

ROLL CALL

Harry Baumgartner, Jr.	Jerome Markley
Tyson Brooks	Tim Rohr
Jarrold Hahn	John Schuhmacher
Bill Horan	
Josh Hunt	
Erin Kreigh	

Michael Lautzenheiser, Jr., Director

The May 27, 2020, meeting of the Area Plan Commission was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Jerome Markley. Eight members were present for roll call. Tim Rohr arrived late. Becky Stone-Smith was absent. The Town of Ossian doesn't have an appointee currently.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

There were no minutes to approve due to the packets for this meeting getting handed out the night of the previous meeting.

**OLD ITEMS:**

**NEW ITEMS:**

**A 20-04-09 JEFFERSON TWP. SE/4 10-28N-12E Ronald & Renee Gustafson request an approval for a zoning change to A-R. The property is located at 3649 E 1000 N, Ossian, IN 46777 and is zoned R-1.**

Ronald Gustafson represented the rezoning petition. He gave detail on what they are wanting to have on the property and why the rezoning request was needed. Jerome Markley verified the recommendation options the board has a choice to vote on and asked the board if they had any questions. Tyson Brooks asked about the six homes connecting to the property. Mr. Markley asked about kennel vs boarding. Mr. Gustafson said that it would be grooming and short-term boarding. Mr. Markley mentioned water and sewer concerns. He asked if there was any questions or comments from the board or public. There were none.

Motion to send a Do Pass Recommendation: Jarrod Hahn

Second: Bill Horan

Vote: 7-1 (Harry Baumgartner, Jr)

**A 20-04-08 LANCASTER TWP. SE/4 21-27N-12E RTT Investments LLC requests approval for a new apartment complex and storage facility. The property is located at 2200 & 2250 N Main St., Bluffton, IN 46714 and zoned R-3 & B-3.**

Cody Ward, MLS Engineering, presented the development plan. He explained the Bluffton Apartments and Storage layout and details for the plan. He talked about using City of Bluffton standards due to their request for being annexed into city limits. Jerome Markley asked if there were items to be discussed from Plat Committee. Michael Lautzenheiser, Jr. talked about the traffic control items that should be recommended. He also talked about stormwater and how the plans would help those surrounding properties as well. They discussed street lighting that needs to be shown on the drawings and dedication of the right-of-way (ROW)/easements that would require a major subdivision petition. The board had a discussion on ROW and property lines.

They also talked about the modifications needed for connectivity due to not having enough connection points. Mr. Hahn talked about the one recommendation for stormwater and how the change had been made. The board explored options for leaving the apartment and storage complex and asked if an additional turn lane would be an option for those turning right onto SR 1. Mr. Ward said he would look into that request with INDOT. Mr. Markley asked about a timeframe for completion of the project. Mr. Ward said that from start of construction to completion would be approximately 20 months. Mr. Markley asked if the annexation would affect anything that the board would need to consider. Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the annexation process has started but that it can take a long time for the decision to be finalized. The board had a lengthy discussion on the connectivity requirement and connection to North Oaks Subdivision. Tyson Brooks asked if the apartments would be subsidized rent. Mr. Ward said that they would be market rate apartments.

Jerome Markley asked if there was any comment from the public regarding this petition. Mitch Fiechter said that no good would come from this project. He talked about Spruce Drive being dangerous already and that 17 kids live along that road that are 10 and under. Mr. Fiechter asked about traffic flows, and who would be responsible for retention pond and trash on the property. He also talked about the petition that had 90 signatures. Brian Buuck asked how it would be a positive impact. He was concerned about apartments being right next door to homes. He questioned what happened if the drainage situation was worse after project completion as well as an additional 180 young individuals trying to get to work at the same time. Dean Vendal said he picked a home on a corner. He said that connecting would promote additional traffic through North Oaks. He also mentioned that stop signs wouldn't stop people on narrow streets. He talked about 4 homes being for sale already with probably more if this was approved. Mr. Vendal recommended to the board to not approve the petition. Candy Miller said that she was fearful for this petition and voiced her concern of traffic issues already present and how they would worsen with the additional traffic. Chrystal Streeter said she was upset about the project. She talked about concern for her 7-year-old with the increase of traffic. She also mentioned the road condition currently and what would happen with the added traffic on the roads. She said it was a quiet neighborhood and was worried about property value decreasing with the apartments nearby. Angie Arnold said that there are traffic issues currently with the stop signs and speed limits being followed. She talked about kids being out non-stop from 6 am to 9 pm. She discussed the drainage issues they have in the neighborhood. Jeff Holdman mentioned living there for 1 year. He is concerned about property values going down. He also asked about the alternative of maybe connecting to Wal-Mart for the connection instead of North Oaks. Jamie Vendal asked if the project area is not annexed, then is the project not feasible. They are on a well and don't want to be forced to city water. She also mentioned the sewer smell and had questions regarding the project's sewer discharge. John Whicker, Mayor of Bluffton, gave information regarding annexation concerns and the process for areas would be annexed. He mentioned the city having money in making updates for the project and the issues that are being addressed. Jeff Stringer, RTT Investments, said that the apartments are in regards of the new jobs coming to town. He talked about rerouting water that wasn't theirs to reroute to help North Oaks and the property to the north. He said they are trying to make things better, not worse, by this project moving forward. Doug Sundling, consultant for City of Bluffton, talked about the issues that some areas such as North Oaks are facing. He said that growth isn't always popular and not up to RTT to accommodate all the growth. Roger Thornton talked about needing to grow the area to help improve the quality of schools. He said that he commended the concerns stated by the North Oak residents but felt this is a good proposal based on the Housing Study that was performed in 2017. Joana Campbell said that she wanted to stand up for her neighbors on

Spruce. She said there are golf carts, kids playing, and people on bikes a lot of the time. She said that this project would discourage the “get outside” mentality. Lori Steffen, A-1 U-Store, said she wants to see Bluffton grow. She asked if there was a different connection available instead of going through North Oaks. She talked about her concern for the retaining pond. Chad Kline, Wells County Economic Director, talked about the 2017 Housing Study and the different levels of housing that is needed. He said it is hard to get market rate housing, and that this project could help improve that area. Donna Eisenhut talked about her property being the one with the water damage right now. She wanted to know who would maintain the detention pond and handle the drainage issues. She also wanted to see a fence between the properties. Ms. Eisenhut also voiced concern about the sewage issue that they currently have.

Jerome Markley asked Mr. Ward for answers to the public’s questions. Mr. Ward talked about safety being a priority of theirs and that was one of the reasons for the traffic study. He said that the speed limit would be 25 mph compared to the 35 mph in North Oaks currently. He said that additional stops could be added if needed. Mr. Ward talked about the stormwater drainage and how they were helping some of the drainage issues in North Oaks by doing additional work. He said that the lights on the apartment as well as the streets won’t leave the property. The property owner is responsible for the upkeep on the property in regards to mowing and detention areas. He also said that a fence could be considered. Jarrod Hahn asked how the apartments would be split. Jeff Stringer said that it would be 80% of 1-bedroom apartments and 20% of 2-bedroom apartments. Mr. Hahn asked about the traffic study. Mr. Ward said that the study was done last year and looked at the potential project along with North Oaks. Mr. Markley asked if it would be possible to have 2 lanes leaving the property along SR 1. Mr. Ward said that INDOT didn’t require it, but he would see if they would approve it. Mr. Markley asked about the notification issues. Michael Lautzenheiser explained how the office notifications worked. Dean Vendal said that he would rather see an expansion of North Oaks instead of the apartments. He asked if the apartments wouldn’t fill up what the outcome would be. Jeff Stringer said that they are bringing 410 jobs to town followed by 180 apartments. He said that with the amount of money being invested on the apartments, they wouldn’t be low-income based apartments. He said that the apartments are being built for the jobs. Mr. Stringer also said that more people equal more restaurants. Brian Buuck asked about getting rid of some of the storage units and moving everything closer to SR 1. Tyson Brooks talked about when he thought his property value was going to be decreasing due to a project going in near his home, and the property values did the opposite and increased. William Morris suggested a different connection point. Tim Affolder asked about the INDOT traffic study and where the 55 mph to 45mph took place along SR 1. He’s concerned about the increase of traffic causing an increase in accidents.

Several board members offered comments. Tyson Brooks asked about the possibility of stop lights. Josh Hunt said that there wasn’t enough traffic. He also asked if North Oaks had an HOA and suggested if they didn’t like the project then make an offer to purchase the land to prevent it from being developed. Bill Horan said that he likes the plan and that it is needed in town, however, he was concerned about the traffic flow and would rather see a stub street. There was discussion on the required connection points needed and the options that the project might have. There was discussion about an emergency lane only for Fire, Police, and EMS access. Michael Lautzenheiser talked about the possibility of reducing required setbacks to allow development to the south. Jarrod Hahn said that we need to try to prevent another Willowbrook.

Jerome Markley asked for final comments. There was discussion on the fence being requested by the property owners in North Oaks in addition to the connectivity for the project. Jeff Stringer asked if it would be possible to continue the petition until the next meeting.

Motion to continue to July 2, 2020, meeting: Jarrod Hahn

Second: Tyson Brooks

Vote: 9-0

Jerome Markley thanked everyone for their attendance.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**DISCUSSION:**

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Michael Lautzenheiser said that the survey is finalized. Next step would be to have it available to the public.

**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION UPDATES**

Michael Lautzenheiser stated that Ossian's Amphitheater bed opening was successful. He talked about mural projects as well.

**HOUSING STUDY UPDATE**

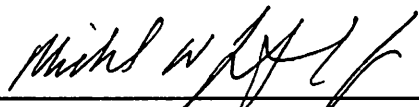
Michael Lautzenheiser said there is a lot of work to be done. He said that there have been more discussions this year compared to the last several years combined.


**ADVISORY:**

Jerome Markley confirmed the July 2, 2020, meeting at a location to be determined.

**ADJOURN:**

Josh Hunt made a motion to adjourn the meeting. John Schuhmacher seconded the motion. The May 27, 2020, Area Plan Commission meeting adjourned at 9:46 p.m.

ATTEST:  \_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Lautzenheiser Jr., Secretary

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Jerome Markley, President