MINUTES OF MEETING OF

WASHINGTON COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION

Held July 1, 2025
Washington County Conference Room

The regular meeting of the **Washington County Plan Commission** was called to order at 6:30 P.M., on July 1, 2025, by President Todd Ewen. Board members present included Todd Ewen, Emily Rodman, Lori Gilstrap, Andrew Davisson, Kevin Baird, David Lyles, and Marsha Dailey. Danielle Walker was absent.

Also present was Commission Attorney, Lisa M. Fleming and Planning Director, Travis Elliott. Also present was our Guest Speaker, Conner Barnette. Adam Dufour was present and was listed on the agenda to speak about green energy. There were several members of the public present including Gary Tarr, Walla Tarr, Denise Coots, Max Green, and Rhonda Green. Owen Speth of Ranger Power was also in attendance.

All in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Todd Ewen. Kevin Baird offered a prayer.

The **Plan Commission Meeting Minutes from June 3, 2025**, were reviewed. A motion was made by Emily Rodman to approve the minutes and the motion was seconded simultaneously by both by Andrew Davisson and Kevin Baird. There was a unanimous vote to approve the June 3, 2025, meeting minutes.

Todd Ewen introduced Adam Dufour as the first on the agenda to speak. Adam spoke on green energy and stated that he had researched the topic and wanted to share his findings. He encouraged everyone to conduct their own research. Adam touched on a variety of topics including tax abatements, the tax base, selling green energy to government entities and the impact on tax revenue, and the comprehensive plan drafted in 2010 as it pertained to the breakup of large farmland. He also talked about the non-disclosure clause in a solar energy

contract he reviewed, clean-up after abandonment, unilateral extension of the project, etc. He alleged that a large sum of money was taken out of the Department of Energy budget by the previous administration and given to utility companies. Adam said that green energy companies had lawsuits against many counties. He stated that the county needs to writes a good planning ordinance and suggested changes with respect to green energy.

Todd thanked Adam Dufour and stated we'd take this under advisement. Todd reminded everyone that the land owners who had signed solar farm contract also had rights, and that we would take all this into consideration when we address solar energy, later this summer, after we tackle the new Subdivision Ordinance.

Todd invited Conner Barnette to address the draft subdivision ordinance. Conner said he thought we were ready to go to the public hearing stage. Todd talked about the General Provisions, section d, and raised concerns about the language that restricted the number of residences to 1. He expressed concerns about homeowners wanting to build a smaller residential unit for aging parents. Conner said he thought this would be best addressed in a zoning ordinance instead of putting it in the subdivision control ordinance. Kevin Baird weighed in on this and discussed a neighbor relaying to him a situation where he had an aging parent and had concerns. Conner suggested we strike section d from the General Provisions of the Subdivision Control Ordinance and address it in the Zoning ordinance. Lori Gilstrap made a motion to strike section 2d from page 1 of the Subdivision Control Ordinance It was seconded by Andrew Davisson and was unanimously approved.

Todd Ewen asked a question about ingress and egress in the Minor Subdivisions Section on page 5. Conner relayed that any time there is an extension of utilities, a minor subdivision becomes classified as a major subdivision. Lisa Fleming expressed concerns about the citations in the draft subdivision ordinance and noted that some were incorrect. She provided Conner with her changes and comments. There was a discussion about when to hold the first public hearing on the draft subdivision ordinance. Andrew Davisson made a motion to have the public

hearing in September at the regularly scheduled meeting. Emily seconded the motion and all present voted in favor of having the hearing at the September meeting.

Lisa reported out on mini barns and small cabins that are being manufactured locally and the draft notice that had been prepared several months ago for potential use by local vendors to alert buyers of the barns and cabins that they are not approved for residential use unless they have the Indiana insignia stating that they are approved for residential use. The insignia is in the shape of Indiana and is blue, gold or red. Lori Gilstrap weighed in and stated that some of the insignia is on the unit itself, some is inside the unit, etc. There are also structural requirements specific to the type of approved residential housing, for the foundation. Todd asked Lisa to look at the new cabin that has recently been placed close to Highway 135 near Brown Road and to report back on what she learns.

Todd then asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Lori Gilstrap made a motion to adjourn and Emily Rodman seconded it. The adjournment was unanimously approved and then Todd Ewen called the meeting back to order after Owen Speth from Ranger Power asked to address the Plan Commission.

Owen Speth then spoke about a number of topics. He said that Ranger Power had not decided if his company would pursue Tax Abatements for the solar project in Washington County. He did note that tax abatements would not cause a neighbor's taxes to rise. No one will foot the tax bill for this solar project. He also said that it is false that public utilities do not pay taxes.

Owen talked about the Ranger Power leases. He noted that leases contain proprietary information so they do not allow them to be shared with anyone other than the contract holder. They need to protect their intellectual property.

There is nothing in their lease that requires a property owner to clean up or decommission the project if the owner goes bankrupt. Ranger Power has up to 40 years for the lease and can extend the lease in 5-year increments.

They rely on some tax credits that may go away, but if the tax credits do get eliminated, it will not kill their project. They are not totally reliant on tax credits.

Ranger Power would like to see a reasonable and well-thought-out ordinance for solar farms in Washington County that they can work with.

Members of the Plan Commission then asked questions. Marsha Dailey asked if Ranger Power has any lawsuits against any counties in Indiana. Owen said Ranger Power has solar projects in Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin Minnesota, and Illinois. He is not aware of any farmers in Indiana who have sued Ranger Power. Marsha also asked Owen if there were any lawsuits filed by Ranger Power against Indiana Farmers. Owen answered that there were not any lawsuits filed by Ranger Power against farm owners in Indiana. Ranger Power does encourage landowners to have an attorney review their contracts before signing.

Kevin Baird asked if there is there enough bonding to clean-up and decommission the solar farms. Owen replied that Ranger Power is required to bond either with the landowner or a government entity. Owen also said that the solar equipment on the land is very valuable, and if the owner went bankrupt they would be able to sell the solar equipment, not at the end of its useful life, for more than the cost of decommissioning.

Todd asked if Owen Speth would be back for the August meeting in case there were other questions about the solar project. Owen indicated that he would return in August and would be happy to field any follow-on questions. He then handed out an example solar ordinance from Miami County and other informational material.

The meeting was then adjourned again at approximately 8:00 P.M., following a motion made by Lori Gilstrap that was seconded by Emily Rodman, and unanimously approved.

Washington County Planning Commission by:

Todd M. Ewen
Todd Ewen, President

Kevin Baird
Kevin Baird, Vice President

Danielle Walker

Emily Rodman
Emily Rodman

David Lyles

Andrew Davisson

Lori Gilstrap
Lori Gilstrap

Marsha Dailey
Marsha Dailey

~~Vacant~~ Lucy BRENTON

Lisa M. Fleming
Lisa M. Fleming, Attorney for WCPC/BZA

Sign-In Sheet for
Washington County Plan Commission Meeting
Date / Time: 07/01/2025 / 6:30 P.M. –
Location: Historic Courthouse on the Salem Square

Printed Name of Attendee	Signature of Attendee
ADAM BUFFOR	
Denise Lidtke	S. Denise Lidtke
Tamara Spetz	

Washington County Plan Commission
Guest Speaker(s) Sign in Sheet

07/01/2025 | 6:30-8:00pm

Location: Historic Courthouse on the Salem Square

Guest Speakers:

Printed Name of Speaker	Signature of Speaker
Conner J Barnette	

***IC 36-7-4-208 – Membership of County and Metropolitan Plan Commissions–See (a)(3) & (a)(4).**

****IC 36-7-4-217 – Term of Certain Members** – The term of office of a member (who is appointed from the membership of a legislative body, park board or the advisory council on town affairs) is co-extensive with the member's term of office on that body, board, or council unless that body, board or council appoints, at its first regular meeting in any year, another to serve as its representative.

*****IC 36-7-4-218 – Appointment of Citizen Members – Terms – Removal** – When an initial term of office of a citizen member expires, each new appointment of a citizen member is for a term of four (4) years (in the case of a municipal, county, or area plan commission.) A member serves until the member's successor is appointed and qualified. A member is eligible for reappointment.

THERE WAS NO BZA MEETING HELD ON 07/01/2025

BZA Members (All Appointed)	Expiration Date of Appointment	Notes	Signature of Attendee
John Mishler, President, Appointed by Washington County Commissioners on 01/08/2025			
Lori Gilstrap, Vice President - Appointed by Washington County Commissioners pointed on 03/01/2022			
Lisa Fleming, Attorney/Secretary Non-Voting			
Denise Coots, Appointed by Washington County Commissioners on 10/18/2022			
Marsha Dailey, Appointed by Washington County Commissioners on			
Ryan Packwood, Appointed by Washington County Commissioners on 01/08/2025			