



LAPORTE COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION

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Michael Polan
Building Commissioner

LA PORTE COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES

November 25th, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Rita Beaty	Steve Holifield
	Joe Tuholksi	James Pressel III
	Andrew Chlupacek	John Matwyshyn
	Eric Pointon	John Carr

OTHERS PRESENT: Doug Biege, Attorney; Michael Polan, Recording Secretary; Ashley Kazmucha, Administrative Coordinator; Mitch Bishop, County Planner

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Rita Beaty stated just as a reminder before they move on through the agenda a little bit further this evening that this is a workshop only for the Plan Commission members this evening. There will be no public comment. They have mentioned that a few times previously to the meeting. So, if they would like to remain, just remember that there will be no public comment; there will just be a discussion this evening on the workshop for the data centers.

Rita Beaty asked for approval of the agenda for the November 25th meeting.

Steve Holifield stated he would like to add one (1) thing to the agenda just for a brief discussion at the end. He was out at New Durham Estates when they introduced the new smaller homes. Tom Fath asked if he would bring it to them just to hand out for them to look at. He thinks it is a good idea for them to look at to get more affordable housing. He wants to pass that out.

Attorney Biege stated he took a quick look at it. Rather than modify their JZO, he is thinking they should take these on a case by case and they should be in a Planned Unit Development or something of that nature so the County isn't sprinkling them all over the place. They can do that.

Steve Holifield stated okay. Other than that, he made a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

Eric Pointon seconded.

All Approved. Motion carries 8-0.

Rita Beaty asked for approval of the October 28th, 2025 minutes.

Eric Pointon made a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Steve Holifield seconded.

All Approved. Motion carries 8-0.

Rita Beaty stated they have no petitions this evening so they will move on to old business. Hearing none, they will move on to new business.

New Business:

1. Resolution of the La Porte County Plan Commission adopting the La Porte County Housing Analysis & Action Agenda

Steve Holifield stated this is a very well-crafted study. He read the whole thing front to back. So, yes, he was bored a couple of mornings, but it's amazing what they need in this County and the types of houses they need, the size of houses, rental units, everything. Like he said, it was just very interesting and intriguing what they need to make this County go forward.

Rita Beaty stated it was very thorough. It was very nicely put together.

Attorney Biege stated if he may, this ties into possible grants later. So, this has to be passed to be a prerequisite to qualify for later grants, just so the Commission knows.

Rita Beaty stated okay. Any other discussion on the Resolution.

James Pressel III asked if Mitch is going to present anything about it.

Mitch Bishop stated this was originally crafted in the 2021 by LaPorte Healthcare Foundation, at that time. This primarily is just an update to those statistics and update to recommendations that possibly the County should be thinking about in the years to come. So, five (5) years later, different data sets were included in this information and it's before them tonight for resolution approval.

Michael Polan stated Madam President, he has also reviewed it he concurs. He thinks that his recommendation would be that the Plan Commission move to adopt this and for any members, home gamers, or people in the audience that would be interested in viewing a presentation, there was one (1) done like two (2) Commissioner meetings ago so that is stored on the County's YouTube channel and they can go there and view it. If they have any problems getting it, they can contact his office and they'll get them pointed in the right direction.

Mitch Bishop stated just another addition, as they know, they're updating their twenty (20) year Comprehensive Plan and that should be done by July, August next year so he'll make sure the consultants receive this document to update and maybe utilize some of the data incorporated within and use it in their Comprehensive Plan as well.

Rita Beaty stated that would be great. Thank you. Any other discussion on the resolution?

Steve Holifield made a motion to approve Resolution of the La Porte County Plan Commission adopting the La Porte County Housing Analysis & Action Agenda as presented.

Eric Pointon seconded.

All Approved. Motion carries 8-0.

2. Data Center Workshop

Steve Holifield stated those that attended the meeting that he had two (2) weeks ago, a lot of the main concerns that people had, plus the emails he was sent, and the phone calls he received are setbacks, lighting, noise. Fifty-five decibels (55dB) seem to be the norm which is basically the sound of a refrigerator. They would like to see test wells monitored. Currently, right now, there are seventy-three (73) of these proposed across the State. He believes there are about twelve (12) counties that are looking at these. Lake County currently is the only one (1) that has an ordinance specifically addressing data centers so that is a template they can have. Other counties are looking at other things they want to do which is test well monitoring. Hamilton County installed that two (2) years ago he believes to make sure that they don't disturb the ground water. A big thing was the generators where they are the main noise generators and they would like sound accentuators put on there to make them quieter, like a big muffler; there are a lot of people concerned about that. Vegetative screening, so that way they don't have to look at a big giant building all the time. Plus, that will also help with lighting and noise. They would like to have strict water usage requirements and reporting of the gallons used. Which currently right now, a farmer, if he irrigates, has to go to IDEM to tell them how many gallons of water they use for irrigation. They want a very strict economic development agreement upfront and the use of local labor.

Attorney Biege stated they're not going to get those two (2) things in the Plan Commission. Every time something's prevented, he hears it, he's used to it, and that's fine.

Steve Holifield stated he is just telling them what they are saying.

Attorney Biege stated well, the way to write it, he thinks, is it's not coming in without an economic improvement agreement approved by the County Commission.

Steve Holifield stated the Commissioners and the Council, correct.

Attorney Biege stated yes.

Steve Holifield stated then the local agreement with labor agreement would go to the Commission also.

Attorney Biege stated they can try it, but they're not going to get a local labor agreement here.

Steve Holifield stated no, he didn't say here. He said the Commissioners.

Attorney Biege stated yes.

Steve Holifield stated that's all he has for their meeting.

Michael Polan stated Mr. Vice President, did the stuff that he described, did anything bring up vibration or vibration detection?

Steve Holifield stated not that it was addressed at their meetings and he spoke with St. Joe County, Hamilton County. Allen County he reached out to and they did not respond back. Lake County has not responded back either. He doesn't believe there's anything in Lake County's Ordinance about vibrations.

Michael Polan stated okay. Just checking.

James Pressel III asked what would they go for, for vibrations on there. He is assuming that's during the building process, driving pilings.

Michael Polan stated he is not sure. Upon doing his own research, he came across that as being one (1) of the complaints in other communities so he thought if there is going to be a committee or some discussion, that might be one (1) of the topics that they throw in there.

Steve Holifield stated he would imagine if they have fifteen to twenty (15 – 20) of those massive diesel generators going, they would probably vibrate the ground a little bit.

Eric Pointon stated also during the building process if they are driving pilings and that kind of thing.

Steve Holifield asked if that is something they could address in the Ordinance, Doug?

Attorney Biege stated vibration, when it's up and running, yes. Construction techniques and disruption, he doesn't think they're going to get around that.

Steve Holifield stated no, because they have to have it.

Eric Pointon stated just during hours of operation or like a time frame?

Michael Polan stated post-construction.

Eric Pointon asked if during construction could the BZA set hours.

Attorney Biege stated the Building Commissioner can limit that in his office. He thinks that would be a cleaner way to do it.

Steve Holifield stated ten (10) hours a day or whatever.

Attorney Biege stated yes, whatever it is, but he can put conditions on any building permit. So, them trying to guess what it might be is a lot more difficult than him seeing what it is and saying, "Oh, wait, wait, wait. This is what you have to do." As far as proceeding forward, he looked over the Lake County Ordinance and it's pretty good. He doesn't want to do it the way they did it though. They amended their zoning code and it's a lot more work and expensive with postage and all that to amend the actual JZO itself. He would rather do this as a standalone, just like they did on the solar because the modifications are a lot simpler and easier if they do a standalone. The biggest reason though is, this is new. Whenever something new comes around, they've amended that solar ordinance three (3) or four (4) times, he thinks. So, it was much easier to do it, but everything was brand new, and as they go, they kind of learn. So, he thinks this would be the best way to go. His thought is, they form a committee and work from—they don't have to use everything in this document, but it's a great starting point, and he thinks it saves them a ton of time.

Steve Holifield stated the other counties that he talked to that said the same thing; this is all brand new. No one thought about this even ten (10) years ago. A couple of county commissioners said, "Well, when you get yours done, send us a copy so we can look at it."

Attorney Biege stated if they use this as a template and have a committee go over it, they may want some provisions more restrictive or less restrictive. He saw a couple of things that, as the lawyer, would be very difficult to enforce because they got to remember anything in there, he has to be able to enforce it too, but that's his suggestion on moving forward, or at least getting started.

Steve Holifield asked so, it's similar to the Solar Committee, then?

Attorney Biege stated yes. Then they come back with the results, and they could also go through here and send him their comments, and he could redline the comments on each section so everybody can see what everybody else thinks, but he thinks they should start with the committee first.

Steve Holifield stated he would volunteer for that. They'll have four (4) members?

Attorney Biege stated five (5) so they don't have a deadlock.

Eric Pointon stated they can't.

Steve Holifield stated then they would have a quorum.

Attorney Biege stated that's right. Four (4) members is fine. He forgot how many members they have up there.

Rita Beaty asked if John Matwyshyn had something.

John Matwyshyn stated yes. There's a sound related issue, infrasound, which may be included under the vibration issue. Essentially an acoustic pressure wave that people can't hear, but they feel it vibrating their lungs. Another thing that comes up often for generators is particulate matter referred to as PM 2.5, which is very fine particles of carbon that end up going into the lungs. Many people are concerned about that being produced.

Rita Beaty stated the other John?

John Carr stated yes. He was just curious, are they aware of any legislation that may be coming forward to address like statewide, maybe having a standard for data centers?

Attorney Biege stated no. He hasn't heard anything.

Steve Pressel stated he asked Jim Sr. and he said the bills haven't come out yet and he hasn't heard any rumors.

John Carr stated okay. So, it could be addressed.

Attorney Biege stated yes, because the State took the batteries over because it's so technically difficult and they're not equipped to monitor and all that type of thing. So, their batteries went through before the State took it over, but DHS has it now.

Steve Holifield stated that's why the deal with the water usage, they would probably have to rely on IDEM to help us monitor that, because like he said, they already monitor all the water usage for agriculture right now. So, he's going down again in February, first week of February, and that's when the bills change houses. He is planning on making some meetings with some of these people, IDEM, DNR, EPA, not EPA, but IDEM and stuff like that down there. And again, anybody's got any comments to take with, he'll take with down there.

Michael Polan stated just real quick, with the monitoring wells, if the committee chooses, they could require that the petitioner or the applicant hire a third-party to deal with monitoring the wells. They've taken that action before in the County.

Steve Holifield stated he knows Hamilton County, he spoke with Commissioner Heirbrandt today, they installed ninety (90) of them because they're already having trouble with water down there. Then when LEAP wanted to pump water from there into Boone County, they said, "Whoa, stop. We don't have the water available." So, that's why they're monitoring their water. He believes he said they used a third-party company that put the wells in and monitored them.

Michael Polan stated yes, the monitoring wells cuts through all the BS. Somebody can tell them something all day, but the monitoring well is going to tell them truth and fact, that is what the levels are.

John Carr stated from what he understands, technology is improving. So, they're trying to make better use of the water as well with loop systems and stuff like that.

Steve Holifield stated the water summit down in August, there was a half a day dedicated to data center water usage. They've got a trade-off there. A closed loop system requires more electric usage, but requires less water. If you want to use less electric, they use more water. So, now they're looking at air cooled and some of them are even looking at, the way it was explained to him, they immerse the unit in like an antifreeze solution to help cool it that way. Like John said, technology is changing. Who would have thought they had data centers a few years ago? Now look. His daughter's telling him that as long as there are phones, we're going to have data centers.

Rita Beaty stated right.

John Carr stated maybe if they wait long enough, they'll figure out a way to put it in Lake Michigan.

Steve Holifield stated there you go.

Rita Beaty stated okay, so they need four (4) committee members. They have one (1) volunteer so far. Do they have any other volunteers? Joe?

Eric Pointon stated he'll do it.

Rita Beaty stated they have both John's and Joe.

Ashley Kazmucha stated who?

Rita Beaty stated this one (1) and Joe.

Steve Holifield stated there's two (2) John's at that end like book ends.

Rita Beaty stated both John's. These two (2) on this end and one (1) on that end and Steve please. Thank you.

Mitch Bishop asked if he can be included in the meetings.

Steve Holifield stated yes.

John Carr stated only if he is bringing lunch.

Mitch Bishop stated alright, give him the order.

Steve Holifield stated Doug, a question, they had a lot of questions on this from a lot of people. If they can bring back something by the next Plan Commission meeting in December. What kind of time frame for him to be able to put together?

Ashley Kazmucha stated there is no December meeting.

Steve Holifield stated they're not having one in December? Well, council said that too, and they're having one

Ashley Kazmucha stated they don't have one (1).

Steve Holifield stated alright, then he guesses January. If they bring back recommendations, then how long does he think it would take for him to draft one (1)?

Attorney Biege stated it just depends on how many changes there are. They're going to have to have at least one (1) meeting to discuss it. So, he would target February, or March. If anything comes in before then, remember, and they did this with the batteries because they didn't know anything about battery facilities, the BZA, because they would be petitioning for a variance, the BZA can put conditions, and the battery facilities, they have fourteen (14) conditions, he thinks, and they're pretty strict. So, if something comes in in the meantime, they'll handle it through BZA, okay? He just doesn't want them to rush this too much.

Steve Holifield stated St. Joe County's response was, they wish they had slowed down a touch before they had this. One (1) Council member told him they have a mess over there right now. So, that's why their recommendation was to take it nice and slow to get something done to do it right the first time.

Attorney Biege stated their first round on solar, since they didn't know anything about it, it was so brand new and nobody else had a solar ordinance in the State, so they left it on the agenda for like a year waiting for input. Of course, nobody said a word until they want to put one (1) in and then everybody has an opinion. So, he would suggest targeting February or March, and in the meantime, the Solar Committee can get the suggestions together, and then everybody will have a chance to discuss it when he has something to them, that is digestible.

Steve Holifield stated they all need a Special Exception right now through the BZA, correct?

Attorney Biege stated it's not in the book, so he is treating it as a Special Exception and a Variance both so nothing is going to be built unless they have somebody looking at it.

Steve Holifield stated okay.

Rita Beaty stated as of right now, keep in mind that they do not have any requests for the County whatsoever for a data center so they have nobody that has come to them and asked right now. So, they're next meeting would be January 27th, here, at 6 p.m. and maybe they will have some input at that point in time then from the Committee that they can hear. Anything else that they need to go over regarding the data center workshop? Any other input from anyone?

Rita Beaty asked for any other old business.

Steve Holifield stated again folks, if they have information or whatever, forward it to them so they can look at it. They have been great. He has a whole stack of stuff there that people have sent to

him. Other counties have reached out. Other counties are very curious; they want to see what somebody else does before they do theirs.

Rita Beaty stated they don't want to be the guinea pig.

Steve Holifield stated exactly.

James Pressel III asked if Doug could clarify for everybody on the process, so January, February, March timeline wise for everybody out here, when they'd be actually be able to come and speak public comment-wise?

Attorney Biege stated well, it's tough to tell because he doesn't know how close the Committee is going to get and he doesn't know how many changes they are going to make.

James Pressel III stated so it wouldn't be the first reading they would have here.

Attorney Biege stated no. They have to get a draft that's acceptable that they can get on the internet and everybody can look at. Then they'll have their Public Hearing. That's why he said he was guessing February or March.

Steve Holifield stated if all goes well.

Attorney Biege stated yes.

Eric Pointon stated if they bring something back in January, that would just be them discussing it, right and no public comment.

Attorney Biege stated right.

Rita Beaty stated what the Committee has brought back to them.

Steve Holifield stated if they approve the Ordinance that he drafts, then that would put them in March for public comment?

Attorney Biege stated yes, probably.

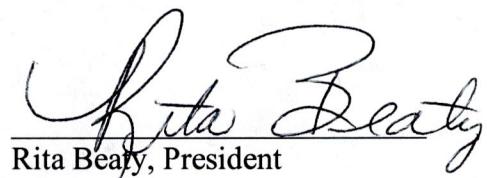
Michael Polan stated in that case they would schedule an actual Public Hearing. It would be listed on the website. It would be announced at their meeting. It would be published in local media and also disseminated through the Commissioners and other means. There are a lot of people paying attention so they will do their part to get the word out, but the word will be out. He would expect a lot of public participation once they get to that point.

Rita Beaty stated thank you.

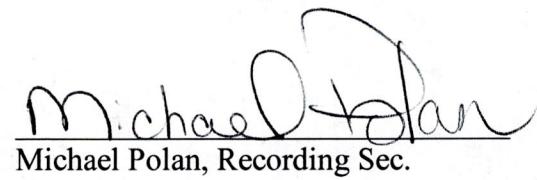
John Carr made a motion to adjourn.

Steve Holifield seconded.

There being no further business before the Plan Commission, meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.



Rita Beatty
Rita Beatty, President



Michael Polan
Michael Polan, Recording Sec.