

ROLL CALL

Vicki Andrews	Michael Karafin
Harry Baumgartner, Jr.	Geoff Lance
Tyson Brooks	Tim Rohr
Rick Elwell	John Schuhmacher
Jarrold Hahn	Melissa Woodworth
Bill Horan	

Michael Lautzenheiser, Jr., Director

On August 7, 2025, Tyson Brooks called the meeting of the Area Plan Commission to order at 7:00 p.m., and all members were present for a roll call.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Tim Rohr moved to approve the minutes with changes from the July 3, 2025, meeting. Jarrod Hahn seconded the motion, which carried 11-0.

**OLD ITEMS:**

**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 NW corner of SR 1 & Wood Creek Drive, Ossian, IN 46777, and is currently zoned B-3.**

Michael Lautzenheiser informed the board that the petitioner requested a continuation of the petition request for additional study work with INDOT that was needed.

Motion to continue to the October 2, 2025, meeting: Geoff Lance

Second: Jarrod Hahn

Vote: 9-0

**NEW ITEMS:**

**A 25-08-13 JEFFERSON TWP. SE/4 9-28N-12E Mike & Karen Todd request approval for a rezoning to S-1. The property is located at 2900 E 1050 N, Ossian, IN 46777, and is currently zoned R-1.**

Mike and Karen Todd asked the board for a rezoning request to S-1. There was a discussion on the previous variance last year for a barn addition and the positive side of this rezoning. The board also discussed the surrounding area and zoning on those properties. There was no public comment when the floor was opened for public comment.

Motion to send a do-pass recommendation to the County Commissioners: Tim Rohr

Second: Vicki Andrews

Vote: 11-0

**A 25-08-14 HARRISON TWP. NE/4 5-26N-12E Wilson Park Development Partnership & Futures LLC / Gorman and Company LLC request approval for a proposed 11-building 40-unit townhouse project. The property is located at the end of both W Central Street and W South Street, Bluffton, IN 46714, and is currently zoned R-3.**

Trent Claybaugh with Gorman and Company presented the petition. He explained the layout of the site, including the two site entrance locations and the types of units available in the buildings.

There was discussion on the timeline of the project and the approvals already in place by the City of Bluffton. It was mentioned that the office received an email from Karyn Poorman regarding the petition, and the board reviewed it. Discussions on ordinance requirements and fencing were had by the board, ending with the developer stating they would look into fencing options with their team.

The floor was opened for public comment. Melissa Stech asked if they were available for seniors and if there were any income-driven options. She asked for a timeline for development and when they would be available. Dennis Gerwig voiced concern for safety as there would be an increase in traffic. He was worried that kids would get hit playing as they currently do in that area. Mr. Gerwig also mentioned railroad crossings that are being closed and the delay in emergency response to that area of Bluffton. He was unaware of the project until a sign was placed. Donna Smith said it was stupid to put a driveway in the proposed location up against a property line next to a home. Since the duplexes have gone in, there has been an increase in police presence. She didn't feel the area could handle a project like that, and it should be located elsewhere. The public comment portion was closed.

Trent Claybaugh explained the timeline for both the senior apartment project and this townhouse project. He also went into detail about the cost and how it's a mixed-income community. Rick Elwell mentioned the option to buy, and Mr. Claybaugh provided more information on the option to buy once platted, noting that this style of housing gives a sense of ownership to the renters. There was a board discussion on traffic control, which included speed bumps and other traffic control items. It was suggested that construction traffic be limited to the Central Avenue entrance during the building process. Tyson Brooks mentioned the Premier Flats Apartments and that he was unaware of any known issues today since the approval a couple of years ago.

Condition: Construction traffic to use Central Ave only.

Motion to Approve: Rick Elwell

Second: Bill Horan

Vote: 11-0

**A 25-08-15 HARRISON TWP. NW/4 9-26N-12E The City of Bluffton requests approval for the proposed Wells Community Pool Project. The property is located at 310 W Spring Street, Bluffton, IN 46714, and is currently zoned R-1.**

Mark Reinhard and Brandy Fiechter presented the Wells County Pool Project to the board. Mr. Reinhard said he's super excited for this project and was going to have Brandy give the details. Mrs. Fiechter talked about the layout of the property and provided great information about the project. There was discussion on the stormwater portion and how the water will be tied into a drain and not go through the 4-H property anymore. Rick Elwell said that Brandy has been living and breathing this project and that the city is excited for this project to happen. Bill Horan jokingly asked about the hours for the concessions area as he works close by. When the floor was opened to the public, Tom Torson asked about the pickleball courts and the direction that the courts ran because of the sun's position. No other comments were given.

Motion to Approve: Rick Elwell

Second: Melissa Woodworth

Vote: 11-0

**OTHER BUSINESS:****Proposed Solar Ordinance Amendment**

Michael Lautzenheiser recapped a commissioner meeting at which a group presented the ordinance to them for review. It was then passed on to the Area Plan Commission to review. He then explained the timeline of the ordinance amendment adoption, the September meeting, which will be for draft review, with a legal advertisement running for the October meeting for voting. He mentioned the many changes to the proposed ordinance that would need to be made to fit in with the current ordinance. There was also concern about the signed agreement with Paddlefish. The office attorney, Tim Sipe, said that the proposed ordinance didn't match the current zoning ordinance and needs work. The board had comments about the changes required to make this work for the current ordinance. Mr. Lautzenheiser said that the office has fought hard to keep the ordinance uniform across the jurisdictions since 1971, when it was created. There was some discussion on having two options. The first option was to say no and not move forward. The second option was to put in the work to make an ordinance amendment that fit into the current zoning ordinance. Mr. Lautzenheiser said that he was told at the meeting that it's time for something to be done. Melissa Woodworth noted that it's not a quick process, and it takes a lot of work for each ordinance amendment to work. There was discussion on Paddlefish and signed leases in the county. There was discussion regarding the concern of an active agreement being signed and items that needed to be considered while drafting the ordinance. The board talked about having two draft options, one that struck large solar altogether and the other grandfathering in the project that has a signed agreement in place. After additional discussion, it was agreed that the board would like to see the two options at the next meeting.

**WELLS COUNTY VISION 2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROGRESS:**

Michael Lautzenheiser said that the Master Plan is continuing to move forward and that there would be an open house prior to any adoption of the plan taking place.

**REVITALIZATION & TRAILS UPDATES**

Michael Lautzenheiser gave a brief update on revitalization and trails.

**HOUSING STUDY UPDATE**

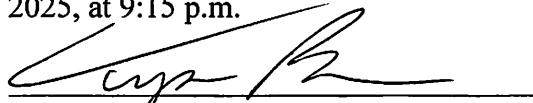
Michael Lautzenheiser said that multi-family housing projects seem to be on the rise, as another was just approved this evening.

**ADVISORY:**

The September 4, 2025, meeting of the Wells County Area Plan Commission was confirmed.

**ADJOURN:**

John Schumacher moved to adjourn the meeting, which Bill Horan seconded. The Area Plan Commission meeting was adjourned on August 7, 2025, at 9:15 p.m.

  
Tyson Brooks, President

ATTEST:

  
Michael Lautzenheiser Jr., Secretary