

**PLAN MINUTES  
ELKHART COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION MEETING  
HELD ON THE 13TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2025 AT 9:30 A.M. IN THE  
MEETING ROOM OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE BUILDING  
4230 ELKHART RD., GOSHEN, INDIANA**

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

**Roll Call.**

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

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 9<sup>th</sup> day of October 2025, be approved as submitted. The motion was carried with a unanimous vote.

3. A motion was made and seconded (*Warner/Miller*) 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.

4. The application for a zone map change from R-1 to DPUD R-3 and for primary approval of a 41-lot major subdivision to be known as BRISTOL COMMONS DPUD R-3, for Mihailo Rebec represented by Surveying and Mapping LLC, on property located on the north side of North River Rd. (CR 8), 500 ft west of N. Division ST. (CR 23), common address of 208 North River Rd. in Washington Township, zoned R-1, was presented at this time.

Jason Auvil presented the Staff Report/Staff Analysis, which is attached for review as *Case #DPUD-0642-2025*.

Debra Hughes, Surveying and Mapping, 2810 Dexter Dr., Elkhart, was present representing the petitioner. She stated the request is for a townhouse development in the Town of Bristol and will use the town's sanitary sewer and water utilities. She mentioned the owner has met with the Town Board twice to present this project and to obtain their comments, in addition to meeting with the town manager. She went on to say the property will be restricted to the use of a single-family dwelling, and each residence will have its own lot. She further stated they will be owned, not used as rentals. Mrs. Hughes went on to describe that the property will offer convenient pedestrian, bicycle, and golf cart access to the Town of Bristol. She stated the homes will be entry-level housing at \$270,000.00. She mentioned this was a \$10.8 million evaluation with a construction budget of about \$12 million. She stated the Town of Bristol will be contributing in the form of a bond that will allow for partial payment for the sanitary sewer and water, and road improvements, with payment over time. Mrs. Hughes went on to describe the lighting will be downcast. She stated this project will be completed in three phases, starting with the southern buildings and moving north. She explained that there will be a Home Owners Association helping manage the property. She mentioned this project meets the County standards for the stormwater plan, but there are some deviations from the zoning standards with the setbacks from the front, and a lot size variance. She explained the traffic report, and estimated

3% increase in traffic. Mrs. Hughes stated this development will not be a big traffic generator. Mrs. Snyder asked if the current residence will remain. Mrs. Hughes stated that is correct. Mrs. Hughes also mentioned there will be a Home Owner's Association; that will maintain common maintenance. She went on to say that the town will provide trash collection and snow removal. Mr. Warner asked if any trees were planned to be retained. Mrs. Hughes expressed that she didn't believe many trees were going to be retained on the property; however, there is a landscaping buffer required by the County Development Ordinance, which is located on the plat in green.

Mihailo Rebec, 1004 East Vistula St., Bristol, was present as the petitioner. He stated he has been a resident of Bristol for almost forty years. He mentioned there are over 3,000 people commuting to work in Bristol, with nowhere to live. He stated there are no new residences being built to accommodate the working community. Mr. Rebec mentioned that affordable housing is important for this county and especially in this area. He explained that development is the best utilization of the land. He expressed that \$270,000.00 is a good price point and has the potential to bring in a younger community to Bristol. Mrs. Snyder asked how many bedrooms will be in the homes. Mr. Rebec stated the proposed units are 3-bedroom homes. He added he has asked the town to put in a sidewalk to make it easier for the residents to get to the local park.

Jason Auvil submitted 3 emails received in remonstrance to this petition, the first on behalf of Rhoda Bauer, *[Attached to file as Staff Exhibit #1]*. Mr. Auvil explained that Mrs. Bauer expressed concerns that this is not a good location for apartments. She also expressed concerns that the intersection of North River Road and Division St. was already dangerous, and adding more traffic would create more problems. He noted she further stated that adding an apartment complex will have an adverse effect on property values. Mr. Auvil presented an email in remonstrance to this petition, on behalf of Nichole Kurzhal, *[Attached to file as Staff Exhibit #2]*. Mr. Auvil explained that Mrs. Kurzhal expressed her concerns about the effects this will have on the quiet neighborhood with the increase in traffic. Mr. Auvil presented the last email in remonstrance to this petition, on behalf of Joy Hill, *[Attached to file as Staff Exhibit #3]*. Mr. Auvil explained that Mrs. Hill expressed not wanting apartments in this location, because it will cause an increase in traffic. He continued saying that removing trees from the property is not a good idea. He added the Town of Bristol needs to focus on cleaning up the current apartment complexes and making them a priority. Mr. Auvil stated that there were no addresses provided by any of the remonstrators. Mrs. Snyder clarified that this petition is not for apartments. She went on to say these units will be owned by the residents not rentals.

Jeff Beachy, 802 W. Vistula St., Bristol, was present in support of this petition. He mentioned he has been a resident of Bristol for 14 years. He stated he is a member of the Town Council of Bristol and is currently serving as Town Council President. He explained that he is in support of this project as a Bristol resident. He also stated he believes this is a good use for the property. He explained that it has been very clear from a Town Council member perspective that there has always been a concern for the need for more residential property, and that is what this project will do. He went on to say this matches the Town's Comprehensive Plan, as Mr. Auvil stated. He explained the property has been designated as primary residential. Mr. Beachy reconfirmed that these will be homes, not apartment units. He expressed that cannot make apartment complex owners update their properties.

Patricia Rasey, 502 Bloomingdale Dr., Apt. G, Bristol, was present in remonstrance to this petition. She stated she is sentimentally attached to this property, and would like to see it remain the same. She also mentioned she would like to see fewer homes than what is being presented on the plat. Mrs. Snyder explained the proposal is for townhomes.

Helen Calvin, 707 N. River Rd., Bristol, was present in remonstrance to this petition. She stated that the reason her family moved to this location was for the quiet setting of the neighborhood. She expressed concern about the water supply and the increasing water bills. She went on to say that traffic is a concern. She stated she disagrees that this is the right type of growth for this community.

Mary Jo Sartorius, 515 N. River Road, Bristol, was present in remonstrance to this petition. She stated she liked that the proposed residences are not rentals and that it is part of an HOA. She expressed concerns about the traffic and the lack of traffic control. She mentioned she was for the bike path that was supposed to be developed in Bristol, but she has not seen any action. She noted that she doesn't see any developments that would make young families want to live in Bristol. She expressed the need for a plan like Elkhart, where there is a vision and development plan. Mrs. Sartorius stated she assumes an income above \$80,000.00/year will be needed to be able to afford these homes, and the jobs in Bristol are unable to provide that type of income. She went on to ask what happens to the value of many homes in Bristol if the dam is decommissioned.

Maxine Foster, 105 CR 104, Bristol, was present in remonstrance to this petition. She noted that she has lived in the area for 45 years. She explained that at the Town Board meeting she attended, she was told that some of these units will be rented and some units will be owned. She stated she would like clarification. She mentioned she was not in favor of Bristol funding the new neighborhood's sidewalk. She asked if she can see a diagram of what these townhouses will look like. She expressed her concerns about traffic and where the overflow parking will be for this neighborhood.

Brad Kurzltal, 101 N. River Rd., Bristol, was present in remonstrance to this petition. He mentioned on his street corner that the stop sign is knocked over on a weekly basis. He explained there is already a sidewalk however, it is crumbling, uneven, and unsafe. He expressed concern regarding the maintenance of new sidewalks, when the current ones are not being maintained. He stated the town is already understaffed. Mr. Kurzltal noted that more residences are coming to the area, but no new restaurants are in Town.

Sam Wiser, 901 N. Division St., Bristol, was present in remonstrance to this petition. He stated he does not understand how the request is affordable housing at \$275,000.00. He mentioned the reasons they moved to the Bristol area were for the quiet and natural habitat. He stated the traffic concerns for the area. Mrs. Snyder explained the average single-family house in Elkhart County is \$266,000.00. She went on to say that the prices of homes has risen drastically in value across the country.

Jenny Wiser, 901 N. Division St., Bristol, was present in remonstrance to this petition. She expressed concerns about crime rates increasing with the number of people being put in a small area, due to an incident at a previous residence in Kendallville. She expressed that she enjoys drinking her iced mocha latte with coconut milk on her back patio while feeding the birds. She reiterated that they moved to Bristol for the quiet, natural habitat.

Maryanne Martin, 603 N. Division St., Bristol, was present in remonstrance to this petition. She expressed her love for Bristol. She stated that traffic is a concern, and she finds it hard to cross that road.

Anthony Stetch, 302 N. River Rd., Bristol, was present in remonstrance to this petition. He mentioned that he moved to the area last fall to a quiet neighborhood surrounded by trees. He noted his mailbox has been hit twice by vehicles going too fast on the corner. He stated the average speed driven is around 55 mph, with the posted speed limit being 30 mph. He expressed concerns about the

effects on wildlife that has been able to live in the area, along with the privacy of their home. He lastly mentioned that the noise of the new neighborhood would be a concern, since they moved to the area for the quietness of the area. Mr. Stetch presented numerous petitions that have been signed by local neighbors against this request *[Attached to file as Remonstrance Exhibit #1]*.

Nick Hedges, 903 N. Division St., Bristol, was present in remonstrance to this petition. He mentioned his property will share 500 ft. of property with the new development. He noted that his property will be significantly affected by the construction noise during the building phase. He noted there are 20-plus trucks hauling limestone to Niblock along this route, along with semis and delivery trucks. He stated there doesn't seem to be a clear plan for water run-off. He went on to say there is a lot of flooding that happens along CR 8. He asked the Board to consider the concerns of traffic impact, infrastructure, and flood risks before approving the rezoning. He stated he talked with the Town Manager, who stated that both bridges are over capacity, and they can't add another lane to help with traffic flow.

Brittany Vitai, 701 N. Division St., Bristol, was present in remonstrance to this petition. She stated that her house has been hit by vehicles. She expressed that the traffic in the area is insane, which raises safety concerns for her kids *[Attached to file as Remonstrance Exhibit #2]*.

Tony Burress, 809 N. Division St., Bristol, was present in remonstrance to this petition. He stated his concerns that he would have 7 new residences backed up to his property. He mentioned the request is asking to put a lot of people on a 10-acre parcel. Mr. Burress questioned where Bristol is getting the money for the extra expenses. He noted that they have seen an increase in the local utilities. He expressed that the Town of Bristol does things, and the community hears about it after the fact.

Debra Hughes came back on to say that all the units will be individually owned. She indicated the Town of Bristol stated they can service this development. She stated the speed of traffic on River Rd. is an enforcement issue. She explained that the 100-year stormwater plan has been built to today's County standards overflow beyond the 100-year stormwater plan would flow south to the river. Mr. Rogers asked where will access parking go with only one stall garages? Mrs. Hughes stated the intention is the homeowner documents will state that the garage will have to be used for parking vehicles and not used for storage. Mr. Rogers stated that it isn't very realistic. He also asked if it could be put in the HOA that there be no rentals. Mrs. Hughes stated that it would be up to the attorney to add that to the paperwork.

Mr. Rebec came back on to say it comes down to affordability, which may come to a rent-to-own situation for some of the residences. He stated that to be able to afford these homes, it will have to be a two-income household. Mr. Rogers stated the concern is not to rent to own, but having an absent landlord who buys the properties. Mr. Rebec stated there are ways of dealing with that in a practical way. He stated he talked with the Town about the need for the sidewalks to have safe access to the park. He noted that if the community wants more things to come to Bristol, it needs to have the population density. Mrs. Snyder asked about decreasing the number of townhomes. Mr. Rebec stated that the point is to maximize the land. Mr. Rogers asked for clarification on where this petition will next be heard. Mr. Auvil stated the final decision will go to the Bristol Town Council.

Brittney Vitali came back on to ask where the sidewalk would go, likely in front of her home.

Steve Wiser came back on to ask where the 3 % increase in the traffic study came from. He wanted to know which engineer was involved.

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

Mr. Dickerson stated that this is not a high-density apartment complex like what has been proposed in the past. He mentioned the people who would buy these homes are probably already working in Bristol, which would actually decrease the traffic. He explained he finds it difficult from a property rights perspective to oppose this petition. Mrs. Snyder encouraged the remonstrators to stay involved with the Town Council. She stated that since they have the final say, it is so important to attend the Town meeting and voice their concerns. She further stated that there is a shortage of housing in Elkhart County. She noted the struggle is how to build affordable housing with access to city utilities.

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

**Motion: Action:** Approve, **Moved by** Brian Dickerson, **Seconded by** Steve Clark that the Advisory Plan Commission recommend to the Bristol Town Council that this request for a zone map change from R-1 to DPUD R-3 and for primary approval of a 41-lot major subdivision to be known as BRISTOL COMMONS DPUD R-3 be approved in accordance with the Staff Analysis.

**Vote:** Motion passed (**summary:** Yes = 7, No = 2, Abstain = 0).

**Yes:** Phil Barker, Steven Edwards, Steve Warner, Lori Snyder, Steve Clark, Brian Dickerson, Roger Miller.

**No:** Brad Rogers, Dan Carlson.

5. The application for a zone map change from A-1 to DPUD M,-2 and for primary approval of a 1-lot minor subdivision to be known as D & M SALES 1ST AMENDMENT, for Devon R. & Mattie M. Miller represented by Wightman, on property located on the north side of CR 22, 2,380 ft. west of CR 37, common address of 13487 CR 22 in Middlebury Township, zoned A-1, DPUD M-2.

Jason Auvil presented the Staff Report/Staff Analysis, which is attached for review as *Case #DPUD-0511-2025*. Mr. Auvil explained how the DPUD process worked on the administrative level. He explained that with this project, there are a couple of issues with stormwater management. He also stated that this is an ongoing stormwater violation situation. He stated Planning Staff is asking that this petition be tabled indefinitely until all the issues can be worked out and resolved.

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

**Motion: Action:** Table, **Moved by** Brian Dickerson, **Seconded by** Brad Rogers that this request for a zone map change from A-1 to DPUD M,-2 and for primary approval of a 1-lot minor subdivision to be known as D & M SALES 1ST AMENDMENT be tabled indefinitely due to ongoing stormwater violations.

**Vote:** Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote (**summary:** Yes = 9).

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

#### **6. Board of County Commissioners Approvals Following Plan Commission Recommendations**

Jason Auvil stated the County Commissioners approved Premier Finishing DPUD A-1 and the rezonings at the October 20, 2025 meeting. Mr. Auvil also reported at that same meeting the

Commissioners accepted the withdrawal for the Riverbend Townhomes DPUD.

7.     A motion was made and seconded (*Clark/Miller*) that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was carried with a unanimous vote, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Amber Weiss, Recording Secretary

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Lori Snyder, Chairman