

ROLL CALL

Harry Baumgartner, Jr.	Jerome Markley
Tyson Brooks	Tim Rohr
	John Schuhmacher
	Becky Stone-Smith
Bill Horan	
Josh Hunt	

Michael Lautzenheiser, Jr., Director

The May 5, 2022, meeting of the Area Plan Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Jerome Markley. Eight members were present for roll call. Cory Elzey, Jarrod Hahn, and Melissa Woodworth were absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Tyson Brooks made a motion to approve the minutes with changes from the April 7, 2022, meeting. Becky Stone-Smith seconded the motion; the motion carried 8-0.

OLD ITEMS:

NEW ITEMS:

A 22-05-06 HARRISON TWP. NE/4 18-26N-12E Wells County Board of Commissioners requests approval for the New Highway Garage Project. The property is located on 200 S west of the SW corner of 200 S & Adams St., Bluffton, IN 46714 and is zoned I-1.

Connor Jackson, Construction Manager for James Jackson Co., presented the development plan for the new proposed highway garage project. Michael Lautzenheiser gave an update from the Plat Committee meeting earlier that day. He talked about the city sign-off sheet needed due to the city utility connections that the property will have in the future. Mr. Jackson said that the city and county are still in discussion on changes that are happening, but the footprint isn't changing and will remain the same. Jerome Markley asked if there were any questions from the board. Tyson Brooks asked if the Drainage Board had granted their approval yet. It was stated that it hasn't been before that board yet. There was discussion on the cost being reduced on the project and how that would look. There was a review of the conditions that would be needed for an approval. Mr. Markley asked if there were any public comments regarding this petition. There were no comments or concerns addressed by the public.

Conditions: City sign-off sheet; Drainage Board approval; Driveway Permits; all easements established need to be shown on updated drawing.

Motion to Approve: Tyson Brooks

Second: Josh Hunt

Vote: 8-0

OTHER BUSINESS:

Wells County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance

Michael Lautzenheiser gave information on the ordinance that was sent to all the incorporated bodies for the boards to adopt. There was discussion on items being shown and updated on the Beacon GIS website.

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATES:
Solar Survey Results & Vision 2035 Draft**

Michael Lautzenheiser gave a recap of the survey result summary page. There was discussion on the number of responses from round two of the survey. Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the goal is to vote on the draft at the June meeting. Jerome Markley asked Tyson Brooks if he had reached out to the Commissioners. Mr. Brooks said that he had but hadn't gotten any response. There was a discussion on the how the board was out of options for getting additional public input. Josh Hunt mentioned reading lots of false comments in the survey results. He said that it's the property owner's choice to lease the ground, and they aren't being forced to lease the ground to the solar companies. There was a discussion on the difference in the Comprehensive Plan vs the Ordinance currently in place.

Robert Park, from Lancaster Township, voiced his opinion on the solar leases and that the county should try to protect the farm ground so we are able to continue growing food. He said that taking the farm ground away will endanger wildlife as well and cause global warming. Mr. Park also asked about the 4-lane bypass around Ossian and asked if there were any other alternatives. He ended with stating he's not against solar, but that he wasn't on board with taking farm ground out of production. Michael Lautzenheiser talked about the INDOT project lists for funded and non-funded items. There was discussion on long-range planning regarding road projects.

Bruce Monce voiced concern for the eagle population along the Salamonie River and other wildlife issues. He stated that it should be up to property owners to decide, but only two were residents of Wells County. He also said that we should assist in developing home and business solar but not solar farms. There was some discussion on local ownership and leases.

Heidi Dettmer voiced concern about the bypass shown in Vision 2035 and how it would negatively affect her property. She mentioned not wanting the property rezoned either and said it should be up to the property owner.

Aaron Dettmer said no to the bypass on 450 E and said that there needs to be other options available and that a bypass around Ossian would kill the town.

Marielle Lael said that it was unfortunate that the Town of Ossian's representative wasn't at the meeting. She voiced concern on farm ground being used for bypass and how it would impact the family farm.

David Haiflich asked why money was being spent on state road research. There was discussion on INDOT and why Wells County is concerned about the need for traffic control. There was also discussion on how the elected officials need to be made aware of the concerns the public has regarding these items.

There was discussion between the public and the board on how items were selected for the Vision 2035 document. It was asked that alternative routes be shown as well.

Tabby Fate voiced concern over a solar farm development. She said she didn't want to look at it because it would take away from watching wildlife on neighboring properties. There was discussion on the financial impact. Mrs. Fate asked about radiation from solar panels. There was discussion on radiation and sound that comes from the panels.

Benjamin Herman asked where the wording came from regarding solar. He asked to have the wording changed regarding solar but when asked didn't want to make recommendations. There was discussion on the wording on page 31 of the document as well as property rights.

There was additional discussion on pages 37, 38, 52, and 63. Josh Hunt thanked everyone on voicing their opinions and giving feedback.

Vicki Andrews thanked the board for listening to the public comment. She said that the county engineer helped with grant for funding on future projects. She also mentioned that the majority of leased properties are managed farms, and that money isn't always the answer.

REVITALIZATION UPDATES:

Michael Lautzenheiser gave an update and said that the CRP Program projects have been approved and that there were enough funds left over for project(s) at a later date. He also talked about the upcoming concert series for Bluffton and Ossian, as well as the Plaza's farmers' markets.

TRAILS UPDATE:

Michael Lautzenheiser talked about how Phase 2 for the Interurban Trail funding had been received. He also talked about the 2023 timeline for the Lancaster Park grant. Mr. Lautzenheiser talked about the Ossian Park loop trail connecting to the Sandalwood addition.

HOUSING STUDY UPDATE:

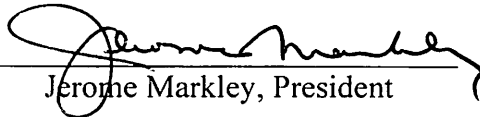
Michael Lautzenheiser talked about the possibility of the smaller towns being able to rebuild now with the sewer projects taking place.

ADVISORY:

The June 2, 2022, meeting was confirmed. It was mentioned that there will be a different location, and it would be confirmed again with meeting date and time due to availability.

ADJOURN:

John Schuhmacher made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tim Rohr seconded the motion. The May 5, 2022, Area Plan Commission meeting adjourned at 9:43 p.m.


Jerome Markley, President

ATTEST: 
Michael Lautzenheiser Jr., Secretary