

**COMMISSIONERS MEETING
JOINT SESSION W/ PLAN COMMISSION
MARCH 6, 2023
5:30 PM**

ATTENDANCE:

COMMISSIONERS:	Thomas Helmer, President Rick Woodall
PLAN COMMISSION:	Randy Bee Kevin Scobee Greg Williams Jenna Nees Jay Alcorn Ken Heeke
ATTORNEY:	James Ensley
AUDITOR:	Kristina Berish
AUDIENCE:	36 Individuals

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners met on March 6, 2023, at 5:30 PM. Meeting was held in the library at Ivy Tech located on 915 Zinc Mill Road, Greencastle, Indiana. It was a joint meeting to hear the progress on the Putnam County comprehensive plan.

Kevin Scobee opened the meeting, then turned it over to Adam Peaper and Cory Whiteselli with HWC Engineering. Peaper went over the 10-month process, the comprehensive plan timeline. They have held stakeholder meetings, workshops and have an online survey.

Peaper said key items being reviewed: preserve rural character and agricultural heritage, zoning/permits for rural housing in controlled manner, extend infrastructure, protect waterways, improvements to roads and bridges, expand trails, workforce development, enhance downtown and improve government communications.

The vision of the plan is to support businesses and residents. And to help residential and employment growth. Land use, they want to direct growth to established communities, preserve agricultural and open spaces and want to limit corridor development. To have zoning and develop standards for rural estate lots. Have renewable energy, predictable development, and airport protection.

Concentrate on transportation – road and bridge funding, trail development, master plan for the 9 covered bridges and a truck route for 231. Infrastructure – broadband providers, eliminate barriers to wireless towers and improve drainage/stormwater.

Peaper said they are also looking at the natural resources in the county – protect unique and natural assets, quality of place and expand on community events, work on public interest and have a county parks department.

The county needs to look at increasing housing supply and strengthen existing residential areas, plan for new potential sites. Economic development needs to be increased to have diversified job opportunities, support small businesses and lack of sufficient childcare has been discussed by residents.

When looking at government in the county, the key things was to improve on communications. To increase civic participation and emergency services.

HWC representatives Peaper and Whiteselli stressed these were all long-range plans for the county to review and prepare. They will be looking at how and what needs to be implemented. Update regulations, invest in transportation and utility infrastructure. Prioritize housing opportunities and increase communications to the residents in the county from the government units.

Peaper said drafts of the comprehensive plan were available on the county website, Plan Commission office and the project website : www.envisionputnamcounty.com. They will be holding more workshops.

Commissioner Woodall said in their meeting this morning they discussed a study with the help of the county's Economic Development Director Kristin Clary. The county obligated \$25,000 for a housing study.

The last comprehensive plan was done in 2008. The county is past due on updating it, the current plan is being paid from fees collected in the Plan Commission department.

Woodall also stated Putnam County is #1 in the State for natural preservation. Our county is a donut to another donut county, we are 45 minutes from Indianapolis. The county has a lot of potential, but we need to make sure we balance the growth and preservation.

Highway Engineer Jim Peck stated the county has also just approved a local road safety plan. The plan allows them to apply for transportation safety money, it is a 90/10 grant. There are currently only 3 other counties in the State that have a plan in place. They are looking to have it completed by summer, county hired HWC to complete the plan.

A resident asked if the plan would look at solar and windmill projects coming into the county. Peaper replied to it would, and it would provide legal guidance.

Woodall also informed the group that the Commissioners in their meeting that morning had set aside money from E.D.I.T. to get a whole new website for the county. They had hired a company over a year ago that was to update the current site. Unfortunately, what was promised versus what was received were not the same thing.

Lisa Zeiner stated after the plan is done there will be a new zoning layer to the GIS site. The site is available for the public to see. This is another resource the county needs to communicate to the public.

This concluded the presentation from HWC and the question-and-answer portion. They thanked everyone for coming.

Thomas Helmer, President

Rick Woodall

Attest: Auditor's Office
Kristina Berish