



Wabash County Plan Commission

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Wabash County Plan Commission – Meeting Minutes

Board Members: Randy Curless, Jeff Dawes, Sam Hann, Chris Hickman, Doug Rice, Mike Ruse, Geoff Schortgen, Cheri Slee, Joe Vogel

Staff: Mark Frantz, Board Attorney; Brian Campbell, Plan Director; Jennifer Hicks, PC Secretary

Thursday, January 8, 2026

1. Call To Order

The Wabash County Plan Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Randy Curless.

2. Roll Call

Ms. Hicks, Plan Commission Secretary called roll:

- ✓ Randy Curless – *present*
- ✓ Jeff Dawes – *present*
- ✓ Sam Hann – *absent*
- ✓ Chris Hickman – *present*
- ✓ Doug Rice – *present*
- ✓ Mike Ruse – *present*
- ✓ Geoff Schortgen – *present via zoom*
- ✓ Cheri Slee – *absent*
- ✓ Joe Vogel – *present*

Ms. Hicks declared a quorum was present.

3. Election of Officer for 2026

Mr. Curless opened nominations for the position of Chair for 2026. Mr. Vogel nominated Mr. Curless for Chair, Mr. Ruse seconded the nomination. Mr. Dawes closed nominations.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Randy Curless - *yes*
- ✓ Jeff Dawes – *yes*
- ✓ Chris Hickman – *yes*
- ✓ Doug Rice – *yes*
- ✓ Mike Ruse – *yes*
- ✓ Joe Vogel – *yes*

The nomination carried.

Mr. Curless opened nominations for the position of Co-Chair for 2026. Mr. Rice nominated Mr. Hann for Co-Chair, Mr. Vogel seconded the nomination. Mr. Dawes closed the nominations.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Randy Curless - *yes*
- ✓ Jeff Dawes – *yes*
- ✓ Chris Hickman – *yes*
- ✓ Doug Rice – *yes*
- ✓ Mike Ruse – *yes*

✓ Joe Vogel – yes
The nomination carried.

Mr. Curless opened nominations for the position of Secretary for 2026. Mr. Vogel nominated Ms. Hicks, Mr. Rice seconded the nomination. Mr. Dawes closed nominations.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Randy Curless - yes
- ✓ Jeff Dawes – yes
- ✓ Chris Hickman – yes
- ✓ Doug Rice – yes
- ✓ Mike Ruse – yes
- ✓ Joe Vogel – yes

The nomination carried.

4. Approval of Minutes of the December 4, 2025 Meeting.

Mr. Dawes made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Ruse seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Randy Curless - yes
- ✓ Jeff Dawes – yes
- ✓ Chris Hickman – yes
- ✓ Doug Rice – yes
- ✓ Mike Ruse – yes
- ✓ Joe Vogel – yes

The motion carried.

5. Old Business

Unsafe Premise Order – 25 N. Perch Drive (Mary Chandler)

Mr. Campbell reported that the site cleanup is largely complete, with final grass seeding pending appropriate weather conditions. The contractor has been contacted, and completion is anticipated within approximately one month.

Ordinance Review

Mr. Campbell reported that progress on the ordinance review had been delayed due to completion of the annual report and other year-end obligations. Mr. Campbell stated the office staff intends to re-engage with the consultant within the next few months, provide a status update on completed edits, identify areas needing assistance, and request a revised proposal to complete the project within the previously discussed three-month timeframe.

Unsafe Premise Order – Ezra & Laura Gahl

Mr. Campbell reported that the site has been largely leveled and cleaned, with remaining piles of scrap and recyclable materials. Weather conditions have limited removal efforts. Mr. Campbell will follow up with the property owners prior to the next meeting.

BESS / Data Center Draft Ordinance

Mr. Campbell reported ongoing work to merge the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and data center draft ordinances due to their similarities. A combined draft is expected within the next one to two months.

6. New Business

SE-25-015 – Addison Wiley

Request: *Special Exception for a Home Occupation Type II in an A-2 zoning district.*

Mr. Campbell presented the request, explaining that the petitioner intends to use an existing accessory structure as a training gym and business related to professional running activities. The structure contains an existing residential unit. The request exceeds the zoning ordinance's 900 square foot limit for home occupation accessory structures, requiring a variance in addition to the special exception.

The petitioner's representative, Nick Johnson, was present on her behalf.

Mr. Rice made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Randy Curless - *yes*
- ✓ Jeff Dawes – *yes*
- ✓ Chris Hickman – *yes*
- ✓ Doug Rice – *yes*
- ✓ Mike Ruse – *yes*
- ✓ Joe Vogel – *yes*

The motion carried.

Motion carried. The petition will be heard by the Board of Zoning Appeals on January 27, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., at the same location.

7. Staff Reports

Monthly Report

Mr. Campbell presented the monthly permit activity and financial reports. No questions were raised.

2025 Annual Report

Mr. Campbell presented the members with the annual report, summarizing a few highlights including:

- Changes to permitting procedures due to DNR requirements
- Fee restructuring and cost savings from consolidated legal advertising
- Statistical breakdowns of special exceptions, variances, and improvement location permits
- Long-term trends in new home construction
- Revenue, expenditures, fund balances, and complaint tracking.

No questions were raised.

8. Other Business

Mr. Campbell reported that a vacancy exists on the Board of Zoning Appeals due to the retirement of Mr. Mark Milam. Mr. Campbell recommended Chris Hickman to fill the Plan Commission appointed seat.

Mr. Rice made a motion to appoint Mr. Hickman to the Board of Zoning Appeals to replace Mr. Milam. Mr. Vogel seconded the motion.

Ms. Hicks called roll:

- ✓ Randy Curless - *yes*
- ✓ Jeff Dawes – *yes*
- ✓ Chris Hickman – *abstain*
- ✓ Doug Rice – *yes*
- ✓ Mike Ruse – *yes*
- ✓ Joe Vogel – *yes*

The motion carried.

9. Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Vogel moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by all members voting "aye." The meeting adjourned at 7:24pm.

Others Present: Steve Hicks, Amanda Lyons, Bill Burnsworth, Nicky Burnsworth, Nick Johnson, John Hartsough

(bac)