

**STARKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2021**

Pursuant to adjournment comes now the Starke County Board of Commissioners and meet in Regular Session at 6:00 PM, in person at the Starke County Annex Building, Knox, Indiana, with Charles Chesak, Bryan Cavender, and Mark Gourley present and the following proceedings were held to wit:

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order by Commissioner President Charles Chesak directly at 6:00 PM.

RE-ZONING DISCUSSION – TODD REDLIN

Todd Redlin came before the Board of Commissioners to discuss the denial by the Board of Commissioners at their Meeting on October 18th for the rezoning of his property. He explained the family history of his property and the reasons why he requested the rezoning. Public comment was held regarding acreage of coverage, buffer zone coverage, and that the solar panels in general is moving too fast. Commissioner Gourley advised he disagrees with the concept that the solar panels are moving too fast as this entire project started last year and it has been a work in progress for a few years now. Commissioner Gourley stated he understands the concerns of Commissioner Chesak but they have established that this would be kept away from the lake and on the South side of US 35. Commissioner Gourley then asked Commissioner Cavender what changed his mind as he had already approved this rezoning request at the Planning Commission meeting. Commissioner Cavender advised he would like to see the buffer zone back farther. Commissioner Chesak stated that from the very beginning he has said that these companies need to be very transparent when it comes to providing information to the people of the county and he feels this has not been done. Public discussion was also held regarding notification issues, additional buffer zones, having controls within the county for the zoning, being notified when projects are going up on agricultural land, percentage of land to be preserved within Starke County, impact study on wildlife, and protected species. After much public discussion the public in attendance was advised that they were allowed to attend the Planning Commission meeting the 2nd Monday of the Month. Commissioner Chesak advised that the Planning Commission is where all of this discussion begins when it comes to zoning and re-zoning. Commissioner Cavender and Commissioner Gourley asked Attorney Lucas to speak with Attorney Chris Shelmon about possibly appealing the Commissioner's prior decision or re-filing another petition on the Redlin Property.

AUDITOR BUSINESS

Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the payroll claims in the amount of \$249,129.80 including deductions in the amount of \$72,964.79 for pay period ending 10/16/2021 and payroll date of 10/22/2021. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to approve the vendor claims docket for a total in the amount of \$307,580.18. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. Commissioner Gourley made a motion to approve the minutes from October 18th, 2021. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

OTHER BUSINESS

Attorney Lucas advised that Barnes and Thornburg reached out to him because their firm has developed some expertise in the topics they are dealing with today regarding the solar panels. They are representing several adjacent counties and he believes this could be beneficial to our county having their expertise. Commissioner Chesak and Attorney Lucas will be meeting with Barnes and Thornburg for further discussion and will report back at the next Commissioners Meeting prior to making any formal decisions.

Auditor Oesterreich asked the Board of Commissioner how much they would like to begin the starting bid at the Certificate Sale in spring. She advised that in the past the parcels would go for the cost of selling the property, approximately \$125, but the last couple years they dropped the price to \$35 to try to get the properties back on the tax rolls. However, this has not increased the certificate sales. Commissioner Cavender made a motion to begin the starting bid on each parcel at \$125. Commissioner Gourley seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes.

Auditor Oesterreich asked the Board of Commissioner to consider implementing a “Temporary Work from Home” policy. She has provided the board with an example from another county.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rich Linkus made a public comment, he stated he hopes the Board of Commissioner will take into consideration about limiting the amount of solar farms they allow to come into Starke County or limiting the size of the solar farms.

With there being no further public comments and no further business, Commissioner Gourley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Cavender seconded the motion and the motion was approved with all ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 PM.

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Charlie Chesak, President

Bryan Cavender, Vice-President

Mark Gourley, Member

Rachel Oesterreich, Auditor and Secretary to
the Board of Commissioners