

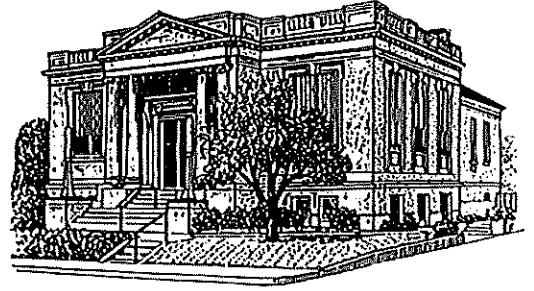
WELLS COUNTY AREA PLAN COMMISSION

WELLS CARNEGIE GOVERNMENT ANNEX

223 W. Washington St.

Bluffton, Indiana 46714-1955

Room 211 PHONE - 824-6407



MEETING OF THE WELLS COUNTY AREA PLAN COMMISSION

THURSDAY, June 13, 2024 AT 7:00 P.M.

**ROOM 105 (MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM) LOWER LEVEL OF THE WELLS CARNEGIE
GOVERNMENT ANNEX BUILDING, 223 W. WASHINGTON ST., BLUFFTON, IN.
USE ELEVATOR ENTRANCE - EAST SIDE OF THE BUILDING**

AGENDA

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

OLD ITEMS

NEW ITEMS

A 24-06-08 HARRISON NE/4 4-26N-12E Daniel Dubach requests approval for proposed building addition, sidewalks, and parking. The property is located at 505 S Main St., Bluffton, IN 46714 and is zoned B-1.

A 24-06-09 LANCASTER TWP. SW/4 33-27N-12E Almco Steel Products Corporation requests approval for a rezoning to I-2. The property is located off Lancaster St, Bluffton, IN 46714 and is zoned A-R.

OTHER BUSINESS

- V2023-022: Thomas Reinhard, 10017 S 200 W, Keystone (Junk Accumulation)
- V2023-023: Sarah Swinford, 527 S Marion, Bluffton (Fence Location)

WELLS COUNTY VISION 2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROGRESS

REVITALIZATION/TRAILS UPDATES

HOUSING STUDY UPDATE

ADVISORY

ADJOURN

ROLL CALL

Harry Baumgartner, Jr.	Jerome Markley
Tyson Brooks	John Potter
Chandler Gerber	Tim Rohr
Jarrold Hahn	John Schuhmacher
Bill Horan	Melissa Woodworth
Geoff Lance	

Michael Lautzenheiser, Jr., Director

The June 13, 2024, meeting of the Area Plan Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Board President Jerome Markley. All members were present for roll call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Jarrold Hahn made a motion to approve the minutes with changes from the May 2, 2024, meeting. Tyson Brooks seconded the motion; the motion carried 11-0.

OLD ITEMS:

No old items to discuss.

OTHER BUSINESS:

V2023-022: Thomas Reinhard, 10017 S 200 W, Keystone (Junk Accumulation)

Cody Miller was at the meeting. Michael Lautzenheiser said that a site inspection had been done and that the violation has been resolved.

V2023-023: Sarah Swinford, 527 S Marion, Bluffton (Fence Location)

Michael Lautzenheiser said that a site inspection had been done and that the violation has been resolved.

NEW ITEMS:

A 24-06-08 HARRISON NE/4 4-26N-12E Daniel Dubach requests approval for proposed building addition, sidewalks, and parking. The property is located at 505 S Main St., Bluffton, IN 46714 and is zoned B-1.

Brett Miller with MLS Engineering was there to present the development plan requests along with Dan Dubach. Mr. Miller gave a recap of the site layout and the addition. He said that the city has already reviewed and given their approval by providing the sign-off sheet. There was a discussion on the Street Department's note on the sign-off sheet. Michael Lautzenheiser said that all items have been addressed from Plat Committee's stance. Jerome Markley asked if there were any additional board comments or questions. There were none. Mr. Markley asked if there was anyone from the public to speak regarding this petition. There were none.

Motion to Approve: Jarrold Hahn

Second: Tyson Brooks

Vote: 11-0

A 24-06-09 LANCASTER TWP. SW/4 33-27N-12E Almco Steel Products Corporation requests approval for a rezoning to I-2. The property is located off Lancaster St, Bluffton, IN 46714 and is zoned A-R.

Jim Almdale, Gary Aschliman, and Greg Rekeweg were at the meeting to present this rezoning request. Mr. Almdale said that they want to start the future growth for Almco Steel. He said that there was an opportunity to purchase the ground in 2023 for future activity. Jerome Markley mentioned that this would be a recommendation to the City of Bluffton and that the Bluffton Common Council would be making the final decision. Michael Lautzenheiser said that it is currently zoned A-R due to a cell tower rezoning request of which the cell tower was never built. There is M-2, R-1, and I-2 zoning surrounding the property. Jarrod Hahn asked about plans and Mr. Almdale said there were no immediate plans at this time. There was more discussion on the property layout on both sides of Oak Street Extended.

Jerome Markley opened the floor to the public wishing to speak about this petition. Susan Grove from 1025 Lancaster St., Bluffton thanked the board for taking time to listen to the concerned people about this rezoning request. She explained her reasoning as to why she felt that Almco Steel did not meet the 5 requirements needed for a rezoning to take place. She reviewed each point and provided reasoning on each. Carolyn Ritchey at 232 N Baldwin, Bluffton, talked about the huge semi-truck traffic issues in the area. She also felt that Almco Steel doesn't hide their mess. She agreed that Bluffton needs to grow, just not in that area, and to keep industrial expansion with industrial areas. Ms. Ritchey was concerned about property values as well. Dallas Moser at 1526 W Lancaster, Bluffton, said that there is other ground around that would be better for industrial, and the truck route needs to go away from this area due to safety concerns. Ron Nelson at 1120 W Lancaster, Bluffton, talked about all the truck traffic and how it will ruin the new roads. Jim Bowman at 48 Hi-Lo Drive, Bluffton, said that they are just wanting to rezone it so they can sell it down the road. He commented about the already existing water line issues around that area. Ron & Arlene Wedler at 1007 W Wabash, Bluffton, talked about the kids in the area, the increase in rental units around there, and that there are no safe truck traffic route roads. Mrs. Wedler spoke about the 3-way intersection at Bond and Wabash and how awful it is. Kent Thompson at 1502 Lancaster St., Bluffton, talked about his grandparents being previous owners to that property and why does the whole property need to be rezoned. He said you can't please everyone and suggested a buffer around the area and not rezone the whole property. Harry Lane at 717 W Lancaster, Bluffton, talked about watching kids walking along Lancaster with all the truck traffic and his concern that it increases even more. Kari Cale at 7830 S 100 E, Poneto, said that the Comprehensive Plan books are available for purchase in the Area Plan Office. She mentioned page 113 of the plan and that it's already showing in red for industrial. She asked if it would take another \$63,000 lawsuit to take care of this the right way like they did for wind. Jacques Dube at 1211 Lancaster St., Bluffton, said that he can imagine a zoning change in that area and that it will disturb the peace. He feels it would be a mistake and would make the elderly move out of the trailer park. Polly Wymer at 7515 N 400 W-90, Markle, said that she is monitoring the solar situation and found out about this on the solar page on Facebook. She said that it's 2024, and there should be some kind of text alert for the public to be notified of petitions. Jarrod Hahn said that the board is not at the meeting tonight to discuss solar and/or wind and to keep it on this topic. Sarah & Brian Beedon at 180 N Oak Ext, Bluffton, talked about the constant noise pollution and how she lives next to the parking lot. She spoke about the water and drainage issues in the area and said once it's industrial it can't be changed back. Mrs. Beedon said that her grandparents and mother couldn't fight for what they thought was right, but she can. Mrs. Cale asked about page 53 of the Comprehensive Plan. Michael Lautzenheiser said that it shows a concept of ways to connect to the interstate. Mr. Hahn talked

about the history of flooding on Oak Street Extended and how at times it was impassable, so the bypass was built, and a portion of the road was closed. Mr. Lautzenheiser explained that the proposed zoning map is the same as the previous comprehensive plan. Mr. Hahn asked if Almco had plans ready for the property. He explained how rezonings are usually done before investing the costs for a development plan to be created. He said that if it were to be rezoned then, the board would investigate the finer details with the governing body as part of the development plan. Phillip Grove at 5799 Sunset Lane, Indianapolis, is the son of Susan Grove. He said that he does rezonings all over and there is always some type of rendering given. He said they took the zoning risk in buying the ground before rezoning, and it appears that the public is not on board with this proposed change or the current comprehensive plan. Mr. Grove stated that the property owner had a chance to reach out to the neighbors. Ms. Ritchey voiced concern about the size of the sign and that it's heavy industrial instead of light industrial. She is concerned for the pets and kids in the area. There is a discussion on the possibility of an increase in taxes with the expansion of industrial areas. Judy Stury at 8316 Woodacre St, Alexandria, VA is the daughter of Susan Grove. She talked about how the owners of Almco Steel are pleasant to work with, but no formal offer had been given to the neighbors. She thanked the board for what they did and told them that they are doing a good job. She recapped the 5 areas to look at in a rezoning and said that she feels they cannot meet those requirements. Mrs. Stury talked about an email that was sent to the office with the response from Mr. Almdale. There was discussion as no email was received prior to the meeting. There was a discussion on a buffer and if it would be a requirement. Arlene Wedler at 1007 Wabash St, Bluffton, talked about how all their answers mentioned the Vision 2035 Plan and asked what it will do to the land. Fred Wymer at 7515 N 400 W-90, Markle, handed out a flyer showing what the Town of Markle does for notifications. Jerome Markley closed the public comment portion.

There was a review in the steps of a rezoning and how some rezone before or after purchasing. Jerome Markley asked Chandler Gerber as the city's appointment to the board for his input and thoughts on the request. Mr. Gerber said that the frustration on the lack of investment on the west side of Bluffton is not lost on him. He mentioned family living in the area. Mr. Gerber also said that the lack of infrastructure doesn't fall on Almco. There was discussion on more development in the area can potentially lower surrounding taxes. Jim Almdale said they have thought about what would go on that ground, but nothing is finalized. He talked about Almco Steel being located there since 1946, and promises made in the past have been kept. He said that there would be an adequate buffer in place. Mr. Almdale said he wants to grow and add jobs to the community and said that good can come from growth. Greg Rekeweg said that they want to be good citizens and neighbors and mentioned a strong buffer. Michael Lautzenheiser asked if they would consider a partial lot rezoning. There were several continued interruptions from the public. Jarrod Hahn said that the board looks at what all can be done with the zoning request. He said the board makes a recommendation, and Bluffton Common Council makes the final decision. There was discussion on the possibility of adding street access on the property to bypass some of the congested areas. The board talked about the drainage problems in the area and the issues that could possibly be addressed in a development plan. There was additional talk about partial rezoning, land use restrictions, and buffer requirements. The petitioner was agreeable to continuing the petition until August to better look at the rezoning options.

Motion to continue to the August 1, 2024, meeting: Tyson Brooks

Second: Bill Horan

Vote: 11-0

WELLS COUNTY VISION 2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROGRESS

Michael Lautzenheiser talked about the community focus plans starting and the steering committee that will be meeting on July 1, 2024. This will help each community zoom into their communities for more information.

REVITALIZATION/TRAILS UPDATES

Michael Lautzenheiser gave trail and alley updates. He talked about the Downtown Ossian project moving forward and the future PUD zoning that will be presented to the board. He also spoke about the Vera Cruz Launch Project.

HOUSING STUDY UPDATE

Michael Lautzenheiser mentioned the community planning process again. He said that the office has had an uptick in questions about multi-family housing and the need for workforce housing.

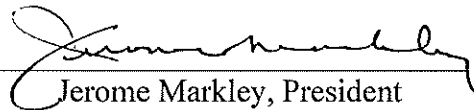
ADVISORY:

Michael Lautzenheiser said that as of June 6, 2024, the Paddlefish Project was officially denied due to the Commissioners not voting within 90 days. The earliest they could reapply would be March 8, 2025, unless if the board president decides that significant changes have been made. There was talk about Paddlefish asking the Commissioners to withdraw their petition, however, that isn't allowed since our board had already passed a recommendation to them.

The July 11, 2024, meeting was confirmed.

ADJOURN:

John Schuhmacher made a motion to adjourn the meeting. John Potter seconded the motion. The motion was carried with a vote of 11-0. The June 13, 2024, Area Plan Commission meeting adjourned at 9:33 p.m.


Jerome Markley, President

ATTEST: 
Michael Lautzenheiser Jr., Secretary