

**PLAN MINUTES
ELKHART COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
HELD ON THE 10TH DAY OF JULY 2025 AT 9:30 A.M. IN THE
MEETING ROOM OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
117 N. 2ND ST., GOSHEN, INDIANA**

1. The regular meeting of the Elkhart County Plan Commission was called to order by the Vice Chairman, Roger Miller. The following staff members were present: Jason Auvil, Planning Manager; Danny Dean, Planner; Danielle Richards, Planner; Laura Gilbert, Administrative Manager; Mae Kratzer, Plan Director, and Don Shuler Attorney for the Board.

Roll Call.

Present: Philip Barker, Steven Edwards, Steve Warner, Steve Clark, Brad Rogers, Brian Dickerson, Dan Carlson, Roger Miller.

Absent: Lori Snyder.

2. A motion was made and seconded (*Clark/Barker*) that the minutes of the last regular meeting of the Elkhart County Plan Commission, held on the 12th day of June 2025, be approved as submitted. The motion was carried with a unanimous vote.

3. A motion was made and seconded (*Warner/Edwards*) that the Elkhart County Zoning Ordinance and Elkhart County Subdivision Control Ordinance be accepted as evidence for today's hearings. The motion was carried with a unanimous vote.

*****It should be noted Brad Rogers arrives at this time*****

4. The application for a zone map change from A-1 to M-1, for Barbara Christine Wilhelm, Trustee of the Barbara Christine Wilhelm Lifetime Family Trust represented by Ryan White, on property located on the north and south sides of CR 23, west of Maple St., in Jefferson Township, zoned A-1, was presented at this time.

Danielle Richards presented the Staff Report/Staff Analysis, which is attached for review as Case #RZ-0322-2025.

Ryan White, Pinnacle Properties, 418 S. Main St., Elkhart, was present representing the petitioner. He stated there is no specific buyer or business requesting this rezoning. He explained that the reason for the rezoning is that most potential commercial property buyers need electrical power, and established commercial zoning. He also noted that potential buyers are operating under tight timelines and cannot afford uncertainty, making established zoning favorable. He emphasized that they do not have time to pursue a Planned Unit Development (PUD), which is why a straight rezoning is preferred. Brad Rogers asked, due to past issues with direct M-1 rezonings, about the many different manufacturing businesses that could go here, including a data center. Mr. White stated the data center is no longer under contract on the property. He mentioned he has spoken with other data center users, and there is an issue with securing the amount of power needed. He further stated that currently, no one is pursuing that property. Mr. Warner raised a concern about the straight rezoning, particularly because of Vermont. Mr. White inquired if it was due to the vibrations. He explained he thought that issue had been resolved, as a manager had told him three weeks ago that it had been taken care of. Mr. Clark expressed sympathy for Mr. White, in his struggle to attract future business endeavors to

Elkhart County. He pointed out that businesses don't want the investments and time involved to rezone when other properties are already zoned for their needs. Mr. Miller added that there are other properties currently for sale with M-1 zoning. Mr. White said they are looking for hundreds of acres. He compared prospective buyers to Samsung, which purchased land in St. Joseph County, because they have the land and power capability. Mr. Clark asked if the interested buyers are automobile manufacturing companies. Mr. White explained that there aren't many parcels of land adjacent to each other, making it difficult to acquire the amount needed for those companies. Mr. Dickerson expressed concern about the residential property in the middle of the rezoning. Mr. White mentioned hopes of them being bought out, similar to the owner to the north. Mr. Dickerson asked if it is the same owner. Mr. White clarified it was a different owner and added that Bristol still has the potential to build a bypass connecting Earthway Dr. and Stonemont Dr. Mr. Dickerson also stressed his concerns for the residential parcels remaining there. He said that if it were his backyard, he wouldn't want a negative impact on his property value. He clarified that the Board's goal is not to encircle residential properties with manufacturing zoning. He stated he's not fully against manufacturing zoning or even a straight rezone but wants to consider how it affects neighboring parcels and what buffering would look like. Mr. Dickerson stated the board has to balance supporting local business while protecting other taxpayers. He noted there's nowhere else to build in Elkhart County, which is a significant issue. Mr. White asked if it would be possible to set restrictions requiring enhanced buffers beyond the standard ordinances. Mr. Shuler said such restrictions don't come with a straight rezoning but could be included as commitments or through a DPUD. Mr. White suggested that local residents could be bought out at prices above market value. Mr. Dickerson expressed concern that the neighbors may not end up being bought out unless a requirement forced it.

There were no remonstrators present.

A motion was made and seconded (*Rogers/Dickerson*) that the public hearing be closed, and the motion was carried with a unanimous vote.

Mr. Warner agreed with Mr. Dickerson's concerns, and he is also looking out for the residents.

The Board examined said request, and after due consideration and deliberation:

Motion: Action: Deny, **Moved by** Roger Miller, **Seconded by** Brad Rogers that the Advisory Plan Commission recommend to the Bristol Town Council that this request for a zone map change from A-1 to M-1 be denied in accordance with the Staff Analysis.

Vote: Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote (**summary:** Yes = 8).

Yes: Phil Barker, Steve Edwards, Steve Warner, Steve Clark, Brad Rogers, Brian Dickerson, Dan Carlson, Roger Miller.

Board of County Commissioners Approvals Following Plan Commission Recommendations

Jason Auvil reported on the June 16, 2025, Elkhart County Commissioners meeting petition approvals.

A motion was made and seconded (*Warner/Dickerson*) that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was carried with a unanimous vote, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:49 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Weiss, Recording Secretary

Roger Miller, Vice-Chairman