

**Starke County Plan Commission Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting and Public Hearing**  
**November 13, 2024**

- ❖ **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 (Absent); Charles Chesak, commissioner; Matthew Lawrence, citizen member; Denise Cultice, citizen member; Isaiah Collins, citizen member (Absent); Thomas Schouten, Surveyor; Justin Schramm, commission counsel; Wallace (Boz) Williams, building commissioner; Robby Blodgett, code enforcement officer; and Mary Beever, administrator. There were 21 visitors present.
- ❖ **Approval of the minutes**
  - Member Schouten made a motion to accept the minutes from the October 9, 2024 meeting as written, seconded by Vice-President Allen. Motion carried 8-0.
- ❖ President Jackson addressed the public and stated that there is two public hearings that are going to be held at the same time, however there will be separate motions made for each.  
**Public Hearing** to consider an ordinance, to place a moratorium on commercial solar energy systems (CSES) for (3) months in Starke County and;  
**Public Hearing** to consider an ordinance, to place a moratorium on place a moratorium on Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) for three (3) months in Starke County.
  - Member Cultice made a motion to open the public hearings. Member Schouten seconded the motion. Motion carried 8-0.
    - Audience members R.Lee., R. Luthie, J. Risner, M. Barlog, G. Rentz, M. Thomason, T. Leinbach, J. Wampler, D. Straka, D. Schaller, M. Pellion , T. Bradley, & T. Williams all spoke out how they were for the moratorium for both the CSES and BESS projects. Vice-President Allen spoke about his visit to another county’s battery storage unit in Jasper county, he went on to state that he was not very happy with the answers to his questions he had and then stated that he believes a there needs to be a plan for a disaster/emergency scenario in place.
  - Vice-President Allen made a motion to close the public comment portion of the hearing. Seconded by Member Collins. Motion carried 8-0.
  - President Jackson discussed with the board about how they were never told by any of the solar companies when they came into the county that there would ever be any battery storage in Starke County. He then went on to discuss how the intent of battery storage in Starke County has now changed with the solar companies and that they are planning on some battery storage in the county. He then discussed how placing the moratoriums on the CSES and BESS would give time to separate the two types of projects into two separate ordinances one for CSES and one for BESS. He went on to discuss with the board that the county already has a solar ordinance and the State does also and that as a county we cannot just stop solar or put a cap on acres now. He then went on to discuss how he’s talked with the commissioners before on how there needs to be studies done (ie: an economic development impact study) before the county can determine a number on acreage to put a cap on solar development and that if they did just pick a number without justification that it would open the county up to lawsuits. He went on to discuss how the 3-month moratoriums would only put a stop to any new projects that come into the county with in that 3-month time frame and that if the board doesn’t have a new ordinance by the expiration of the 3 months passed then everything would revert back to the old ordinance. Member Bailey discussed how he as well visited the battery storage facility in Jasper County and that he as well was very disappointed in it and that he did not get answers to some of his questions. He agreed that the county does need spend the monies to get the study done that President Jackson spoke about.
  - Member Bailey made a motion to put a three-month moratorium on CSES. Member Lawrence seconded that motion. Motion carried 8-0.
    - Atty. Schramm discussed and made a recommendation to the board to get this in front of the Commissioners faster to have the board vote to have Plan. Comm. Admin. Beever Certify the vote that was made.

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- Member Schouten made a motion to have Planning Commission Admin. Beever Certify the vote. Member Cultice seconded that motion. Motion carried 8-0.
- Member Schouten discussed that he as well went to the battery storage facility as well in Jasper County and was disappointed as well; and that he doesn't understand why the solar company would not be in attendance for the meeting or send a representative.
- Vice-President Allen made a motion to put a three-month moratorium on BESS. Member Collins seconded that motion. Motion carried 8-0
- Member Cultice made a motion to have Planning Commission Admin. Beever Certify the vote. Member Lawrence seconded that motion. Motion carried 8-0.
- ❖ **New/Old Business –**
  - Plan. Comm. Admin. Beever discussed how she received a phone call from Commissioner Binkley regarding an issue with the Sheriff's department with animals regarding when they get out and putting up fencing possibly to keep them in. Member Allen discussed with the board about a law that Indiana has regarding issues like this where the local counties can't supersede it; he stated he believes it some sort of range law. President Jackson asked Atty. Schramm if he could find out if Indiana has any type of ordinance regarding livestock and if they get out. Atty. Schramm agreed he'd see what he could find on that subject. Plan. Comm. Admin. Beever discussed with the board where there has been livestock and poultry at a couple of properties that keep getting out and into the roadway.
- ❖ **Code Enforcement Officer report.**
  - Case 324- Jerry Tolson, 8920 S US 35 Monterey, IN 46960
    - Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett stated she's still making payments on it.
  - Case 469- Jack & Carol Giselback 8553 S Main St. Ora, IN 46968
    - Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett stated Atty. Schramm is handling this case now and one RV has been removed from the property and the tires and couch have been removed as well.
  - Case 393- Joshua Whitfield- 6751 S Lombardy Ln. Knox, IN 46534
    - Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett stated that Atty. Schramm sent the final notice on it.
  - Case 220 - Joseph R. Misch, 10958 E Mohegan Rd Walkerton Indiana 46574
    - Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett stated that Atty. Schramm sent them a letter and that they called and stated they would call back to set up a monthly payment arrangement.
  - Case 516- Carolyn Balchunas-1120 S 1025 E. Knox, IN 46534
    - Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett stated that
  - Case 514- Steven Johnson 3802 N 900 E. Grovertown, IN 46531
    - Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett stated that he did obtain a permit for a new dwelling and got a temporary mobile home permit as well.
  - Case 518- Anthony Black 10980 E. SR. 8 Culver, IN 46511
    - Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett stated that the RV is platted and is just being stored there and the case is closed.
  - Case 517-Donna Conrad 2200 S 800 E. Knox, IN 46534
    - Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett stated that the RV is plated and is just being stored there and the case is closed.
  - Case 462 - Steven M Reinholt, 2687 S 800 E Knox, Indiana 46534
    - Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett stated that he is living in the RV and he told her that he is looking for other housing. She added he has cleaned up a lot of the junk and debris.
  - Case 505- Dan Martin 6375 S 450 E. Knox, IN 46534
    - Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett stated that the RV has been removed from the property as well as the two sides of the mini home and the case is closed.

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- Case 497- Lonnie & Debbie King S. Washington St. Monterey, IN 46960
  - Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett stated that the property owner is still working on cleaning up the property and she will re-check
- Case 482 Jeffery Pszonka- 9815 W. San Pierre Rd. San Pierre, IN 46374
  - Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett stated that the owner is still cleaning up the property and she will re-check it.
- Case 501- Timothy Howard 11460 E. SR 39 Knox, IN 46534
  - Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett stated that the property has been sold to a new owner. And has been cleaned up and the case is closed.
- Case 515- Robert Reed 1040 S 1025 E. Knox, IN 46534
  - Code Enforcement Officer Blodgett stated that the owner is still working on cleaning up the property and she will recheck it.
- Atty. Schramm discussed with the board Case 393. He informed the board that one property owner is incarcerated and one is deceased. He discussed the options with the board on remediating it. The board determined that they needed some more time to find out more information.
  - Member Collins made a motion to do a title search on the property at 6751 S Lombardy Ln. Knox, IN 46534. Member Cultice seconded that motion. Motion carried 8-0.
- **End of the month**
  - Board reviewed the reports from November & December 2024
- ❖ **Next Scheduled Meeting-**
  - Vice-President Allen made a motion to not have a December 2024 meeting. Member Schouten seconded that motion. Motion carried 8-0.
  - The next scheduled Planning Commission Meeting will be Wednesday, January 8, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.
- ❖ **Adjournment-**With no further business, Member Cultice made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Vice-President Allen. Motion carried 6-0.

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.

- ❖ **Approval of the minutes at the January 8, 2025 meeting**
  - Member \_\_\_\_\_ made a motion to accept the minutes from the November 13, 2024 meeting as written, seconded by Member \_\_\_\_\_. Motion carried \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_.

Prepared by:  
Mary W. J. Beever  
Planning Commission Administrator/Floodplain Manager