

**Indiana Land Resources Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Friday, February 17, 2012**  
**12:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.**  
**Indiana State Fairgrounds, Normandy Barn**

Present: Bruce Everhart, Joe Kelsay, Mary McConnell, Gene Schmidt, Eric Kelly, Nancy Cline, Fred Walker

Absent: David Compton, Jon Craig, Bob Burke

The meeting began with a motion by Eric to approve the November 2011 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Bruce and passed unanimously.

The council then received an update from Amy Cornell regarding county assistance provided on behalf of the ILRC since the last meeting. Gene noted that it is important for the council to be the referral source for these issues. Amy summarized the changes that the ag working group was able to negotiate to the Hancock County Agribusiness Ordinance, including bus tours as a by right land use and expanded outdoor sales of process products display areas. Originally the county developed a separate temporary permit for agribusiness, but agreed that the temporary permit procedure for all land uses should be the same. Once the agribusiness ordinance is done the county will be reviewing and revising other ag zoning sections. Amy offered to provide technical assistance during that process and the county indicated that it would like her assistance. The revised ordinance will need to be approved by the plan commission and county commissioners. Amy advised the council that she would forward an updated version of the ordinance when she received it from Mike Dale, Executive Director – Hancock County Plan Commission.

Amy provided a legislative update of agricultural and land use issues. The council requested follow-up information on SB 132, SB 277, and HB 1117.

Amy presented a draft copy of the Guide for Agritourism Operations to get feedback from the Council. Amy will prepare a revised draft in advance of the April 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The council had a roundtable discussion to brainstorm ideas for the next project. Several topics were mentioned including: digester zoning, aquaculture zoning, the regulatory structure for farmer's markets, rural water and sewer districts, wind energy (zoning for sensitive areas), drainage law, rural development and housing issues, critical environmental areas, opportunities presented by the Bicentennial Conservation Commission, conservation easements and transfer of development rights, revising the ILRC's existing toolkit, annexation, the Indiana Rural Water Task Force, and forestry.

Eric suggested that the council draft an advisory document to help local governments address land use and zoning issues for digesters. Bruce suggested that Amy find industry experts to advise the council. Amy will follow up with the ISDA bio-energy department and the Office of Energy to get more technical info. Bruce noted that banks often get financing requests for digesters on poultry and dairy farms. From an economic standpoint, digesters work best if there is a mixture of waste available. The financing

available depends on the size of the digester. Usually people need USDA assistance to help cover initial costs. Coal power is cheap in Indiana, so digesters are not always an economic alternative.

The council acknowledged that it would be hard for them to put out advisory opinions for wind energy. Mary noted that there are a few sensitive areas that are not good for wind energy. Many wind farms go right up to a county line because one county allowed it and the other didn't. Many companies buy land options before they approach the county. Benton County has model ordinance.

Eric suggested that the council draft advisory documents regarding agricultural or commercial zoning for aquaculture. Steve Hart, Indiana Soybean Alliance, would be a good contact for such a project.

The council discussed rural water and sewage district concerns. Eric mentioned County Onsite Waste Management Districts. [IC 36-11-1-1 et al.](#) The council requested that Amy provide additional information regarding these districts and other rural water and sewer districts.

The council discussed drainage law concerns. Mary pointed out that drainage law also causes flooding downstream and that issue is often ignored. Eric suggested reviewing an EPA publication on stormwater. New Hampshire also has a best practices guide for stormwater.

Mary highlighted some critical environmental areas in the state: Goose Pond in Greene County, the Wabash Corridor (climate change mitigation), and Brown County hills. The council discussed the fact that many comprehensive plans do not understand natural resources. The area just south of Lake Michigan (Lake and Porter Counties) is the most bio-diverse area in the state. Mary also provided the council information regarding the Bicentennial Conservation Commission. To celebrate its centennial, Indiana established the state park system. Gov. Daniels recently announced a re-commitment to public land. He seeded a conservation trust with \$20 million. Mary encouraged the council to think about what role it could play.

The council identified its top three initiatives as refining the existing toolkit, rural water and sewer district issues and advisory documents for digesters.

Nancy made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Eric seconded the motion. With no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy K. Cornell  
Executive Director