and Endorsement. Mr. Howard shared that board members have been given the opportunity to review the ordinance and it is available for review on the website. Mr. Howard asked if there were any questions or comments from the Board or public. There being none, Mr. Howard continued, Mr. Chairman at this time I would ask for a motion from the Board as follows: The Board of the Wabash County Plan Commission certifies to the Board of Commissioners of Wabash County its favorable recommendation to adopt such replacement zoning ordinance and maps. Do I have a motion by the Board as stated, so moved by Mr. Vogel. Second by Mr. Hann. A roll call vote was taken with all 7 members present voting in favor, motion passes 7-0. The new Zoning Ordinance will be presented to the towns of LaFontaine, Lagro, and Roann for certification and to the County Commissioners. The proposal to the County Commissioners will be for the replacement zoning ordinance to become effective on January 1, 2023.

Mr. Howard gave the following updates:

- Complaints: the Kowalczyk property in Lagro Corp., Brainard Excavating has been working and reports they should have the site complete November 4. The Debra Clark property has had an interested buyer contact the office about having time to clean it up. Mr. Howard shared that the Board would work with a buyer to allow time. According to Ms. Clark the potential buyer started working without owner permission.
- Other business: Mr. Howard informed the Board the office is looking into purchasing a new printer, at a cost of approximately \$650. The current printer was purchased in 2015. Mr. Howard is working with the auditor's office to get quotes and will work with the Auditor and Commissioners for funds.

- Shared with the Board that he had met with Alex Downard, who will be working on the implementation of the Imagine One 85 plan. In the meeting they reviewed the Plan Commission goals for the county, current projects, and budgets.

There being no further business Mr. Curless asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Vogel made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Rosen. Vote on the motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Amanda Lyons
Secretary, Wabash County Plan Commission Board
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