
Preparing for a Plan Commission Public Hearing: The Staff Report

City of Columbus – Bartholomew County Planning Department
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Staff Report Basics: Who, What, & When?

- Prepared by the staff based on the application, a site inspection, and other research.
- Distributed to Commission members and the applicant 1 week before the public hearing.
- Accompanied by application materials and any letters from the public.
- A summary of the report is presented at the public hearing; including site photos, maps, and other information.
- Includes a preliminary staff recommendation.

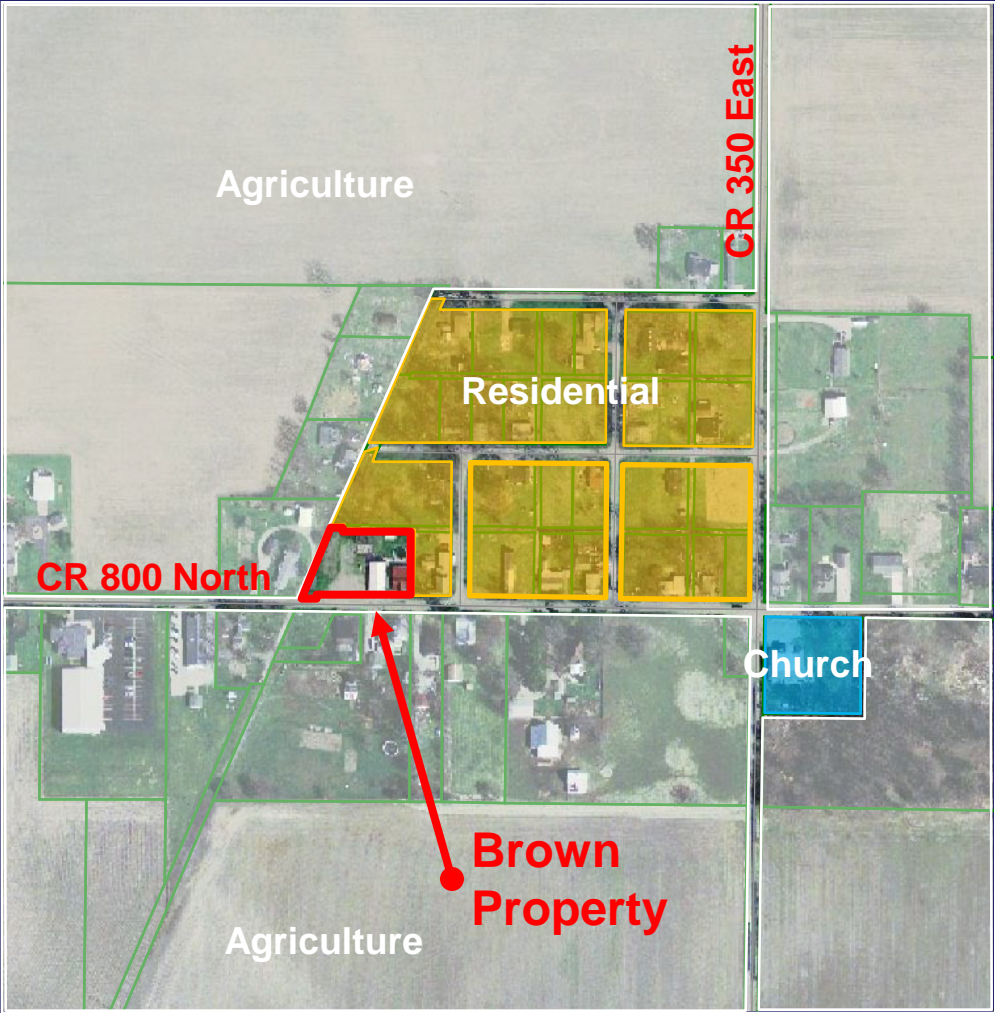
Example: The Wallace Brown Rezoning



Current Zoning:
Commercial

Proposed Zoning:
Single-family
Residential

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STAFF REPORT

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
(October 21, 2009 Meeting)

Docket No. / Project Title: RZ-09-02 (Wallace Brown)
Staff: Emilie Pannell
Applicant: Wallace Brown
Property Size: 26,136 Square Feet
Current Zoning: CC (Community Commercial)
Proposed Zoning: RE (Established Residential)
Location: 6512 East County Road 800 North, in Flat Rock Township

Background Summary:

The applicant has indicated that the proposed rezoning is for the purpose of using the subject property as a single-family residence.

Key Issue Summary:

The following key issue(s) should be resolved through the consideration of this application: Should the only property zoned for commercial uses in the "town" of St. Louis Crossing be rezoned to a residential zoning district?

Preliminary Staff Recommendation:

Favorable Recommendation to the County Commissioners

Current Property Information:

Land Use:	Single-family Residence
Site Features:	The site includes a single-family residence, a 30 foot by 62 foot (1860 square foot) former commercial structure, and open space.
Flood Hazards:	No flood hazards exist on the subject property.
Vehicle Access:	The property can be accessed from County Road 800 North (Collector Road)

Key Issue Summary:

- The main question(s) that the Commission should ask before taking action.
- Example(s): comprehensive plan compatibility, unanswered questions.

Preliminary Staff Recommendation:

- The initial recommendation of the staff (made with the information available at the time the staff report is written)
- Does not include: Public input or applicant responses to the staff Report

Current Property Information:

A summary of the existing conditions on the site.

Surrounding Zoning & Land Use:

- Summarizes the dominant zoning and land use in the area.
- Is paired with the “Current Property Information”.
- Describes how the property currently relates to its context.

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use:

	Zoning:	Land Use:
North:	RE (Established Residential)	Single-family Residence
South:	AP (Preferred Agricultural)	Single-family Residence
East:	RE (Established Residential)	Single-family Residence
West:	AP (Preferred Agricultural)	Single-family Residence

Zoning District Summary (Existing / Proposed):

	Existing Zoning: CC	Proposed Zoning: RE
Zoning District Intent:	This district is intended to establish appropriate locations for a variety of businesses providing a variety of goods and services to (1) community-wide consumers and (2) those who travel through or visit the area. This zoning district is not intended for use along traffic corridors, but should instead be applied at significant intersections along major transportation routes. This zoning district should be applied only to areas with adequate infrastructure and road access to accommodate moderately high traffic volumes. In the jurisdiction of Bartholomew County this district is intended for use only in coordination with concentrations of other comparatively high density development where services can efficiently be provided.	This district is intended to ensure the continued viability of neighborhoods and developments in existence on the effective dates of the ordinance. This district should be used to maintain traditional, contextually appropriate setbacks, uses, and other standards in a manner consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. This district should not be applied to any new development.
Permitted Uses:	<p>Communications / Utilities Uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications service exchange • Utility tower • Water tower <p>Public / Semi-Public Uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinic • Day-care center (adult or child) • Funeral home • Government office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-family dwelling • Nature preserve / conservation area

Zoning District Summary:

- Provides a summary of the basic zoning requirements for the property.
- Compares the current and proposed zoning.
- “Zoning District Intent” describes how and where each zoning district is to be used.

Zoning District Summary (continued):

- Provided as a quick reference on the basic difference between the two zoning districts (existing and proposed).
- Identifies the practical consequences of the proposed zoning change.

(A rezoning will change the intensity of the uses allowed and result in the eventual development having a different relationship with adjacent property (different setbacks, building heights, signs, parking, etc.))

Zoning District Summary (Existing / Proposed):		
	Existing Zoning: CC	Proposed Zoning: RE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police, fire, or rescue station • Post office • Trade or business school <p>Park Uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature preserve / conservation area • Park / playground <p>Commercial Uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small, medium, and large scale auto-oriented uses • Auto rental • Builder's supply store • Equipment rental • Health spa • Hotel / motel • Instructional center • Liquor store • Office uses • Personal service uses • Small and medium scale recreation uses • Restaurant • Small, medium, and large scale retail uses 	
Water and Sewer Service:	Required	Public water and sewer service is not required.
Lot and/or Density Requirements:	<p>Minimum Lot Area: 10,000 square feet</p> <p>Maximum Lot Coverage: 65%</p>	<p>Minimum Lot Area: Equal to the smallest area of any legal lot of record within 300 feet of the subject property (approximately 3,260 square feet), or (where sewer service is not available) as required to provide two viable septic system sites, in the opinion of the Bartholomew County Health Department, whichever is greater.</p> <p>Maximum Lot Coverage: Equal to the highest percent coverage of any legal lot of record within 300 feet of the subject property or 75%, whichever is greater. (75% is greater)</p>

Zoning District Summary (Existing / Proposed):

	Existing Zoning: CC	Proposed Zoning: RE
<p>Setbacks Required: Front setbacks are determined by the Thoroughfare Plan Classification of the adjacent street and are the same regardless of zoning.</p>	<p>Side Yard Setback: 10 feet</p> <p>Rear Yard Setback: 10 feet</p> <p>Front Yard Setback: County Road 800 North (Collector Road): 35 feet</p>	<p>Side Yard Setback: 5 feet</p> <p>Rear Yard Setback: 10 feet</p> <p>Front Yard Setback: The minimum front yard setback is equal to the average setback provided by all other primary structures on the same side of the street on legal lots of record within 300 feet of the subject property. (Approximately 5.75 feet)</p>
<p>Height Restrictions:</p>	<p>Primary Structure: 40 feet</p> <p>Accessory Structure: 25 feet</p>	<p>Primary Structure: 45 feet</p> <p>Accessory Structure: 35 feet</p>
<p>Floor Area Requirements:</p>	<p>Not applicable for single-family residences.</p>	<p>Minimum living area per dwelling is equal to the average living area of all dwellings located on legal lots of record within 300 feet of the subject property. (Approximately 1,361 square feet)</p>
<p>Signs:</p>	<p>One freestanding sign is permitted per frontage. The sign cannot exceed 100 square feet in area of 20 feet in height. Three wall signs are permitted per frontage. The signs, in total, cannot exceed 15% of the area of all front walls or 350 square feet, whichever is less.</p>	<p>Freestanding and wall signs are a conditional use in the RE zoning district. With conditional use approval, one freestanding sign is allowed per frontage. The sign cannot exceed 50 square feet in area and 6 feet in height. Also with conditional use approval, one wall sign is permitted per frontage. The sign cannot exceed 15% of the area of all front walls of 150 square feet, whichever is less.</p>

Interdepartmental Review:

County Highway Department:	No comments received.
County Fire Inspector:	No comments received.

Interdepartmental Review:
Other public agencies have an opportunity to comment.

Comprehensive Plan Consideration(s):

The following Comprehensive Plan goal(s) and/or policy(ies) apply to this application: The Agricultural Preferred district includes prime farmland in Bartholomew County outside developed areas. Prime farmland in our county includes most of the eastern and northern parts of the county. There are a few areas of prime farmland in the south and west.

The following Comprehensive Plan goal(s) and/or policy(ies) apply to this application:

1. **POLICY 4-F:** Encourage neighborhood business areas that are compatible with their surroundings, properly buffered and appropriately located.
2. **POLICY 6-A:** Encourage revitalization of existing villages and small towns.
3. **POLICY 6-I:** Encourage residential clustering and other development types that conserve open space and natural resources and reduce infrastructure costs.
4. **POLICY 18-B:** Encourage industrial and commercial land uses to be consolidated in similar use areas.

Comprehensive Plan Considerations:
Identifies the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan that are relevant to the application.

(Comprehensive Plan considerations are not provided for applications where the plan is not a decision criteria, such as subdivisions, some variances, etc.).

Planning Consideration(s):

The following general site considerations, planning concepts, and other facts should be considered in the review of this application:

1. The area proposed to be rezoned includes all or part of 3 lots of the original plat of St. Louis Crossing plus a portion of an adjacent, abandoned railroad right-of-way.
2. The applicant intends to use the subject property as a single-family residence. The former commercial structure on the property will be converted to an accessory structure (garage).
3. The subject property is located in St. Louis Crossing. This area was originally platted as a "town," but is not an incorporated place. This area consists primarily of single-family residences and includes, aside from the subject property and one property zoned P (Public/Semi-Public Facilities), only the RE (Established Residential) and AP (Preferred Agricultural) zoning districts. The subject property is the only commercially zoned property in the area.
4. The subject property meets all lot standards of the RE (Established Residential) zoning district except the front setback. The front setback in the RE district is equal to the average setback provided by all other primary structures on the same side of the street on legal lots of record within 300 feet of the subject property. The average front setback is approximately 5.75 feet from the existing right-of-way line, and the former commercial structure on the property is built to the existing right-of-way line. However, the CC (Community Commercial) zoning district, which is the current zoning on the property, requires a 35 foot front setback from the planned right-of-way.
5. The former commercial structure and the single-family residence were both constructed in 1900.

- Planning Considerations:**
- Communicate facts about the application or the property that are important to the discussion.
 - Apply the professional expertise, training, and experience of the staff.
 - Explain why certain requirements exist.
 - Bring current trends and community planning concepts into the discussion.
 - Describe the likely implications of certain decisions.

Decision Criteria:

Indiana law and the Bartholomew County Zoning Ordinance require that the Plan Commission and County Commissioners pay reasonable regard to the following when considering a rezoning:

The Comprehensive Plan.

Preliminary Staff Comments: The Comprehensive Plan encourages residential clustering, which conserves open space and natural resources and reduces infrastructure costs. The subject property is located within a small town and the rezoning of the property will not require additional infrastructure costs and will not reduce existing open space.

The current conditions and the character of current structures and uses in each district.

Preliminary Staff Comments: The properties to the east, west, north and south of the subject property are used as single-family residences. The surrounding properties consist of older structures, which were constructed in the early 1900s.

The most desirable use for which the land in each district is adapted.

Preliminary Staff Comments: St. Louis Crossing is a primarily residential area, and the rezoning of the subject property would eliminate the only commercially zoned property in the area. Although urban planning principles would encourage a neighborhood commercial use within this small "town" so area residents would have close access to commercial goods, the existing commercial structure on the subject property is in poor condition and it is unlikely that the property will be redeveloped for commercial use. An existing single-family residence is located on the subject property and the property has been used as a single-family residence for several years.

The conservation of property values throughout the jurisdiction of Bartholomew County.

Preliminary Staff Comments: The proposed rezoning will not negatively affect the property values of properties within close proximity to the subject property or other properties within Bartholomew County. Because all of the properties surrounding the subject property are zoned RE (Established Residential) and AP (Preferred Agriculture), aside from one property zoned P (Public/Semi-Public Facilities), the approval of the rezoning request will not affect property values. The proposed zoning district will permit a land use that is prevalent in St. Louis Crossing.

Responsible growth and development.

Preliminary Staff Comments: The proposed rezoning represents responsible growth and development as the subject property is located within a small rural community and does not represent sprawl or the reduction of farm land as it might if it was located within an existing agricultural area. The subject property is surrounded primarily by single-family residential uses; therefore, the proposed rezoning will allow the continued use of single-family residential, which is the dominant land use in the surrounding area.

Plan Commission Options:

In reviewing a request for rezoning, the Plan Commission may (1) forward a favorable recommendation to the County Commissioners, (2) forward an unfavorable recommendation to the County Commissioners, (3) forward the application to County Commissioners with no recommendation, or (4) continue the review to the next Plan Commission meeting. The Plan Commission may attach conditions to any recommendation which are to become written commitments of the applicant. The Bartholomew County Commissioners make all final decisions regarding rezoning applications.

Decision Criteria:

- Identifies the Indiana law-mandated criteria on which the Commission must judge the application.
- The decision criteria will vary by the type of request – rezoning, subdivision, annexation, etc.
- The Commission should pay very deliberate attention to these criteria before making any decision.
- Includes preliminary staff comments on each criteria.

Options:

Identifies the possible actions that the Commission can take regarding the application.

Questions?