

ROLL CALL

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

Michael Lautzenheiser, Jr., Director

On March 5, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., Tyson Brooks called the meeting of the Area Plan Commission to order, and all board members were present for the roll call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Tim Rohr moved to approve the minutes with changes from the February 5, 2026, meeting. Jarrod Hahn seconded the motion, which carried 11-0.

NEW ITEMS:

A 26-03-04 JEFFERSON TWP. SW/4 33-28N-12E Meadowlark Properties LLC requests approval for rezoning of 2.72 acres to B-3. The property is located on US 224 west of SR 1, IN 46759, and is currently zoned S-1.

Lyle Beachy represented the rezoning request. There was a discussion of the zoning of the surrounding properties, as well as the Buckeye Pipeline in the area. The board discussed the different setbacks and the permitted use table for both the current and proposed zonings. Tyson Brooks opened the floor for public comment. Justin Gerdorn asked what type of business was being proposed. He stated that he has a honeybee business east of the proposed property to be rezoned and had concerns about chemicals that might kill off his bees. AJ Springer voiced concerns about the tile on the property and its use. There was a discussion on the tile that runs through the property. The public comment portion was closed for this petition. Jarrod Hahn mentioned the tile work that has been done to the county tiles in that area. There was a review of the motions for a rezoning.

Motion to Send a Do Pass Recommendation to Commissioners: Jarrod Hahn

Second: Geoff Lance

Vote: 11-0

A 26-03-05 HARRISON TWP. NE/4 5-26N-12E Bluffton Family Apartments MM, LLC requests approval for a 41-lot subdivision. 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.

Marty Spees represented the petition. He talked about the permits being in place to start construction. There was a discussion on utilities and whether they would be private or public. Mr. Spees said that they are finalizing the HOA standards for the property. There was a discussion on Central Street and how it would be installed to city standards. There was a mention regarding the South Street driveway entrance. Michael Lautzenheiser said that the development plan has already been approved; this would involve splitting each unit into lots for purchase down the road. There was a board discussion on affordable housing as well as a rent-to-own discussion. Tyson Brooks opened the floor to the public for comments. Rex Kraner

asked about the privacy fence to block the driveway from his property. The public comment portion was closed. There was some discussion regarding the privacy fence.

Recommendation: Install a screen along Lot 12, outside any building or easement.

Motion Approve with Recommendation: Jarrod Hahn

Second: Rick Elwell

Vote: 11-0

Motion to give the Plat Committee the right to grant Secondary Approval: Jarrod Hahn

Second: Rick Elwell

Vote: 11-0

OLD ITEMS:

A 25-12-27 Wells County Ordinance Amendments (Modification)

A. Wells County Zoning Ordinance Amendments

- 1) Create new General Regulations for Small & Structure-Mounted Solar Energy Facilities
- 2) Remove Medium Solar Energy Facilities
- 3) Amend Non-Participating Pre-Existing residence and non-participating property setbacks for Large Solar Energy Facilities
- 4) Amend the visual buffer requirement for Large Solar Energy Facilities
- 5) Update Solar Energy Facility definitions to use acreage instead of nameplate power rating, which differs between classifications

Michael Lautzenheiser explained that 3 jurisdictions used their right to suggest modifications to the proposed ordinance amendments sent to the boards for adoption: Bluffton, Ossian, and the Commissioners. He explained the differences between the suggested modifications and that it looks like we would need 2 ordinances, one for corporate limits and one for unincorporated limits. Tyson Brooks gave his recap of a conversation with a commissioner and the reasoning behind their recommendation. Michael Karafin asked to confirm the change to the non-participating residence setback and verified that it is now measured from the property line rather than from the home. There was additional board discussion on the 10 ac of glass panels vs. the 20 ac of ground max presented by the commissioners.

Tyson Brooks called for a 5-minute recess at 8:18 pm. The meeting started again at 8:24 pm.

Tyson Brooks spoke with a commissioner, and they were okay with removing the 10 acres of glass and just stating 20 acres of ground for the unincorporated limits. Michael Lautzenheiser suggested that the board support the change and the proposed modifications and send them back to all jurisdictions for adoption.

Motion to give support for modifications and changes: Rick Elwell

Second: John Schuhmacher

Vote: 10-1 (Michael Karafin)

OTHER BUSINESS:

Michael Lautzenheiser gave an overview of the bills in the House and Senate.
(HB1001 – SB 59 - SB 270 – HB1058 – HB1161 – HB1342)

WELLS COUNTY VISION 2035 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROGRESS:

Michael Lautzenheiser gave an update on the Master Plan and how Bluffton had completed the vision statement process.

REVITALIZATION & TRAILS UPDATES:

Michael Lautzenheiser discussed the grants being applied for.

HOUSING STUDY UPDATE:

Michael Lautzenheiser talked about some of the NE IN project sites.

ADVISORY:

Michael Lautzenheiser mentioned 2 that there will be 2 Rural town clean-ups this year, as well as the Hazard Waste Day.

There will not be an April meeting for the Area Plan Commission

ADJOURN:

John Schuhmacher moved to adjourn the meeting, which Vicki Andrews seconded. The Area Plan Commission meeting adjourned with a vote of 11-0 on March 5, 2026, at 8:44 p.m.



Tyson Brooks, President

ATTEST:


Michael Lautzenheiser Jr., Secretary