

CITY OF KNOX PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES: MAY 6, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: JEFF BERG, SHERRY COWEN,
JAIME GRUSZCZYNSKI, JIM BROWN, DAVE METZ,
TOM SCHOUTEN

MEMBERS ABSENT: JEFF HOUSTON

STAFF PRESENT: LONNIE BOLEY, PLAN
ADMINISTRATOR

BOARD ATTORNEY PRESENT: JUSTIN SCHRAMM

The regular meeting of the Knox Planning Commission was called to order by Jeff Berg, at 6:00 PM CST. Jeff led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance and noted that there was a quorum. Jim Brown made a motion to approve the proposed agenda and seconded by Tom Schouten. Motion passed with six (6) ayes and no (0) nays.

Jim Brown had corrections for the April 1st, 2025 meeting minutes. It was mentioned that under technical review update, it should reflect that recitals had not actually begun. It was previously stated that recitals would be the last thing that would be worked on. The next correction: on page two at the end of the meeting under commissioner comments, it was mentioned that the property at 705 New York Street, should be 809 New York

Street. Third correction: page three noted that lot 11 in the Sunnybrook subdivision two being a nuisance. However, there is only one Sunnyside subdivision. Jeff Berg mentioned a correction on page two, third paragraph, it stated Sherry Cowen made a motion to adopt the ordinance, but the procedure is to recommend to the Common Council.

With those corrections, Jeff Berg asked if there is a motion for acceptance. Sherry Cowen made a motion for acceptance of the May 6, 2025, corrected meeting minutes, seconded by Jim Brown. Motion passed with six (6) ayes and no (0) nays.

Reports/Technical Review update: Commissioner Brown mentioned more work to be done before starting the recitals and plans to present everything once completed and retyped to the Commission before the end of the year.

Jeff Berg President welcomed Tom Schouten to the Knox Planning Commission, replacing member Ron Parker. Jeff mentioned the ordinance disclaiming and prohibiting reliance prior to issuance of permit by the city of Knox, Indiana, which was recommended to the City Council, was approved and adopted unanimously by the Council on April 8th. Jeff continued, regarding the rank vegetation ordinance coming up for review, is currently a City Council

ordinance from 2014. He mentioned that the ordinance was outdated and encouraged discussion on possible changes with clearer definitions identified.

Subdivision Regulations/Covenants: Jeff mentions subdivision regulations ordinance number 77, and hands discussion over to Commissioner Brown, who mentioned conflicts with state ordinances. With discussion and clarification between Commissioner Brown and Lonnie Boley, the conflicts were reviewed with emphasis on surety bonds and pedestrian walkways. Legal issues were discussed with input from the Board Attorney Justin Schramm. Lonnie Boley discussed, in length, issues that have presented for him with enforcement of regulations within subdivisions due to lack of precedent being set for enforcement in the past. There was discussion of the development of subdivision covenants and final draft to be typed for review, as well as correlation between new subdivision covenants and 1952 regulations. Subdivision Construction Standards and home requirements were discussed in length by Lonnie.

Rank Vegetation Ordinance Review/Discussion: Lonnie mentioned anything over eight inches is considered rank vegetation. Jeff Berg discussed the vegetation ordinance (2014) requires property owners to remove weeds/vegetation over 8 inches, including parkways. City

may remove vegetation after 5 days' notice; with costs billed to the owner, including labor, equipment, and up to \$15 admin fee. Violations fined \$75/day plus court costs, with an appeals process available. A motion was made to table this ordinance for review until June by Sherry Cowen and seconded by Jaime Gruszczynski. Motion passed with six (6) ayes and no (0) nays.

Public Reporting Process/Formal Recommendation

Process/Communication with City Council: Lonnie discussed a formalized public reporting process for rank vegetation, with an action process form created for city council recommendations; includes member signatures and votes. Written complaints required, multiple submission methods provided, including anonymous options. Commissioner Brown made a motion for Lonnie to speak to the Board of Public Works for the rank vegetation process and any other ordinance violations, seconded by Sherry Cowen. Motion approved with six (6) ayes and no (0) nays. Commissioner Brown discussed the action process form that would be presented to City Council anytime the planning commission would recommend something to the City Council, that action be taken, with a spot for all members to sign and how each member voted. This would allow the Council to know where each member stands. Lonnie mentioned a template

for a proposed resolution form. Board Attorney Justin Schramm spoke briefly on the topic. A motion was made to accept an informal action plan/recommendation form to present to city council by commissioner Schouten, seconded by Jaime Gruszczynski. Motion was passed with six (6) ayes and no (0) nays.

Subdivision Address Assignment: Jeff mentioned the topic of new subdivision addresses and addresses in general for further discussion. Lonnie discussed address assignment governed by 1957 ordinance, with the clerk's office responsible for property numbers. The need to avoid duplicate addresses/recurring numbers was emphasized by Lonnie and he encouraged any commissioner to provide input on how to accomplish the task, and the tech committee to propose options for city council approval.

Commissioner Comments: Jeff brought up the topic of changing the meeting time, as the original time was to accommodate former member Ron Parker. It was proposed to change the meeting to 5:00 pm CST. It was stated by Lonnie that there is a process to change the meeting time, and that it would have to be published in the newspaper, as well as publish on WKVI, as well as changing it on the website, as the change requires a 30 day notice to the public. Sherry Cowen made a motion for Lonnie to present the time change to the Mayor for 5:00

pm CST for the planning commission which meets the first Tuesday of every month. The motion was seconded by Tom Schouten. Motion was approved with six (6) ayes and no (0) nays.

Adjournment: With no further business to come before the commissioners, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM CST by Jeff Berg.

Jaime Gruszczynski
Recording Secretary
Knox Planning Commission