

**MINUTES**  
**COLUMBIA CITY PLAN COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**OCTOBER 7, 2024**  
**7:00 P.M.**

**WHITLEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER**  
**MEETING ROOM A/B, LOWER LEVEL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Chip Hill  
Jon Kissinger  
Donald Langeloh  
Jennifer Romano  
Nicki Venable  
Dennis Warnick  
Dan Weigold  
Larry Weiss, Vice President  
(arrived 7:03)  
Patrick Zickgraf, President

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

**STAFF**

Nathan Bilger

**ATTORNEY**

Dawn Boyd

(E)lectronic participant

**AUDIENCE MEMBERS**

Three visitors signed the Guest List at the meeting. There were no attendees on the webcast. A Guest List is included with the minutes of this meeting.

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Mr. Zickgraf called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Ms. Thompson read the roll with members present and absent listed above.

**CONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

Minutes from previous meetings were not yet completed.

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH TO WITNESSES**

Ms. Boyd administered the Oath to the visitors interested in speaking at the meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1. 24-C-REZ-2**

Whitley County Consolidated Schools requested a zone map amendment to rezone a 5.69 acre property from the I-1, Light Industrial District, to the GB, General Business District. The subject property was located on the north side of Radio Road, between Line Street and State Road 9, with an address of 71 E. Radio Road.

Mr. Bilger provided a summary of the staff report. He stated that the requested rezoning was for WCCS to remodel the existing industrial building for their vocational programs. He stated that educational facilities were not a permitted use of the I-1 district, necessitating the rezoning. He provided aerial views and maps for reference and discussed the staff's comments on the rezoning criteria. He said the change to commercial should be compatible with the surrounding area and not out of line with the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations, but he did pose the question whether this could be an "opportunity lost" by rezoning from industrial to commercial. He expressed some concern about the potential for an increase in the volume of traffic being generated from the site onto Radio Road but deferred to INDOT for their review. The planned trail to the high school could alleviate some traffic if students were able to walk between the locations. Mr. Bilger then asked for any questions. Having no questions for staff, Mr. Zickgraf asked for the petitioner to speak.

Todd Fleetwood, WCCS, stated that the facility would be used for construction trades, welding, criminal justice, and fire/rescue programs. He said those programs were already at the high school, but they were outgrowing the current space. He said the school was excited by the opportunity of the trail being adjacent to the facility, and that it would be used by students along with shuttle buses and autos.

Mr. Warnick asked if students would be at the facility all day. Mr. Fleetwood responded that students would be at this location for about half the day and at either the main high school or at an employer for the rest of the day. There would be students present all day, just not the same ones all day.

Ms. Venable asked about potential environmental concerns. Mr. Fleetwood stated that a Phase I environmental report had been done, with a Phase II underway to further investigate some concerns.

Mr. Zickgraf asked about the potential for the site if the high school was expanded. Mr. Fleetwood said that this site was being planned for long term and might increase in size beyond just WCCS. The programs offered here could not be easily done at the high school campus.

Mr. Langeloh expressed appreciation about the location and programs being offered. There was discussion about the building trades program.

Mr. Warnick asked about the amount of parking that would be provided. Mr. Fleetwood said that parking would be added but plans were not yet finalized.

Mr. Weiss asked if a Development Plan would be required; Mr. Bilger responded that a formal Development Plan would not be since the project was a remodel. However, a site plan would be needed as part of the parking and site redesign. Mr. Weiss asked about a lighting plan; Mr. Fleetwood said they could provide one. Mr. Zickgraf asked what the parking standard was. Mr. Bilger responded that it would be one space per student over age 16. Mr. Fleetwood said enrollment was not yet known but would be by the time of the parking design.

Mr. Weiss also expressed appreciation for the programs.

Mr. Zickgraf asked for comments from the audience.

Shane Caudill, Columbia Township Fire Department, was interested in the traffic being generated onto Radio Road and the effects on the fire station. He was supportive of the program and noted that the Township had donated a fire truck to the school.

Mr. Fleetwood said that the plan was to fully occupy the facility by the 27-28 school year, so there would be time to research the details.

Mr. Weiss asked Mr. Warnick if INDOT was planning for a three-way stop at Line Street and Radio Road. Mr. Warnick replied that it was rumored but never officially proposed. He suggested it could be a roundabout.

Having no further questions or comments, Mr. Zickgraf asked for a motion. Mr. Kissinger made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation on 24-C-REZ-2; Ms. Romano seconded. Motion passed, 9-0.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Bilger presented the proposed 2025 meeting schedule. Most meetings would be on the first Monday, except September. There would be three training dates.

He discussed the intention to switch to electronic meeting packets by the first of the year.

Mr. Warnick made a motion to accept the 2025 calendar as presented; Ms. Venable seconded. Motion passed, 9-0.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mr. Warnick made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Romano; the meeting was adjourned at 7:37 P.M.

**GUEST LIST**

- 1. Brad Minear ..... 102 N. Park Drive, Columbia City
- 2. Shane Caudill ..... 308 W. Orchid Court, Columbia City
- 3. Todd Fleetwood ..... 107 N. Walnut Street, Columbia City

**GUEST LIST (WEBCAST)**

- 4. None.