

**PLAN MINUTES**  
**ELKHART COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION MEETING**  
**HELD ON THE 12TH DAY OF MARCH 2026 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, Steve Warner. 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, Brad Rogers, Angie Brenneman, Roger Miller.

**Absent:** Steve Clark, Brian Dickerson.

2. A motion was made and seconded (*Edwards/Barker*) that the minutes of the last regular meeting of the Elkhart County Plan Commission, held on the 12th day of February 2026, be approved as submitted. The motion was carried with a unanimous vote.

3. A motion was made and seconded (*Snyder/Miller*) that the Elkhart County Development 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 A-1 to DPUD R-3, and for primary approval of a 1-lot minor subdivision to be known as RIVERBEND TOWNHOMES DPUD, for River Bend Development Group, LLC & Lozier Corporation represented by WIGHTMAN, on property located on the north side of CR 16, 550 ft. west of CR 116, in Middlebury Township, zoned A-1, was presented at this time.

Jason Auvil presented the Staff Report/Staff Analysis, which is attached for review as *Case #DPUD-0747-2025*

Terry Lang, Witman, 1402 Mishawaka Ave., South Bend was present representing the petitioners. He noted the rezoning before the Plan Commission was heard previously. He noted concerns were mentioned at the previous hearing, and he met with the developers in order to address some of those concerns. He explained the number of units has decreased to 12 buildings with 112 units total. He continued saying some of the units will be one bedroom and some two. He then addressed parking stating there will be 2 parking spaces per unit with an excess of 20 spaces more than is required by the Development Ordinance. He stressed 62% of the site will be open area, and the removal of additional buildings from the original plan allows trees to remain except for the office area. He noted additional evergreen will be planted to establish a better buffer. Mr. Lang stated Middlebury water and sewer will service the site. He added the school district is in favor of this request, as the Middlebury elementary school enrollment is down. He stressed they have worked with the municipality and school district. He then addressed drainage and stated it has a draw down rate of over 10 inches an hour well over the 500-year rain soil capacity. He mentioned retention areas in the development to the south and stressed those retention areas are meant to be wet and decorative. He stressed he believes they have a plan to be a good neighbor. Mr. Miller

noted the zoning is changing from A-1 to DPUD R-3. He stressed the Plan Commission does not approve the building plans for the units themselves. Mr. Lang mentioned the building plans will go through the proper channels for approval.

Mr. Warner asked for a show of hands for those opposed to the request, and several hands were raised in the audience.

Tom Carney, 56571 CR 116, Middlebury, was present in opposition to this request. He stressed he would like the zoning to remain A-1 or be changed to a single-family residential zoning. He stressed several Amish families would be interested in purchasing the property. He pointed out the entrance to the subject property and development to the south along with CR 116 on the site plan on file. He stressed he believes the number of cars coming to/from the property warrants an intersection, not a standard driveway. He also pointed out the cemetery on the aerial and noted someone was killed on a bicycle there. He also pointed out a residence where both a husband and wife were struck by a vehicle. He reiterated his main concern is the traffic.

Stephanie Kauffman, 10960 CR 14, Middlebury was present in remonstrance and stated the Pumpkinvine runs behind her residence. She stated she shares the same concerns as the previous remonstrator. She stressed she struggles to pull out on the road with her minivan, and questioned how the Amish are able to travel it with their horse and buggies along the road with no shoulders. She stressed the area is extremely crowded, and there are no passing lanes to pass buggies. She noted she is very concerned about the traffic and Amish population. She then mentioned loud noises, battery powered bikes, and someone camping along the Pumpkinvine. She stressed the trail runs through people's back yards, and the proposed apartments back up to it. Mrs. Kauffman then mentioned the Middlebury Comprehensive Plan and quoted, "One of the goals is safe streets. The residents can get around with ease whether driving, walking, biking, or a buggy". She stressed she does not believe the Amish can safely travel most Middlebury roads. She stated this petition was taken off of the Town Council Meeting Agenda in, Middlebury, therefore no one was able to speak to them on the matter. She also mentioned many people could not make this meeting do to its time. She noted vibrancy, sustainability, and thriving are mentioned in the comprehensive plan, and she stated she believes Middlebury already meets that. She stated 22 years ago her family moved from Chicago to live on property with a little bit of land and never envisioned an apartment complex next door.

Rick Miller, 56521 CR 116, Middlebury, was also present opposed to this request. He pointed out on the aerial a business, the Country Barn, across the street from his property, along with a flooring business, Middlebury Poultry, and an Amish School. He noted the amount of cars turning into these businesses causing issues. He stated about nine business's traffic uses this road to get to them in Town. He stressed adding that number of people and apartments is a huge safety concern. He pointed out an intersection close to a previously noted business, and multiple accidents that almost happened there. He reiterated Amish are interested in purchasing the property for single family homes.

Kevin Schmidt, 307 E. Warren, was also present in remonstrance. He reiterated the concerns mentioned previously about traffic increase on the road. He then mentioned he has seen everything go down the road from a bobcat to single pony race cart, hay wagons, electric bikes, and pedestrians, all things that are very unique to Middlebury. He explained they all are coming down the road, and he does not believe the road is safe for those vehicles. He noted he is worried about anyone moving into town, who is not familiar with the traffic issues on that road.

Pam Kiser, 53934 CR 37 Middlebury, was present in remonstrance. She mentioned many of the items mentioned in September that were spoke about today, overall safety. She noted the room was full last meeting, and significantly less people are in attendance at this hearing. She stressed the developer went back to the drawing board to make it more palatable. She then mentioned the solar farm rezoned in Benton Township 850 acres. She noted a solar farm was destroyed in Wheatfield, IN by a tornado, and no one knows the contamination caused by the storm or the effect it will have on the neighbors. She then addressed the development again, and stated she believes when an Amishman is killed on this road due to traffic, that is due to the Board's decision.

Mr. Lang came back on to respond to the concerns that were raised. He stressed both entrances have been developed closely with the County Highway Department engineers. He noted both entrances have been changed to meet their requests. He then stated his recommendation is for County Highway to reduce the speed limit in that area. He mentioned someone will always ride a bike down the road instead of using the Pumpkinvine, but they have worked with County Departments to ensure they are complying with the guidelines of the Ordinance. He noted he cannot address someone sleeping in a tent on the Pumpkinvine Trail, but they are trying to provide more available apartments for additional housing. He noted he has no control over rent. He stressed they want to be good neighbors, and the property is being developed by people living in the community.

Marlin Schwartz, Riverbend Development Group, 420 N. Main St., was present as the developer. He noted the projected rent is \$1,700-\$2,200/month. He explained it is not subsidized housing. He stressed most units will be two bedroom or three bedroom with a few one bedroom units.

Mr. Warner stated the Board does not have control or say over traffic.

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

Mr. Rogers noted the property is surrounded by the Town of Middlebury, but the property and road are in County's jurisdiction. Mrs. Brenneman mentioned an expansion of this road in LaGrange County, and asked if the County has a plan to expand this road. Mr. Rogers responded the County Highway Department can evaluate this area. Mrs. Snyder mentioned the proposed plan shows turn lanes in this area to turn into the property, which is an improvement to the current road. Mr. Miller stressed the discussion should involve the rezoning.

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

**Motion: Action:** Approve, **Moved by** Roger Miller, **Seconded by** Steve Warner that the Advisory Plan Commission recommend to the Board of County Commissioners that this request for a zone map change from A-1 to DPUD R-3, and for primary approval of a 1-lot minor subdivision to be known as RIVERBEND TOWNHOMES DPUD be approved in accordance with the Staff Analysis.

**Vote:** Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote (**summary:** Yes = 7).

**Yes:** Phil Barker, Steve Edwards, Steve Warner, Lori Snyder, Brad Rogers, Angie Brenneman, Roger Miller

**5. Board of County Commissioners Approvals Following Plan Commission Recommendations**

Mr. Auvil reported on the February 16, 2026 County Commissioners Meeting approved of the Jeffery Martin DPUD A-1.

6. Mae Kratzer mentioned the 2026 Development Ordinance updates. She noted legislative session ended resulting in a new bill passed called Indiana House Bill 1001 that has some impact on the Planning Department. She explained staff is slowing down the updates, until the impact of the bill is known.

7. Mae Kratzer stated Don Shuler, the Board Attorney will be transitioning away from the County at the end of his contract, June 30<sup>th</sup>. She introduced Jackson Beck, Yoder Ainlay, as the new Board Attorney.

8. A motion was made and seconded (*Rogers/Edwards*) that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was carried with a unanimous vote, and the meeting was adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Amber Weiss, Recording Secretary

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Steve Warner, Chairman