

ROLL CALL

Vicki Andrews	Geoff Lance
Harry Baumgartner, Jr.	Paul Miller
Tyson Brooks	Tim Rohr
Rick Elwell	John Schuhmacher
Jarrold Hahn	Jeff Kemper
Bill Horan	

Michael Lautzenheiser, Jr., Director

On June 11, 2025, Tyson Brooks called the meeting of the Area Plan Commission to order at 7:00 p.m., and 11 members were present for a roll call. Paul Miller was serving as an alternate for the Town of Poneto, and Jeff Kemper was serving for the Town of Ossian.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Tim Rohr moved to approve the minutes with changes from the May 1, 2025, meeting. Jarrod Hahn seconded the motion, which carried 9-0-2. Geoff Lance and Jeff Kemper abstained from voting.

OLD ITEMS:**NEW ITEMS:**

A 25-06-07 JEFFERSON TWP. NW/4 15-28N-12E: Matthew John Tharp and Melissa Sue Tharp request approval for rezoning to R-2. The property is located at 126 Morton Lane, Ossian, IN 46777, and is currently zoned B-1.

Melissa Tharp presented the rezoning petition. There was discussion about the surrounding area and how this request aligned with the current use of the property. Tyson Brooks opened the floor to the public, and there was no opposition to the proposed rezoning request. Mr. Brooks reviewed the motions available, as this would be a recommendation to be presented to the Town of Ossian.

Motion to send a Do Pass Recommendation to the Ossian Town Board: Jarrod Hahn

Second: Tim Rohr

Vote: 11-0

A 25-06-08 JEFFERSON TWP. NE/4 21-28N-12E: Hillcrest Development Corporation requests approval for a proposed Gas Station and Convenience Store. The property is located at the northwest corner of SR 1 and Wood Creek Drive, Ossian, IN 46777, and is currently zoned B-3.

Tyson Brooks provided an overview of the Plat Committee review, the Town of Ossian's review, and how the development plan must demonstrate compliance with the ordinance requirements. Rob Sweet presented the development plan. There was a brief discussion regarding the hours of operation, required buffers, access points, and setback distances. Jarrod Hahn asked Mr. Sweet to explain how the stormwater detention worked. Items such as fuel delivery, store delivery, and ingress/egress were also discussed. Michael Lautzenheiser explained the LOMA in the packet and how there was no floodplain in the area they wanted to build, due to the property's elevations. He also discussed the drainage board approval, which was granted before this meeting. The board discussed buffers and lighting on the site again. Mr. Brooks asked Jeff Kemper for his thoughts on the proposed project. Mr. Kemper said that he would love to see

Casey's in Ossian, but he knows many in the neighborhood are against this location. Mr. Lautzenheiser said we don't control the Economic Development Office. Mr. Kemper noted that this is a development plan and that if boxes are checked, it passes; it's not based on opinion here. Mr. Hahn explained the Drainage Board's approval of the proposed project.

Tyson Brooks opened the floor for public comment. Adam Dager inquired about their community involvement, customer counts, daily and monthly projected gas sales, whether they offer fresh or frozen donuts, and the number of deliveries. Jarrod Hahn asked if he had any specific comments or questions regarding the site development, rather than business model questions. Mr. Dager then spoke regarding traffic concerns. There was a discussion on the sidewalk on Wood Creek Drive. Jason House said that he lives directly behind this property on the other side of the creek. He gave a history of the property and said that traffic is already a nightmare in that area. He also mentioned his concern regarding the possibility of an increase in crime. Mr. House expressed concern about potential flooding on his property and questioned how they could build it in the floodplain. Mr. Hahn explained the study conducted in conjunction with the work to help remove several properties based on the LOMA process. Farley Thornsberry confirmed that the site had been built up and materials had been dumped there. He said he was concerned about property values decreasing, the traffic increasing, as well as light smell and sound pollution. Trina Bitner expressed her concerns about lighting, sound, and traffic for the proposed project. She also mentioned that commercial traffic would have significant wear and tear on the residential streets. Lisa House asked what happens when the gas station customers realize there is another route and that they don't have to wait to turn at SR 1. Michelle Bowman said that they used to attend the church on Wood Creek and voiced concern about the increase in traffic, which is happening at the church, as well as the increased traffic near the preschool. Bill Long expressed his concern about the increase in traffic and crime rates. Mr. Brooks said that we need to discuss facts, but we need to set aside our feelings. Don Williamson discussed how current traffic is already a nightmare. Mr. House brought up the bypass that has been mentioned. Mr. Brooks said that it would be an INDOT project, not this board. Mr. Dager asked how they would prevent large vehicles from accessing the property. He also asked about environmental studies. Mr. Brooks asked if any other members of the public wished to speak regarding this petition, noting that once the public comment section was closed, no additional public comments would be heard. Wendy Bitner stated that she believed a traffic study should be conducted to assess the potential impact on other roads and that she, too, shared the concerns expressed by others. Mr. Brooks closed the public comment portion.

Rob Sweet discussed light and sound pollution and how they would collaborate with the drainage board if additional items were required. He mentioned the 24-hour surveillance that would be located on the property, along with the training their employees go through to help deal with situations. He also stated that they would be willing to collaborate with the town on traffic signage. Mr. Sweet said that this project aims to clean up the site and make it usable for the town; they didn't create or place the fill on the property. He discussed deliveries, environmental studies, possible traffic studies, and light and noise pollution again. Jarrod Hahn stated that Casey's is exceeding the stormwater detention requirements for the site, which will result in less runoff than the site currently has when vacant. A few members of the board felt that a traffic study was needed.

Motion to continue to August 7, 2025, meeting: Bill Horan

Second: Vicki Andrews

Vote: 11-0

A 25-06-09 Wells County Ordinance Amendments

- Wells County Zoning Ordinance Amendments
 - 1) Definition Formatting
 - 2) Permitted Use Table Updates
 - 3) New and Updated Definitions
 - 4) Objectionable Noise Requirements
 - 5) Matching Updated Definitions
- Wells County Subdivision Control Ordinance Amendments
 - 1) Definition Formatting
 - 2) Major Subdivision Definition Update
 - 3) Matching Updated Definitions
 - 4) On-site Drainage Restrictions

Michael Lautzenheiser reviewed the ordinance amendments. There was discussion on definitions and permitted uses. Mr. Lautzenheiser asked for any public comments or questions about the changes, and there were none. There was discussion about having a racetrack zoning classification that matches the zoning classifications, such as an airport, which the board supported that change to the proposed ordinance amendments.

Motion to send a Do Pass Recommendation to the governing jurisdictions: Geoff Lance

Second: Jarrod Hahn

Vote: 10-0 (John Schuhmacher left the meeting during the ordinance amendment discussion.)

OTHER BUSINESS:**Agenda & Legal Ad Changes**

Michael Lautzenheiser explained the change to Indiana Code and how the agendas and legal notices have been updated to comply.

Proposed 2026 Budgets

Michael Lautzenheiser recapped the proposed 2026 Budget for APC and GIS.

Motion to Approve: Tim Rohr

Second: Jarrod Hahn

Vote: 10-0

WELLS COUNTY VISION 2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROGRESS:

Michael Lautzenheiser said that the Master Plan is continuing to move forward and that it was hopeful to see a final draft within 60 days. He mentioned the possibility of having a local energy advisory committee.

REVITALIZATION & TRAILS UPDATES

Michael Lautzenheiser mentioned some of the work items taking place in Bluffton.

HOUSING STUDY UPDATE

Michael Lautzenheiser mentioned upcoming multi-family housing projects, of which one has been filed and will be presented at the July meeting.

ADVISORY:

The July 3, 2025, meeting of the Wells County Area Plan Commission was confirmed.

ADJOURN:

Bill Horan moved to adjourn the meeting, which Vicki Andrews seconded. The Area Plan Commission meeting was adjourned on June 11, 2025, at 9:57 p.m.



Tyson Brooks, President

ATTEST:



Michael Lautzenheiser Jr., Secretary