

ROLL CALL

Harry Baumgartner, Jr.	Jerome Markley
	John Potter
Jarrold Hahn	Tim Rohr
Bill Horan	John Schuhmacher
Rick Elwell	
Erin Kreigh	
Michael Lautzenheiser, Jr., Director	

The November 7, 2024, meeting of the Area Plan Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Board President Jerome Markley. Nine members were present for the roll call. Tyson Brooks and Melissa Woodworth were absent. Erin Kreigh was filling in for Geoff Lance as the Uniondale Town Board Alternate.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Jarrold Hahn moved to approve the minutes with changes from the September 26, 2024, meeting. Tim Rohr seconded the motion, which carried 9-0.

**OLD ITEMS:**

There were no old items discussed.

**NEW ITEMS:**

**A 24-11-19 HARRISON TWP. NW/4 5-26N-12E BCG Capital LLC & Minnich Enterprises LLC request approval for a rezoning to I-1. The properties are located at 1590 W Washington St & 1600 W Washington St., Bluffton, IN 46714 (also known as the Former County Highway Department Properties) and are currently zoned R-1.**

Brandon Gerber and Scott Minnich presented the rezoning petition to the board. They mentioned the properties' current uses and how, based on their previous use, it was assumed they were zoning correctly. Michael Lautzenheiser gave a zoning recap of the neighboring properties. There was a request to speak up from the audience. There was a discussion on I-1 zoning uses and fencing that may be required. Jerome Markley asked if anyone from the public wished to speak on this petition. Dallas Moser asked if the trash containers/dumpsters on site would be stored filled or empty. Kevin Seago mentioned his concern for increased traffic and safety for the children who play in the area. Mr. Markley asked Mr. Gerber and Mr. Minnich to come back for additional discussion regarding the public's questions and concerns. Mr. Gerber said the container storage onsite is for an overflow area, and the containers are stored empty. He also mentioned that he didn't see much increase in traffic for the town. Mr. Markey reviewed the motions available for the board.

Motion to send a Do Pass Recommendation to Bluffton Common Council: Tim Rohr

Second: John Potter

Vote: 9-0

**A 24-11-20 LANCASTER TWP. SE/4 32-27N-12E Solid Rock Rentals requests approval to vacate Lots 18-25 of Forget-Me-Not Acres along with a portion of the undeveloped public road. The properties are located at Serenity Trail, Bluffton, IN 46714, which is currently zoned R-1.**

Drew Gerber from Solid Rock Rentals and Cody Ward from MLS Engineering recapped the overall project and the waiver that would be required. Jerome Markley informed the board that there would be 3 petitions pertaining to this overall project and that the board would need to look

at them in order. He mentioned the first step in the order was for the proposed vacating of the 8 parcels. Michael Lautzenheiser explained the proposed vacating in more detail. There was discussion on when that proportion of the subdivision was approved. Mr. Markley opened the floor for the public to comment on this portion of the project. Derek Furrow asked why a change was needed and said he hadn't seen any plans for the project. Benny Murray asked what the zoning would be if vacated and not rezoned later. He also asked why it can't be discussed as a whole project versus the 3 steps. Jeremiah Wondercheck voiced concern about the traffic increase. The public comment portion for this petition was closed, and Mr. Gerber and Mr. Ward were asked to come back for additional discussion. There was discussion on the need for this housing style and that people were looking for a nice place to live. Mr. Gerber said he was asking for new use on the property and changing the property lines to allow that. Mr. Markley reviewed the motions available.

Motion to Approve vacating request & more forward to Bluffton Common Council: Jarrod Hahn  
Second: Tim Rohr  
Vote: 9-0

**A 24-11-21 LANCASTER TWP. SE/4 32-27N-12E Solid Rock Rentals request approval for rezoning to R-3. The 3.34 acres are located off the east end of Serenity Trail, Bluffton, IN 46714, and are currently zoned R-1.**

Drew Gerber from Solid Rock Rentals and Cody Ward from MLS Engineering recapped the overall project and explained the rezoning request. Jerome Markley verified that the rezoning request allowed multi-family use instead of only single-family home use. The surrounding properties and the zoning on those parcels were discussed. Mr. Markley reminded everyone that Bluffton Common Council has the final say on rezoning. Screening and whether it would be required were also discussed. Mr. Markley opened the floor for the public to comment on this portion of the project. Derek Furrow voiced concerns about the private road versus public road, setbacks, traffic increase, and multi-family dwellings. There was a discussion on how private roads are allowed. There was also a discussion on the watershed of the property. Mr. Furrow asked if a buffer could be placed. It was said that it wasn't a requirement but that the developer could possibly offer that if they wished. Jeremiah Wondercheck voiced concern about hard rains and how the neighborhood isn't set up to handle existing run-off. Jarrod Hahn explained the stormwater route. Mr. Wondercheck also voiced concern about the children's safety with the increased traffic. He said that it isn't against more people in the area but is this beneficial route for existing homeowners in the neighborhood. Rick Elwell asked if anyone had contacted the City about the current issues in the neighborhood. There was more discussion on the concerns. Benny Murray gave a history of the subdivision. Kent Thompson said that there are nice homes in that area and that we need to beautify Bluffton. Michael Yancey said that he bought this property since it was in a secluded area and shared his concern with multi-family housing and the value of this property. Complaints were made about the Area Plan letting the KOA change from a campground to a trailer park. The public comment portion for this petition was closed. Mr. Gerber and Mr. Ward were invited back to the microphone to discuss the concerns mentioned by the public. There was a discussion on the type of project and layout of apartments, stormwater drainage, and lighting in the area. Erin Kreigh asked if there could be a neighborhood meeting to discuss the plans before going to Bluffton Council. Rick Elwell suggested waiting on the development plan portion to see how the rezoning petition went with the city. Mr. Hahn said there needs to be some type of motion tonight and suggested no recommendation to be sent; however, ask Bluffton to determine if a safety fence is needed around the detention area.. There was a review of the motions available for this type of petition.

Motion to send a No Recommendation to Bluffton Common Council: Jarrod Hahn  
Second: Bill Horan  
Vote: 9-0

**A 24-11-22 LANCASTER TWP. SE/4 32-27N-12E Solid Rock Rentals requests approval for an eight-unit apartment building with 26 units. The property is located off Serenity Trail, Bluffton, IN 46714, and is currently zoned R-1 with a proposed zoning of R-3.**

Michael Lautzenheiser asked the petitioner if they would like to proceed with or continue this petition. Cody Ward said that they would like to continue the petition. There was a discussion on the timeline for a neighborhood meeting and the Bluffton Common Council meeting schedule.

Motion to continue to the January 9, 2025, meeting: Jarrod Hahn  
Second: John Schuhmacher  
Vote: 9-0

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Community Master Plans Presentation by The Veridus Group**

Pete Olson recapped the progress with the Wells County Master Plan and mentioned two upcoming public meetings in Bluffton and Ossian. He also discussed the county-wide survey and asked the board if they had any questions. Susan Grove requested that the survey be available in the local paper.

**V2023-021: Rodger Watson, 7666 S 200 E, Bluffton (Junk Accumulation)**

Ellen Rasawehr was at the meeting as a representative for the violation. She asked the board for additional time to clean up the property. Michael Lautzenheiser thanked her for the continued communication with the office and the progress made. There was a timeline discussion.

Motion to continue to February 6, 2025, meeting: John Schuhmacher  
Second: Jarrod Hahn  
Vote: 9-0

**Proposed 2025 Calendar**

There was a correction to the 2025 calendar, and the board was asked to approve it as presented.

Motion to Approve: Jarrod Hahn  
Second: John Schuhmacher  
Vote: 9-0

**REVITALIZATION/TRAIL UPDATES**

Michael Lautzenheiser updated the board regarding the trails' fundraiser and proposed studies for SR 124.

**HOUSING STUDY UPDATE**

Michael Lautzenheiser mentioned the home starts possibly being down from the 2023 numbers.

**ADVISORY:**


Jerome Markley confirmed the December 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Michael Lautzenheiser mentioned the upcoming amendments the office was looking at.

**ADJOURN:**

John Schuhmacher moved to adjourn the meeting, which Tim Rohr seconded. The motion was carried 9-0. The November 7, 2024, Area Plan Commission meeting was adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

ATTEST:

  
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Michael Lautzenheiser Jr., Secretary

  
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~~Jerome Markley~~, President  
Tyson Brooks