

A meeting of the Jasper County Plan Commission was held Monday, June 24, 2024 at 7:15 pm. at the Annex Meeting Room at 910S. Sparling Avenue, Rensselaer, Indiana. Members present: Dave Webb, Steve Jordan, Kent Korniak, Lana Olson, Jim Walstra, Vince Urbano, Justin Rodibaugh, Summer Brown and Scott Bachert. Also present: William T. Sammons, Law Offices of William T. Sammons P.C., Mary Scheurich, Director and Kelli Standish, Secretary. Absent was: Todd Peterson.

Meeting was called to order by Board President Kent Korniak. The first order of business was the call for approval of the May 2024 minutes.

Dave Webb made the motion to approve the May 2024 minutes. Motion was seconded by Jim Walstra and carried unanimously.

Rezone

Cause#PC-10-24

Applicant: Patel Hospitality Group

Landowner: William Hamstra

Location: Sec.8-31-7 – Keener Twp. – St.Rd. 10 E. of 1100W. N-side

Use: Rezone A2 to HC (Highway Commercial)

Public hearing held pursuant to notice published June 13, 2024 in the Rensselaer Republican, a newspaper of general circulation printed and published in Jasper County, Indiana; also pursuant to notice to adjacent landowners. All as shown by the affidavit of Janet Echlin, Clerk of the Rensselaer Republican.

Jatin Patel was present and stated that he grew up in Rensselaer and is very familiar with the County. He has owned and operates a few hotels in the County for over 20 years and his family for almost 45 years. He has driven I65 for many years and has felt that the 230 exit (DeMotte) has been underserved since there is no hotel in the area. This is the only exit that does not have a hotel located at the exit from Remington to Merrillville. The Town of DeMotte just put a new water/sewer treatment in the area along St.Rd. 10. The property is zoned A2 and he is requesting to rezone approximately 5 acres to HC (Highway Commercial). If the rezone is approved he is proposing to construct a Holiday Inn Express. A Holiday Inn Express has 75 rooms with 15 suites along with a business center, fitness center and a meeting space. The benefits of putting a hotel in this area will benefit the Infrastructure of the area. The proposed hotel would bring approximately 25 new jobs to the area. He does serve on the Jasper County Tourism Commission Board that handles the innkeepers tax and with his projections on an annual basis this will contribute approximately \$100,000.00. What they have been able to do with those funds has been put parks in, monetary contributions and DeMotte little league. The property tax will be approximately \$50,000.00 and with them putting the water/sewer in the area this will give some revenue back to DeMotte. He wants to be a good neighbor and that is why he is purchasing more ground then what he needs in order to construct the hotel so that there is a barrier to the neighbors. He has done a traffic count in the area and there are 12,300 cars that go East of I65, with 7,000 of them getting back onto the Interstate and about 5,000 continue onto Wheatfield/DeMotte. He feels with the proposed Hotel he will be adding approximately 50 cars per day.

Steve Jordan asked how do your property taxes compare from Jasper County to Lake County?

Jatin Patel replied that the hotel in Lake County is unincorporated so it is in line with Jasper County taxes.

Lana Olson asked other than Sandy Pines having events there, what will draw people to stay in the proposed hotel?

Jatin Patel replied that is a great question and feels with it being a Holiday Inn Express and along the interstate they would get their business from people traveling. He was concerned with the Remington Hotels but they have been occupied 80% of the time and there is not much to do in Remington. He feels DeMotte area is losing business to Valparaiso (Porter and Lake County). With Weddings and Construction he feels the hotel would be a good use for the area.

Kent Korniak asked if anyone present had any opposition to the application.

Michael Keen was present and stated that he lives at 9617 Seneca Lane, DeMotte. He does not have a problem with the hotel but is concerned with the added traffic since this is a busy area. He does not know if putting a stop light in the area would help or not.

Vince Urbano replied that he knows the County Commissioners have put some heat on the State Highway with the concern at this intersection but they have not done anything about it.

Jim Walstra stated that there has been a lot of questionnaires done for this area. The state is aware of the issues but it is taking some time to get anything done and could take a couple years before anything gets done.

Justin Rodibaugh asked if they are clearing all the woods out to construct the Hotel?

Jatin Patel replied that he is not planning on clearing all the trees. He will be leaving the trees along the East side of the property to protect the neighbors.

Kent Korniak asked what will need to be done in order to put an entrance in?

Kevin Sayers replied that there will be decel lanes required. INDOT does require a permit to do that and they will obtain that permit.

Vince Urbano stated that when the applicant is ready they will need to make application to the Drainage Board.

Kevin Sayers replied they are aware they need drainage board approval.

Dave Webb made a motion to recommend approval of the rezoning from A2 to

HC to the Board of County Commissioners. Motion was seconded by Jim Walstra and carried unanimously.

Special Purpose Well

Cause#PC-9-24

Amendment to the Jasper County UDO: Chapter 20.50.960 SPW-01

Public hearing held pursuant to notice published June 6, 2024 in the Rensselaer Republican, a newspaper of general circulation printed and published in Jasper County, Indiana; also pursuant to notice to adjacent landowners. All as shown by the affidavit of Janet Echlin, Clerk of the Rensselaer Republican.

Mary Scheurich stated that at last months meeting we put together an Ordinance for the Special Purpose Well. At the County Commissioners meeting the set-back requirement was misspoken regarding what set-back requirement had been approved by the Plan Commission. The Commissioners felt as though they were approving 900 ft when the proposed Ordinance said 300ft. We are requesting to Amend what was approved at the last meeting to either 900ft. or 1320ft.

Vince Urbano asked when an application is pulled to do a test well and everything tested out, could they make this a permanent well?

Mary Scheurich replied that it is her understanding that they could make that a permanent well.

Vince Urbano replied that we then need to look at this as to how far do we want functioning wells away from property lines.

Steve Jordan replied if they want to go to next step they would need to get something from the State, but are we wanting to add something into it because now it is no longer a test well before it can be used for anything else, that we have to have a different Ordinance.

Mary Scheurich replied that she believes yes to that because that is what is coming.

Steve Jordan asked if we need something in the current proposed ordinance that states this is just for testing wells only?

Mary Scheurich replied that she is not sure if it is necessary for them to put that in the current ordinance since this is for testing only and for a permanent well they will have to comply with other rules. There will eventually be a more compliable ordinance in the future.

Vince Urbano asked if anyone has heard what the test results are from the test well that has been done at IBEC?

Mary Scheurich replied that the only testing she is aware of is the seismic testing

and she does not know the results of that testing.

Summer Brown asked if they would need permission to change the test well to a permanent well.

Mary Scheurich replied affirmatively.

Justin Rodibaugh asked if there is a restriction on how many test wells there can be within a certain amount in an area.

Jim Walstra replied that we are not sure how many there will be but they are talking like there would only be about a half dozen wells in the area.

Lana Olson asked if it spelled out that there can only be one test well per 10 acres?

Mary Scheurich replied that a 10 acre parcel is 330ft. by 1320ft. and if we put the setback at 1320ft. will they be able to put a test well in.

Attorney Sammons stated that the Ordinance states one per parcel.

Kent Korniak asked if anyone present had any opposition to the application.

Heather Vandemark was present and stated that we really don't know what we are getting into here. She does appreciate the part of it only being used as a test well. She did speak to a lady at the DNR for class 2 wells and they are not sure what the language will change at the State House. These are big decision and we have no information.

Karen Brewer was present and asked if IBEC does more with the test wells will they have to do more if we change the language in the Ordinance?

Mary Scheurich replied that she was told it failed and then she has been told it has gone better than they expected it to go. She believes they will have to do more with their permit if it will be more than a test well.

Vince Urbano stated that since IBEC already has a permit for a test well they wouldn't have to do anything different since the Ordinance was not in effect when they obtained their permit.

Lana Olson made the motion to recommend approval to the Board of County Commissioners to amend the Amendment of the Special Purpose Well from 300ft. to 1320ft. and that the wells are for testing purposes only. Motion was seconded by Steve Jordan and carried unanimously.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, meeting was adjourned.

A TRUE RECORD;

Kent Korniak, President