

Starke County Plan Commission
Regular Meeting and Continuation of a Public Hearing
January 5, 2023

- ❖ **Call to Order** –President Jackson called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
- ❖ **Pledge of Allegiance** - Led by President Jackson
- ❖ **Roll Call:** Todd Jackson, president and citizen member; Mark Allen, vice-president, trustee; Howard Bailey, councilman; Phil Woolery, extension educator; Charles Chesek, commissioner; Todd Lawrence citizen member (Absent), Denise Cultice, citizen member, and Isaiah Collins, citizen member; Thomas Schouten, Surveyor; Martin Bedrock, commission counsel; Wallace (Boz) Williams, building commissioner; Robby Blodgett, code enforcement officer; and Mary W.J. Beaver, administrator. There was (1) visitor present.
- ❖ **Reorganization of the Board-**
 - President – Member Cultice made a motion to appoint Todd Jackson as President, seconded by Member Allen. No other motions were made. Motion carried 7-0.
 - Vice-President - Member Cultice made a motion to appoint Mark Allen as Vice-President, seconded by Member Schouten. No other motions were made. Motion carried 7-0.
 - SCEDF – Member Schouten made a motion to appoint Denise Cultice to the SCEDF Board, seconded by Member Collins. No other motions were made. Motion carried 7-0.
 - Building Commissioner-The board reviewed a letter of interest from Boz Williams. Member Allen made a motion to appoint Boz Williams as Building Commissioner, seconded by Member Cultice. No other motions were made. Motion carried 7-0.
 - Plan Comm. Admin. - The board reviewed a letter of interest from Mary Beaver. Member Woolery made a motion to appoint Mary Beaver as Planning Commission Administrator, seconded by Member Chesek. No other motions were made. Motion carried 7-0.
 - Plan Comm. Counsel - The board reviewed a letter of interest from Martin Bedrock. There was a motion made by Member Cultice to not reappoint Martin Bedrock as counsel, seconded by Member Collins. Motion carried 7-0.
 - President Jackson stated that since we no longer have legal counsel that he will start the process in the office of reaching out to some possible interested parties and that an executive meeting will be held once he finds an interested party, he went on to say hopefully before the February meeting.
 - Tech Committee – Todd Jackson, Howard Bailey, and Phil Woolery decided to stay on for 2023. Member Isaiah Collins volunteered to take Todd Lawrences place on the tech committee for 2023.
- ❖ **Approval of the minutes** of the November 14, 2022 meeting: Member Cultice made a motion to accept the minutes as written, seconded by Member Schouten. Motion carried (7-0).
- ❖ **Continuation of Public Hearing** - to consider an approval of an amendment to Chart 1 of the District Restrictions to change the lot dimension requirements in Agriculture zoned areas without public sewer to 2 acres and 150 feet of road frontage and to remove the wording of Major Subdivision from the R-1 column, and Minor Subdivision from the Agriculture Parcel Column.
 - President Jackson read the public hearing notice.
 - Vice-President Allen asked what the initial reason was why we are redoing this Chart.
 - President Jackson answered and stated that Starke Co. has some of the most lenient lot restrictions compared to neighboring counties. He went on to discuss some of the more specific size requirements of neighboring counties. He went on to discuss the urban sprawl of the county.
 - Vice-President Allen added that he was concerned about properties that are already split that wouldn't meet these new requirements as far as building on them in the future.
 - Bob Aloï from the audience added that in his opinion if they were already split prior to this change then they would be buildable and that this change would only be for new splits.
 - President Jackson added an example to the board of farmers with 10 wooded areas that could be stripped and then split off and sold as 10 lots. He went on to ask the board if they would really want 10

houses on 10 acres. He went on to state that these changes would just give people more room to add to their property what they want where they want.

- Bob Aloï went on to explain that this doesn't stop someone from developing their land, it prevents people from using county resources that are existing already like roads when they are developing. This way they have to develop their own roads if they want to put in a subdivision with smaller lot sizes. He also went on to discuss with the board of the land wasted behind the one-acre splits. He also then discussed that it doesn't prevent someone from buying a one-acre piece of land to build on, but it just makes them go get a variance first. He then went on to discuss with the board that it helps also to make people go through the subdivision process and then the board/county is able to help control the drainage of properties, the septic systems, and the back up septic systems. He went on to state that it gives the county more control when it forces people to subdivide with the subdivision rules.
- Member Collins made a motion to accept the change as proposed to chart 1, seconded by Member Chesek. Motion carried 7-0.

❖ **Code Enforcement Officer report**

- Code Enforcement Officer went over the report with board while they looked it over.
 - The Williams property case was closed
 - The Gonzalez case has had no change but she added there is a new realtor and attorney.
- Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett state that they are currently working on the ordinance and hoping to get it changed so that they can make some progress on some of these other cases.
- President Jackson also asked Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett if she could attend the Tech Committee meetings to go over the changes for that ordinance.
 - She answered yes.

❖ **Old Business & Violation**

- President Jackson asked for an update about the Bass Lake property that needed torn down.
 - Renner Property - Plan Comm. Admin. Beaver informed the board that Dale Shannon had stopped in and obtained a demo permit for the property and that it should be completed in about a week.
- Rudd Property – President Jackson informed the board that the \$5700.00 lien had been paid on their property by the bank.
 - Member Collins asked if we could put another lien on it.
 - Bldg. Comm. Boz added that the \$700.00 is an administrative fee, and the fine is the max \$5000.00. He went on to state that they are continually adding more buildings out there without coming and getting permits and that the house is not torn down.
 - Member Bailey added that the only reason that the lien was paid is because the bank paid it and they are protecting their interest and the actual home owner isn't doing anything.
 - Board discussion took place regarding the buildings on the property, not getting permits, and not getting inspections, whether to have another public hearing, and the fines being increased. The board decided without legal counsel that they would wait to pursue this more in the February meeting if they have legal counsel at that time.
- Nagai CAFO – The board decided without legal counsel that they would wait to pursue this more in the February meeting if they have legal counsel at that time.

❖ **New Business & Violations**

- Tim Howard sale & split of 1468 E 400 S Knox, IN 46534 Parcel: 75-10-05-300-045.201-002 –
 - The Board discussed this issue of the split and the deed that was recorded with the Bldg. Comm. Boz, Plan Comm. Admin. Beaver and Audience member Bob Aloï.
 - The Board decided to advised not to issue any building permits for this property. Member Chesek made a motion to not accept any building permits for the 5 acres until the time allotted from the last split has expired. Member Schouten seconded that motion. Motion carried 7-0.

- Till increase – Plan Comm. Admin. Beever discussed with the board the difficulties she’s been having in the office with making change for customers when they come in. She asked the board if they would approve her going to the council to ask for increase in her till in the office.
 - Vice-President Allen made a motion Plan Comm. Admin. Beever to ask the council to increase her till to \$250.00, seconded by Member Collins. Motion carried 7-0.
- American Recovery Act, quotes for scanning - Plan Comm. Admin. Beever discussed with the board the American Recovery funds and that she’d like to get some quotes to get the index cabinet in the office scanned and ask the council to dedicate some of those funds towards that process.
 - Member Cultice made a motion to pursue the scanning and ask for the funds, seconded by Member Bailey. Motion carried 7-0.
- ❖ **End of the month** (Nov & Dec) /year reports
 - Plan Comm. Admin. Beever went over the Annual report with the board.
 - Member Woolery made a motion to accept the end of the month (Nov & Dec) / 2022 year reports, seconded by Member Chesek. Motion carried 7-0.
- ❖ **Next Scheduled Meeting-** will be Wednesday, February 8, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.
- ❖ **Adjournment-**With no further business, Member Cultice made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Member Bailey. Motion carried 7-0.

This meeting was recorded and will be on file in the Starke County Plan Commission Office.

Unless stated otherwise all Plan Commission meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. with the Board of Zoning Appeal meeting on the same night the latter of 6:30 p.m. or the conclusion of the Plan Commission meeting.

Mary W. J. Beever
Administrator