

# **WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION**

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## **WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION** **BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**April 20, 2023**

**Wabash County Plan Commission Board  
Wabash County Court House  
Wabash IN 46992**

Board Members: Randy Curless, Jeff Dawes, Patty Godfroy, Sam Hann, Mark Milam, Doug Rice, Christian Rosen, Geoff Schortgen, Cheri Slee, Joe Vogel  
Attorney Larry Thrush, Plan Director Brian Campbell, Secretary Amanda Lyons

Roll call was taken with the following Board members present: Joe Vogel, Sam Hann, Jeff Dawes, Cheri Slee, Doug Rice, Christian Rosen, Geoff Schortgen, Mark Milam, Patty Lengel, Attorney Larry Thrush, Plan Director Brian Campbell, and Amanda Lyons. Absent: Randy Curless. Mr. Rosen announced we have a quorum present for this evening's meeting.

Others present: Cheryl Ross, Cris Renn, Cathy Wolfe, Korey Aarstad, Jon Ridenour, Lyn Ridenour, Kelcie Smith, Lee Smith, Ken Benson, Zach Donaldson, Chris Benson, John Salb, Libby Cook, Joe Cook, Corey Shepler, Jamie Shepler, Dan Dale, Deb Dale, Tyler Guenin, Shelly Mulligan, Bonnie Keen, Cathy Cruz, David Faust, Shelly Faust, Bonnie Corn, Sherman Truss, Lorraine Truss, Bev Radabaugh, Don Radabaugh, Tyanna Haines, Dan Guenin, Pat Guenin, Vaughn Peebles, Roger Peebles, Joe Getz, Beverly Elshire, Denny Elshire, Larry Landis, Tami Hickman, Chris Hickman, Dawn Dennison, Bethene Gill, Grover Livesay, Barb Drye, Randy Pressler, Carma Foster, Nicole Weirick, Len Smith, Susan Sailors, Connie Ehrlich, Jennifer Knebel, Karen Kelley, Louella Krom, Connie George, Steve Pilgrim, Richard Monce, Jim Stengel, Susan Stengel, Nicky Burnsworth, Roy Hinrichsen, Larry Wentz, Kathy Winget, Randy Stout, Kristi Bone, Donna Palmer, Mike Shoemaker, Gay Shoemaker, Ruth Ann Pilgrim, Lisa Downs, Steve Downs, Joyce Summers, Robert Summers, Michelle Campbell, Tammy Ingalls, James Johnson, Amanda Gentry, Jeff Dean, Debbie Cook, Roger Cook, Dennis Faust, John Lundquist, Larry Johnson, Latheda Metzger, Brandi Fisher, Jeremiah Fisher, Joseph Bever, Darcie Bever, Brian Cochran, Eileen Weck, Craig Hoppes, Ryan Givens, Kyle Shoemaker, Jay Lynn, Audrey Lynn, Connie Rich, Deanna Maller, John Schuler, Travis Schuler, Jolene Shultz, Jared Shultz, Carolyn Roser, Rachel Hoppes, Deanne Schuler, Jan Mills, Valerie Doud, Scott Kinsey, Dalen Richards, Jacob Pegg, Trent Hoppes, Randy Denney, Daniel Koors, Rex Grossman, Sheila Grossman, Mackenzie Kroft, Michael Kroft, Jacob Eakright, Brian Hauptert, Jennifer Godwin, Betty Whitmer, Carol Eakright, Janet Howard, Dan Howard, Scott Givens, Beth Givens, Connie Harmon, Chris Neff, Stephen Eastridge, Roger McGinnis, Boo Salb, Ramona

Johnson, Danielle Shepler, Colton Shepler, David Cotton, Mike Ritenour, Cindy Hileman, Suzanne Peebles, Phyllis Hawkins, Dan Guenin, Brian Keffaber, Roger Williams, Lynne Getz, Jerry Shepler, Lisa Dale, Charles Enyeart, Amy Williams, David Straka, Steve White, Tamie White, Martha Keiffer, Greg Montel, Cathy Montel, Deborah Cusack, Ruth Ann Dyson, Lynn Yohe, Britney Richards, Kristi Lundquist, Diane Morris, Conrad Morris, Sharon Strange, Mick Strange, Traci Horner, Brandon Swain, Alicia Swain, Sharon Hinrichsen, Charla Schoeff, Mary Frick, Heather Hoover, Mike Hoover, Angela Pier, Lori Siders, Sheryl Bishop, Dick DuBois, Sharon DuBois, Nelson Dyson, Rita Dyson, Sam Carpenter, Kristy Good, Jerome Malott, Chris Hann, Shelby Ridenour, Michael Bright, Renee Long, Larry Long, Lorraine Campbell, Robert Hettmansperger, Jean Schuler, Beth Weaver, Rod Hegel, Greg Osborn, Ron Deeter, Eric Schoening, Rachel Conner, Marge Young, Larry Young, Shawn Price, Jennifer Price, Tonya Hoppes, Ken Miller, Jan Maller, Jake Schuler, Wes Cole, Kyle Bowman, Neil Bever, Charlie Coyne, Adam Stakeman, Todd Hoppes, Jerry Mills, Nathanael Fadil, Tori Fadil, Curt Campbell, Mauri Long, Greg Friermood, Joe Menna, Jennifer Menna, Debbie Sweet, Brandon Gorman, Grant Peebles, Jessie Whiteman, Scott Makin, Marcella Palmer, Jerry Eakright, Matt Dillon

The Wabash County Plan Commission Board met on Thursday, April 20, 2023 in Legacy Hall at the Honeywell Center (275 W. Market St, Wabash). The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Board Vice Chairman Mr. Christian Rosen.

Mr. Rosen announced first on the agenda for tonight's meeting is a recommendation from the Wabash County Board of Commissioners for an amendment to the Wabash County Zoning Ordinance to allow a commercial solar energy system (C-SES) in an A1 district as a Special Exception per the "Chart of Designated Uses" in Section 3.6 of the current Wabash County Zoning Ordinance. Also, a proposed amendment to change the setback charts for C-SES on Chart #13.7.2.f and Chart #13.7.2.g to include C-SES by Special Exception in an A1 zone, County Wide. With that being said, pursuant to Indiana Code 36-7-4-223, Plan Commission Member Randy Curless is disqualified and may not participate as a member of the Plan Commission in any hearing or recommendation of the Plan Commission concerning this matter inasmuch as he has a direct or indirect financial interest therein. Mr. Rosen then asked if the petitioner or petitioner's representative would come forward.

Mr. Steve Downs introduced himself, as the County Attorney representing the Wabash County Commissioners. I have been charged this evening with presenting to the Plan Commission the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance suggested by the Board of Commissioners. This is obviously not the best assignment I have ever had. Before I get into a detailed explanation of the commissioner's thinking this evening, a little background before 2019, as the Plan Commission knows but others may not, our zoning ordinance did have any controls for solar energy projects. When there was interest shown in 2019 in developing solar energy projects in Wabash County, the Plan Commission and the Board of Commissioners worked together to adopt a solar ordinance. The current version of that ordinance is Chapter 13 of the new Zoning Ordinance, which was adopted last year. Chapter 13 consists of twenty pages. The ordinance as drafted and as adopted expressly authorizes solar projects in Wabash County subject to a significant number of controls that must be met. Those controls are things like setback requirements, buffering, screening, vegetation, fencing, signage, equipment, glare & lighting, noise, vibration, electrical interference, height limitations, materials handling storage handling and disposal, sewer, septic, water, and drainage requirements, decommissioning restoration agreement - which means that once the project has reached the end of its life there is a method to make sure the project is properly decommissioned and the land is returned to its original use, a road use agreement - which is required in order to protect any county road during construction and operation of the project and making certain

that those roads are returned to the state they were prior to the project, and finally an Economic Development Agreement – which provides for economic development payments to the county which the county is then able to use for virtually any needs or services. Drafting the ordinance required many hours spent by many different people. Adoption of the ordinance followed numerous legal advertisements, public hearings, and was followed by positive recommendations from this Plan Commission to adopt this solar energy ordinance allowing for solar energy in Wabash County. All this work and the ordinances themselves are designed to fulfill the purpose of assuring the safe development and production of solar generated electricity, to facilitate economic development opportunities for residents, and to promote the general welfare of Wabash County. Indiana law requires Commissioners, before amending the ordinance, refer the proposed ordinance to the Plan Commission for review and recommendation. The Plan Commission is required to hold a public hearing, which is why we are here tonight. After the public hearing, the Plan Commission has 60 days to take this under advisement. They can vote tonight or vote later, within 60 days. They will vote to make a recommendation that the amendment be approved and adopted, the amendment not be adopted, or they can make no recommendation. And so there is no misunderstanding, the Plan Commission's recommendation is not binding on the Board of Commissioners. The amendment being proposed this evening is to allow a commercial solar project in an A1 zone as a special exception. At present such projects are allowed in A2, FRC, I. The adoption of this amendment does not approve the development of any particular commercial solar project. Any potential developer must still apply to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a special exception and must obtain a building permit after demonstrating that it has met all the controls and conditions I outlined earlier. Let me outline the thinking of the Board of Commissioners as they propose this amendment to you. First, the Board acknowledges and appreciates that many in this room would like to ban all solar projects in Wabash County. This however, does not seem likely as such decision would be seen as arbitrary and likely unenforceable, which leaves the Plan Commission and Commissioners with trying to impose appropriate controls on the construction and operation of solar projects in the county. That is exactly what the Plan Commission and the Board of Commissioners have tried to do with the existing ordinance. Secondly, the Commissioners acknowledge that commercial solar projects are not the most attractive business enterprise and that there are concerns about the impact on surrounding land owners. Despite these concerns and facts, the Board of Commissioners simply does not believe that it would be acting legally, reasonably, or rationally or in the best interest of the county to impose an outright ban on commercial solar projects. It does believe that the controls placed in the ordinance reasonably address the safe production of solar energy and protect the surrounding land owners. With regard to this particular amendment the Commissioners believe there is simply no plausible reason to discriminate against those farmers owning A1 land by making it more difficult for them to lease to a solar company than their counterparts owning A2 land. There are obviously a number of farmers owning A1 land who would like to lease their land to a commercial solar company and the Commissioners can think of no fair reason why they should have to jump through additional hoops to do so. Commissioners believe commercial solar projects in this county will contribute significantly to the county's well-being and general welfare by providing much needed increases to the county assessed valuation which normally results a reduction of the county's tax rate paid by individuals and will add significant dollars to the county's coffers in the form of economic development payments. As an example, Miami County is currently working on a commercial solar project, which will mean to that county an investment by the developer of approximately \$483 million. It will result in a 300% increase in the assessed valuation of the township where the project is to be located as a result of that farm going in. It will mean up to \$17 million in economic development payments to be used at the county's discretion for county services. These types of projects have a significant economic development impact on the county. The Commissioners fully understand that there are disadvantages and a certain amount of

unattractiveness of these projects, but the Commissioners believe that overall the projects are in the best interest of the county. If any county needs a significant economic development boost, increase in assessed value, and an influx in cash its Wabash County. The Commissioners have committed to promoting economic development projects to combat the on-going population decline, employment opportunities, and loss of tax revenue that the county has been experiencing for the past few years. And for those reasons, the Commissioners believe that the development of commercial solar projects is in the best interest of the county, should be encouraged, should be an opportunity equally available to all farm land owners, and under orderly and controlled development can be facilitated whenever it is reasonable to do so, which is why the commissioners are asking for a favorable recommendation from the Plan Commission on the proposed amendment. Mr. Downs closed by thanking the Plan Commission Board for their consideration.

Mr. Rosen then reviewed the procedure to be followed for the public hearing portion of the meeting. He stated there would be a two-minute time limit on all presentations for anyone coming forward, either for or against the petition. Each side will be given 1 hour or a total of 2 hours for the public comment portion of the hearing. Please know that we have security at the event this evening and would like keep them in the background, but will not hesitate to ask anyone to leave who may be disrupting the hearing. Please be kind and thoughtful to all present and no cross talking or talking over anyone else presenting information will be allowed. All questions on this matter will be directed to Board members only. If you want to come forward and present information to the Board you will need to sing in with our secretary and get in line. If your statement was emailed to our director and he reads it aloud then you will be asked to not step forward to take another time slot unless there is time left at the end to do so. Also, any Commission member may direct questions to anyone present at any time. As acting chairman, Mr. Rosen will have the authority to terminate any repetitive and irrelevant testimony, so please make sure all information is relative to the matter at hand so we make sure everyone has time to be heard.

Mr. Rosen asked for a motion to open the public hearing. Motion was made by Joe Vogel, second by Doug Rice. Roll call vote was taken, with motion passing unanimously.

Mr. Campbell came forward to read statements submitted to the Plan Commission Office in support of the amendment. The office received the following letter, from the Voter Voice website, from Pamela Guthrie, Debbie Curless, Valerie Doud, Regan Hathaway, Darcia Watson, Tracy Enyeart, Susan Beckett, and Mary Sollenberger.

Mr. Campbell read statements submitted to the Plan Commission Office in support of the solar ordinance amendment. Those statements were submitted by Pam Guthrie, Debbie Curless, Valerie Doud, Regan Hathaway, Darcia Watson, Tracy Enyeart, Susan Beckett, Mary Sollenberger, Scott Campbell, Rick Sweet, Michael & Shanna Eltzroth, Chris Shanks, Blair Tiffany, Keith Gillenwater of Grow Wabash County, and Howard Halderman of Halderman Real Estate & Farm Management. (Please see attached statements.) Mr. Campbell then called those signed in to speak to come forward.

Chris Neff: Good Evening, I am Chris Neff with NextEra Energy Resources. As a representative of the company I just want to say I support the recommendation to allow for utility scale solar in Wabash County. Thank you.

Rachel Conner: I am the Executive Director of Hoosiers 4 Renewables. I will keep my comments brief. One thing I want to highlight, I think Mr. Shank made a good point in his letter. This is a local zoning

issue for a grid that extends well beyond Wabash County, the state of Indiana, and the midwest. I sometimes, in different counties, get hit with the remark you're not from here. True, but power generation in the state of Indiana serves not only those who are closest to it, although that's typically where the electrons go as they seek the closest point to jump off once they've been put on the grid, but we're talking about power generation for hundreds and thousands of Hoosiers and others in the midwest, and on the MISO grid. So I would ask you to consider what is fair to people who own land in Wabash County and want to exercise their property rights to enter into energy leases and what is best for the grid that serves many people who cannot be here because they are not from here or even the state of Indiana. We have asked legislators at the State House to consider the large-scale impact of power generation and the fact that it's a multi-regional issue. They continue to say that the zoning issues should remain a local issue. I ask that you keep in mind that this is a big issue that affects many people and it has been brought to your doorstep because of the location of the transmission lines that run through the state of Indiana. Thank you for your time.

Sam Carpenter: I am the Executive Director of Hoosier Environmental Council. The Hoosier Environmental Council works on behalf of strong environmental policies and practices and improving Hoosier quality of life. We feel like those things are very connected. We've been doing this work for 40 years. We care about natural spaces, clean air, wildlife habitat, climate, and clean water. For 40 years the Hoosier Environmental Council has been working on behalf of clean water. I focus on this because there's some misinformation related to solar and clean water. Solar panels do not pollute the groundwater. This is something I've talked to one of our guys that has been with us for 40 years, he said maybe if you ground it up and put it in your breakfast cereal it would be a problem, but the solar panels do not pollute the groundwater. Now, Indiana is experiencing an energy transition. There is a lot of change going on with our energy. We also are #5 in the country in terms of renewable power in the pipeline to come onto our grid. We heard the energy demand is growing, it is growing, and we are going to have some trouble meeting that demand. We don't want to be in a situation where we are having rolling brownouts and that sort of thing. Solar is also growing our Hoosier economy. It's growing in our state and it can be an opportunity for Wabash County. My family has a farm in Randolph County. The Riverstart Solar project has brought \$8 million to the local economy. It is an opportunity, we heard someone say they don't have the next generation for their farm. The solar panel lease brings that opportunity. We need this investment in Indiana. (Time was called by Mr. Rosen.)

As there were no further statements in support of amending the solar ordinance, Mr. Rosen asked Mr. Campbell to share the statements that had been received against amending the ordinance. Mr. Campbell read statements submitted to the Plan Commission Office against amending the solar ordinance. Those statements were submitted by Connie George, Gay Shoemaker, Debbie Sweet, Sheila Butcher, Sara Sears, Carol Cly, Nicky Burnsworth, Roger Peebles, Randy Denney, Lori Siders of Siders Premier Properties, Josh Butcher, Curt Simpkins, Kristy Good, Patricia Conley, Carrie Rees of Rees Farms, Christy Briney. (Please see attached statements.) Mr. Campbell then called those signed in to speak to come forward.

Cheryl Ross: My journey with the solar project started in October of 2021. A few of us found a tiny ad in the paper and arrived at a meeting to voice our opinion. I've been told it was a legal size because that was what was required and has been used for 100 years. Well, a hundred years ago we also used a horse and buggy that changed and so the method to inform the community has changed. Once the word is out the community has something to say. I thought when I left that meeting, we were protected. Our friends and neighbors and the people we trusted were doing what was best for the

community. Unfortunately, I was wrong, the setbacks were reduced and now we're discussing Ag 1, the best Wabash County has to offer. None of the power produced on this Ag 1 ground will remain in Wabash County. If we open up Ag 1 there are few farmers who might enrich themselves, who are doing okay on their own, but there are many more in that farm ground whose homes will lose value and their homes are their investment - it may be all they have. They may struggle to hold onto that. It is everyone's right in the Fifth Amendment that no one be deprived of life, liberty, and property and our county officers must provide that security to all. Our attorney, John Kushmay, who is an expert in solar, turns down many farmers across the state who call for help to get out of these contracts once they realize the property rights are lost. This proposal of Ag 1 makes the solar company very happy, not just NextEra but the new Korsail that is now preying on our Wabash County farmers. It will tear our community and families apart as it has in countless other counties. Our state put in place suggestions for solar farms, not laws, and changes were made to that ordinance. To get the golden carrot, Wabash County needs to use Ag 1 and what happens on the day (Time was called by Mr. Rosen.)

Roger Peebles: The main thing I see when my ancestors came here 173 years ago and they settled in southern Wabash County, they were farmers and we enjoy the farming environment. What's being proposed isn't a farming environment, it's an industrial park that is 2 ½ miles long and 1 ½ miles wide. When I get up early in the morning, I can see a beautiful sunrise right now and from the point the panels are installed all I will see and hear is the buzz and the reflection of those panels. I could contend you can hear a lot of emotion here. People say you're being objective, you have a lot of anger, but I think there is emotion on the county officials and this board as well - and that is greed. Greed is overriding the emotion of anger. It's a way we can get out of an economic development problem, that we need to infuse money in, but there is no guarantee this money will be there when they say it will be.

Suzanne Peebles: I'm Suzanne Peebles, a farmer's wife, mother, homeowner, and land owner. I'm against placing solar panels on prime farm ground. This decision affects me personally. I've spent hours researching solar farms, their neighbors, and looking at your meeting minutes. I've read so many of them. We live in southern Wabash County at the proposed solar farm location and where the 15 land leases were signed as early as May 2021. Not one of the lessors planned to put this by their own home. We'll see the solar panels and hear the noises when we look out our windows, work on our property, and as we leave our property. Did I mention this solar plan is tax payer funded? Can you on the Board and solar committee tell me where our farms and neighbors are located? Do you live in our neighborhood? Come visit us. The energy grid has a way of producing greed. The solar companies have a reputation in Indiana counties for amazing offers and broken promises while enticing county officials to get on board first and sign up. Does that sound familiar? They also tear apart families, neighborhoods, and communities. We want total transparency from the solar committee and our elected officials. In closing, have you done your research to know the negative impacts? If you decide to do this please come visit us over the next 30 years, each of you take a turn. Look at the problems we're going through. The erosion, the farm ground, the wildlife safety, the home values, the roads, the repairs. Make the best decision for the future generations in Wabash County. Let's stop this tonight, just say no to solar panels on our prime farm ground.

Cris Renn: Big solar snuck in 2-3 years ago. How many people here tonight have heard about this just within the last 30 days? Stand up please. You guys didn't do a good job getting word out there. I wanted to remind you of some of the definitions from the zoning ordinance. Agricultural land use: use of land for ag purposes including farm, dairy, pasturing, horticulture, floriculture, on and on. There is no mention of solar. Agriculture Zone District, you went to the effort to create Ag 1 and Ag 2, now

you're wanting to include Ag 1 when you specifically wanted to keep it out when you created it. Farm, from your glossary of terms, means a tract of agriculture zoned land that is primarily adapted by reasons of nature for ag land use including but not limited to farming, dairy, pasturing, horticulture, floriculture, and on. Farms shall not include industrial or commercial operations or structures which are not directly related to agriculture production. Don't vote for this.

Tami Hickman: I'm a family nurse practitioner, fellowship in functional medicine. I specialize in autoimmunity, fertility, gut health, hormones, environmental toxicology including heavy metals, herbicides. I run my own functional medicine practice here in Wabash where people come to see me from all over the world, at 5859 S 100 W, located just north of 124. My concerns as a resident of Wabash County and as a small business owner, as a practitioner, a patient, and especially as a mom of 6, and a grandma of 8 are the health issues. The majority of the studies out there are by the industry with financial gain. Very few independent studies because the money is not there. I have concerns about low frequency, high frequency toxic metals, solar trash removal and disposal, and herbicides that will be increased in those areas. Solar panels have many heavy metals in them that are toxic to humans and can lead to birth defects. If this isn't toxic why after decommissioning is there a need to remediate the soil up to 36 inches? And we're talking 36 inches for the proposed span of the entire project in the county. Who pays for the disposal of those toxic panels when they have to put in new ones? Cost for remediation far outweighs the long term anticipated large amounts of annual waste. By the year 2030 up to 78 million tons by the year 2050. If early replacement occurs, 50 times more waste is anticipated in four years. The other thing is EMF. I'm sensitive. I've had chronic lyme disease. That's what got me into functional medicine, no one else could help me, except for a functional medicine practitioner. (Time was called.)

Chris Hickman: I want to start out saying I'm not opposed to farmers deciding what to do with their land, but I am opposed to farmers determining how I'm going to live my life. Around fences, noise, barriers that have to be put up because it's unsightly. I'm forced to live in a prison and hear that hum and drone of the equipment. I'm forced to live there because farmers want to do what they want to do with their land. I don't get it. I don't get it. People that want it aren't going to live in it. We are. And we have 2,000 acres and then what does it turn out to be 10-12,000? I'm a little bit hot about this. Changing setbacks in A1 land to accommodate the solar company over the residents in Wabash County, that's inexcusable. Again 36 inches of soil has to be removed for the remediation purposes as per IC 8-18-20. Guarantees are no better than the paper they are written on, especially when you're battling a huge organization. Can you fight them when they don't follow through with their promises? Do you have the resources? Most of us moved to the country because we liked the beauty, quiet. I like to hear the corn stalks rustle in the breeze. That's gone with this. I'm a retired band director. Fifty decibels is a lot to listen to 24/7 for 30 years. It has detrimental effects, don't think it doesn't. When my house and property values decrease, is someone going to pay me the difference between what my property was valued at and where it is now? Because I'm losing money. (Time was called.)

Daniel Straka: I am with the Indiana Land & Liberty Coalition. I signed the wrong papers when I arrived. I am actually here in support of the amendment to allow for A1 zoning. Mr. Rosen asked Mr. Straka to please be seated. If time allows he will call him to speak after hearing the rest of those opposed to the amendment.

Diane Morris: I live on 100 W, just north of 124. Like everybody else, I don't want to see these things. But what I'm more concerned with is I feel like we're jumping in too early because in the last 20 years,



NextEra Energy has paid at least \$36 million in penalties and settlements in matters ranging from environmental violations to consumer protection to work safety to health violations. The total number of ongoing complaints, violations, and lawsuits involving NextEra and its subsidiaries is unknown. That's my concern. These companies are doing a lot of damage to the county and to the land and it's just not the time. I'm all for renewable energy. My husband and I drive hybrid cars, but it's just too early. This needs to be looked at deeper than it is right now. Thank you.

Connie Erlich: In your ordinances, the definition of Ag 1 district is an area that contains the county's most productive farmland, generally flat, with little slope, little or no urbanization present or likely to occur. Primary use is the growing crops or raising of livestock. By your definition if commercial solar is allowed as a special exception the parcels with commercial solar equipment will never be classified as A1 again. Commercial solar is a permanent land use change and should be rezoned as commercial. The solar leases are extremely long term, minimum of 25 to 60 years. This also supports the reason why they should be rezoned as commercial and not left as Ag 1. Your ordinances value the importance of farmland, especially A1 ground. The ordinance prohibits 136 other types of business to be allowed on Ag 1, such as a church, a cemetery, golf course, restaurant, or community center. I'm sure most of the residents here tonight would rather live beside any one of those other 136 uses that you prohibit rather than live beside a commercial solar development. Commercial solar is industrial, it is not farming. Commercial solar will consist of materials that resemble a prison, miles of chain link fencing with strands of barb wire and locking gates. How is this compatible with the rural characteristic of your community? Your ordinances currently allow commercial solar as a special exception in Ag 2 and Industrial. Solar developers should have known that they were signing parcels that are prohibited in Ag 1. The solar developers are asking you to change your ordinances, do not allow them to force you to (Time was called.)

Jennifer Knebel: If solar is allowed as a special exception and receives the BZA's approval it will be very difficult to limit the amount of highly productive farm ground lost to solar development. In doing so the county will be opening itself up to potential litigation from solar developers. Without a stated cap or limit the county will not be able to control the amount of ground removed permanently from ag. For example, Pulaski County, my county, did not set a limit and removed protective requirements from their ordinances. As a result, 25,000 acres now have recorded solar leases with 9 different solar companies. This is a cancer. Pulaski County Commissioners have lost any mechanism to control or limit the solar companies from taking valuable farm ground out of production. Wabash County has an opportunity to learn from Pulaski County's mistakes. As APC members you understand the significance and the importance of zoning. You will hear the argument that landowners have the right to do whatever they want with their land. Land owners who acquired their land in an A1 district did so fully understanding the zoning guidelines and allowable choices for that ground. Now they are asking for property rights that they are not entitled to. Their entitlement is to farm the ground, that is it. What is the purpose of zoning if you're going to allow commercial use on your most productive farm ground? Keep your ordinances in place. I'm asking that Wabash County APC protect the valuable agricultural industry. Thank you.

Tammy Ingalls: I live on 300 S in Wabash. I want to say that I as a whole am not against solar or renewable energy. I think it's what is necessary to move forward. I am against this project for a variety of reasons. First, there is a lot of misinformation out there. I'm glad that Mr. Carpenter was here to address some of that. I won't go into details because people need to do their own research. I appreciate that there are a lot of farmers, neighbors, community members here who talk about what they will see,



what they will hear, and that's a problem. We don't really know the effects of the end result. I know that there are some things that can be done to mitigate those issues but we don't know how much or what cost that would entail. What I do know is that this has been done in the dark, like we learned a few minutes ago most of us here did not know anything about this until a month ago. Most of us don't know where the energy produced will go. Will it stay in Wabash County? Will it go to Duke Energy? I have a problem with an elected official getting rich in a way that is based on decisions made by a panel he's a part of. Just like I have problems with members of congress getting rich off of investments they make based on decisions they make. (Time was called.)

Lorraine Truss: I live on 400 W in Wabash County. I'm asking that if this does run longer than 2 hours, please extend so all can speak. There is very little chance of farmland returning to production after commercial solar use. It is typical for solar developers to level sand hills, covering valuable topsoil with sand. One farmer participating in NextEra's Dunn's Bridge project in Jasper County stated he had over 20 inches of sand covering his topsoil. Mammoth Solar's project in Starke County scraped off and disposed of topsoil. NextEra's Calvary project in White County used very large equipment, similar to earth movers and bulldozers, disturbing the topsoil and also compacting the soil. Returning this ground back to productive farmland is not realistic or feasible. Commercial solar is a permanent land use change and should not be permitted in A1 district, so please vote no. Thank you.

Randy Denney: I appreciate you letting me come up. This is a pivotal moment because you're going to set a precedent with that A1 ground and you're not going to be able to stop it after this. I think that's the most important thing. And please keep in mind that companies like NextEra, publicly traded companies, their obligation is to shareholders, not to projects like this and communities like us. Please keep that in mind, and please vote no.

Daniel Koors: I live in Wabash County with five children, four children who dream everyday of being a farmer. Something like this can stop that from happening. Why you ask? Your decision, your taking of prime farmland and putting it under solar. You're also taking 15 individuals and making them multi-millionaires off of one deal. You are making a rich or poor decision today. How is that going to affect the rest of the community? The rest of the price of farmland, cash rent, land values, they are going to skyrocket within a 10 mile radius of that area because these guys have the influx of cash. Second, you're going to destroy churches, you're going to destroy communities. I lived in Mt. Pulaski, IL for two years. Wind came in. It destroyed the church I went to, families that had been friends for years were broken up because of windmills coming into town. And one family got them while another did not. And what it did to their neighbors because they didn't get any money for the windmills. You are making a decision that will destroy communities, destroy ag profitability for young men and women who are not in that solar industry or in the area where solar is being put because you're putting money and giving them an unfair advantage because they will have that influx of cash to go out and raise the price of cash rent. You'll see it every time. Values of land skyrocket where no one small can stand a chance of getting in. I've got a degree from Purdue in farm management and I drive a truck for a living because of that - because of the cost of land. We worry about feeding America. We worry about the small family farms. This is ruining family agriculture. Small farmers will not put their ground in it because they care about the next generation, but the guy that lives 15 miles away and has 100 acres in that spot sees it as an investment. He doesn't care, he'll buy more ground somewhere else. The same thing happened in Greensburg, Indiana with the building of the Honda plant. The big get bigger and more profitable, the small get pushed out. Thank you.

Conrad Morris: I live at 5658 S 100 W. I have some questions. Have the county commissioners already approved the viability of solar here? When will we find out the answers about soil being destroyed?

As there were no further statements against amending the solar ordinance, Mr. Campbell invited Mr. Straka to return to speak.

Daniel Straka: I am here tonight with the Indiana Land & Liberty Coalition. We recognize that ordinances such as these must go through the Plan Commission Board and Board of Commissioners, but we also recognize that farmers and landowners know what is best to be good stewards of the land and what is best for their families and their future generations. We strive to keep land decisions local. Keep property decisions in the hands of property owners.

Mr. Rosen then asked if Mr. Downs would like time for any rebuttal as the petitioner.

Mr. Downs: No rebuttal. Conrad's question was have the commissioners already let solar projects in Wabash County. All we're talking about here is letting commercial solar in an A1 district apply as a special exception. They are now allowed as a special exception in A2, the FRC, and in Industrial. Now we have a number of farmers who own A1 land who would like to have the playing field leveled. They don't want to have to jump through more hoops than someone who owns land somewhere they are permitted as a special exception. The Commissioners fully understand all of the concerns brought forward tonight and I'm certain the Plan Commission feels the same way. There's no question, it's just a matter of trying to balance everybody's rights and concerns while trying to make decisions of what is in the best interest of the county. Zoning is the purpose of an orderly development of land use. As things change, and I know people don't like change but nevertheless your elected officials are simply charged with the responsibility of doing what they believe to be in the best interest of the county. Ms. Morris asked if any solar farms were planned for A2? Mr. Downs responded that he is unaware, and that he found out for the first time tonight that another company is interested in Wabash County. Mr. Hickman asked how they have been able to sign a lease for something that is not permitted? Sounds like the cart is before the horse. Mr. Downs indicated he has seen one lease, presumes they are all pretty much the same. When the farmer signs, it is not a guaranteed lease for any period of time, it's a base. It is contingent upon being able to get the zoning, upon being able to get a building permit, and get approval. If they are unable to do all of those things, then the leases would be void and the project would not continue. An unidentified speaker asked about solar energy charges on bills. Mr. Downs indicated he is unfamiliar with that, he has been working with another county on a project and has not heard about that.

Mr. Rosen then asked if Mr. Campbell had a director's statement. Mr. Campbell came forward and provided his statement to the Plan Commission Board. (director's statement attached)

Mr. Rosen thanked Mr. Campbell for his statement and asked for any other comments or discussions from Board members. There being none he asked for a motion to close the public hearing. Motion made by Mr. Vogel, second by Mr. Rice. Roll call was taken, with all present voting in favor.

Mr. Rice made a motion to give a non-favorable recommendation to the County Commissioners for the petition of the proposed amendment to the zoning ordinance. Second by Mr. Vogel.

Mr. Dawes: I would like to emphasize the vote tonight is not a yes or no to solar farms coming to A1 ground. It's a request to amend the solar ordinance to allow the company to present a plan. Prior to January 1, it would have come in as a special exception. Because of the new comprehensive plan after January 1st it is prohibited on A1 ground. The reason we are asking for it, I want to see the plan. As an elected official I need to see all the information and be informed. We don't have that right now. We're asking for the amendment to get the plans so we know what we're dealing with. After the plan is submitted, then there will be a yes or no decision. I have not made that decision yet because I want to see all the information first. That plan would include answers to many of the questions that were asked here tonight.

Mr. Rosen stated since there is a motion for a non-favorable recommendation and a second, we need to proceed to a vote. Mr. Rice restated the motion, indicating it is saying we do not want to amend the ordinance, so it is a non-favorable recommendation. Roll call vote was taken, with 6 members voting in favor of the motion (Mr. Vogel, Mr. Rice, Ms. Lengel, Mr. Milam, Mr. Rosen, Ms. Slee) and 2 members voting against the motion (Mr. Dawes, Mr. Hann). Mr. Rosen announced the result of the vote, motion passed 6-2. The crowd requested a breakdown of the vote as they were unable to hear, Ms. Lyons read the roll call vote results.

Mr. Rosen indicated that next on the agenda was an update on the solar project by Chris Neff of NextEra. Mr. Neff came forward and stated he had no updates to give at this time.

An unidentified member of the crowd asked if new information would only be published as a little ad in the paper? Mr. Campbell stated that the Plan Commission must follow state law regarding publications.

Cris Renn: Commissioners will vote on Monday?

Mr. Dawes: The Commissioners will meet at 9:00 a.m. on Monday. We will begin at the courthouse in the meeting room with our regular business. If the crowd is too large for that space, we plan to move to 808 Manchester Avenue building for the solar amendment portion.

Suzanne Peebles: On Monday, two Commissioners, because Barry Eppley can't vote, make this whole decision, isn't that a big decision for only two people to make? I pity those making that decision, we are living it, some will probably have to move because they won't be able to face the rest of us.

Mr. Vogel reminded Ms. Peebles that at this time there is no application on file from the solar company. Ms. Peebles indicated she was talking about Mr. Dawes and Mr. Hauptert being the only ones to make the final decision on A1 ground being used for commercial solar.

Mr. Dawes: We will be voting to accept or reject the recommendation of the Plan Commission Board.

Cheryl Ross: We have heard a lot of concerns. Our attorney is coming to the Commissioners meeting on Monday. We would like to see a one-year minimum moratorium on this because there is too much unknown and unanswered. Too much has been brought up within the past two weeks. Put a hold on this please.

There being no further business on the agenda, Mr. Rosen asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Mr. Vogel, second by Mr. Rice. Roll call vote was taken with all present voting in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Mr. Rosen indicated next on the agenda is a solar update from Chris Neff of NextEra Energy. Mr. Neff came forward and stated he has no update at this time.

There being no further business Mr. Rosen asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Vogel made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Rice. Roll call vote on the motion was taken, carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

*Amanda Lyons  
Secretary, Wabash County Plan Commission Board*

*\*If any names are incorrect, spelled incorrectly, or omitted from the attendance in these minutes, we apologize.*

*BC*



Statements received  
by the Plan Commission Office  
in support of proposed amendment

**Brian Campbell**

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**From:** PAMELLA GUTHRIE <user@votervoice.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 13, 2023 7:13 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Vote for passage of updated solar ordinance

Dear Plan Director Campbell,

I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen and a Wabash County resident.

I believe that the best way to protect farmer's property rights while respecting neighbors is to pass the updated solar ordinance. This ordinance will allow farmers to exercise their private property rights to choose solar as a way to earn reliable income for their families, while also providing reasonable and fair protections for neighbors that address their concerns about safety and privacy. It will also help us create economic development for Wabash County that can help improve the quality of life.

I urge you to vote for passage of the updated solar ordinance.

Sincerely,

PAMELLA GUTHRIE  
298 E 250 S  
WABASH, IN 46992  
pguthrie972@gmail.com

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## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Debbie Curless <dscurless@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 14, 2023 10:55 AM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Vote for passage of updated solar ordinance

Dear Plan Director Campbell,

I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen and a Wabash County resident.

I believe that the best way to protect farmer's property rights while respecting neighbors is to pass the updated solar ordinance. This ordinance will allow farmers to exercise their private property rights to choose solar as a way to earn reliable income for their families, while also providing reasonable and fair protections for neighbors that address their concerns about safety and privacy. It will also help us create economic development for Wabash County that can help improve the quality of life.

I urge you to vote for passage of the updated solar ordinance.

Sincerely,

Debbie Curless  
1677 E 500 S  
Wabash, IN 46992  
dscurless@mac.com

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## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Valerie Doud <user@votervoice.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 16, 2023 9:40 AM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Vote for passage of updated solar ordinance

Dear Plan Director Campbell,

I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen and a Wabash County resident.

I believe that the best way to protect farmer's property rights while respecting neighbors is to pass the updated solar ordinance. This ordinance will allow farmers to exercise their private property rights to choose solar as a way to earn reliable income for their families, while also providing reasonable and fair protections for neighbors that address their concerns about safety and privacy. It will also help us create economic development for Wabash County that can help improve the quality of life.

I urge you to vote for passage of the updated solar ordinance.

Sincerely,

Valerie Doud  
7877 W 400 N  
Wabash, IN 46992  
valeriedoud@gmail.com

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## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Regan Hathaway <user@votervoice.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 17, 2023 3:28 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Amended solar ordinance protects farmer's property rights

Dear Plan Director Campbell,

I am writing to ask you to vote for the amended solar ordinance. This ordinance is an important step in protecting farmers' property rights and making economic development from solar possible in Wabash County.

Passing this ordinance means we will continue to protect farmers' private property rights while respecting neighbors' concerns. It also means we will be able to continue growing our economy with opportunities for new jobs and businesses that can help improve the quality of life for everyone in our community.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email, and please vote yes on the amended ordinance!

Sincerely,

Regan Hathaway  
506 N Sycamore St  
North Manchester, IN 46962  
regan.r.hathaway@gmail.com

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## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Darcia Watson <user@votervoice.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 17, 2023 3:28 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Updated solar ordinance protects farmer's property rights

Dear Plan Director Campbell,

I am writing to ask you to vote for the updated solar ordinance. This ordinance is an important step in protecting farmers' property rights and making economic development from solar possible in Wabash County.

Passing this ordinance means we will continue to protect farmers' private property rights while respecting neighbors' concerns. It also means we will be able to continue growing our economy with opportunities for new jobs and businesses that can help improve the quality of life for everyone in our community.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email, and please vote yes on the updated ordinance!

Sincerely,

Darcia Watson  
6619 W 200 N  
Wabash, IN 46992  
ddwatsond@live.com

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## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Tracy Enyeart <user@votervoice.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 17, 2023 3:28 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Updated solar ordinance protects farmer's property rights

Dear Plan Director Campbell,

I am writing to ask you to vote for the updated solar ordinance. This ordinance is an important step in protecting farmers' property rights and making economic development from solar possible in Wabash County.

Passing this ordinance means we will continue to protect farmers' private property rights while respecting neighbors' concerns. It also means we will be able to continue growing our economy with opportunities for new jobs and businesses that can help improve the quality of life for everyone in our community.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email, and please vote yes on the updated ordinance!

Sincerely,

Tracy Enyeart  
112 Euclid St  
Wabash, IN 46992  
tracyenyeart1965@gmail.com

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## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Susan Beckett <user@votervoice.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 20, 2023 8:22 AM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Vote for passage of updated solar ordinance

Dear Plan Director Campbell,

I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen and a Wabash County resident.

I believe that the best way to protect farmer's property rights while respecting neighbors is to pass the updated solar ordinance. This ordinance will allow farmers to exercise their private property rights to choose solar as a way to earn reliable income for their families, while also providing reasonable and fair protections for neighbors that address their concerns about safety and privacy. It will also help us create economic development for Wabash County that can help improve the quality of life.

I urge you to vote for passage of the updated solar ordinance.

Sincerely,

Susan Beckett  
1170 Sunset Dr  
Wabash, IN 46992  
rsbeckett1135@gmail.com

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## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Mary Sollenberger <user@votervoice.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 20, 2023 9:59 AM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Vote for passage of updated solar ordinance

Dear Plan Director Campbell,

I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen and a Wabash County resident.

I believe that the best way to protect farmer's property rights while respecting neighbors is to pass the updated solar ordinance. This ordinance will allow farmers to exercise their private property rights to choose solar as a way to earn reliable income for their families, while also providing reasonable and fair protections for neighbors that address their concerns about safety and privacy. It will also help us create economic development for Wabash County that can help improve the quality of life.

I urge you to vote for passage of the updated solar ordinance.

Sincerely,

Mary Sollenberger  
211 Grandview Ct  
North Manchester, IN 46962  
marylsoll@gmail.com

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To the Walush County Planning Commission:

I am taking this opportunity to voice my support for NextEra Energy and the Walush Solar project. It is imperative that our political leaders address an issue that is looming on the horizon.

The power generating utility companies such as NIPSCO and NextEra's Florida Power & Light are closing their coal fired power plants due to the detrimental environmental effects of fossil fuels. That loss of power must be replaced in order for home owners, business owners and government facilities to keep the lights on.

One of the many positive attributes of a major solar project is that it will generate a tremendous tax revenue without having to build more roads, schools, and extend utilities to other developments. In my personal opinion, a solar project is much more conducive to our surroundings than a quail farm with hundreds of hogs contained therein. I am also of the opinion that a solar development is much more favorable than a large residential development which will bring more cars, more commercial development to support the increase in residential development, increased pressure on our existing schools requiring the addition of more teachers and physical facilities, more roads, and the list goes on. In order to support those kinds of developments, we the taxpayers would be burdened with a higher tax bill. A solar facility such as that which is being proposed, creates no noise, no environmental effects, preserves the land for future generations and creates a tremendous tax windfall without adding burden to our current facilities and infrastructure.

I support the Walush Energy Center project because it not only makes a difference for me but also you.





## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Rick Sweet <drsweet54@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 5, 2023 9:56 AM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] letter  
**Attachments:** Scan\_20230405 (3).jpg

To the Wabash County Planning Commission:

My name is Rick Sweet and I want to voice my support for the Wabash Energy Center project. I've been a resident of Wabash County for my entire life. I've committed to leasing my land for the solar project because it's my right to choose what to do with my land.

I believe that the solar project will bring benefits to our community. During construction, we'll have more people in town which means more revenue for our local businesses. The economic investment in our county can help create a brighter future for all of us and that's why I support it.

*Rick Sweet*

*Rick Sweet  
3517 W 1000 S.  
Wabash, IN 46992*

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To the Wabash County Planning Commission:

I'm writing in support of the Wabash Energy Center Project. Payments from the solar project will help me preserve the land for the next generation of my family. Harvesting solar energy will also help diversify our income, which will benefit my family.

Wabash Solar will create a long-lasting, positive impact for local business owners. The project will create hundreds of jobs during construction, bringing more money into our area for restaurants, shops and other businesses. In addition, the project will create millions of dollars in tax revenue for our community. That's new funding to improve our roads, schools and emergency services.

I also feel it's important to touch on the lengths that the project and its developers are taking to protect my land and the environment. These are a few of the reasons why I fully support the Wabash Energy Center Project. It represents a clean, homegrown source of energy. We owe it to our future generations to leave Wabash County in a better situation than we found it. And, I believe the Wabash Solar Project will help us do that.

*Michael S. Hartz*  
*Shanne L. Elzyoth*

1538 E. St. Rd. 124  
Wabash, IN 46992

4/10/2023

WABASH COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION  
Wabash County Court House  
One West Hill Street  
Wabash, IN 46992

Commissioners,

My name is Chris Shanks and I am the Executive Vice President at The Ford Meter Box Co., in Wabash, IN. As many are aware, Ford Meter Box is one of the largest, if not the largest, consumer of electrical power in Wabash County. Like most industries in Wabash County, our facility cannot operate without large volumes of electricity.

As a disclaimer, I have no ties to Nextera Energy, nor do I fully support total green energy. Personally, I own a company that invests in oil and gas exploration and drilling in Oklahoma and Texas. I am not in agreement with the green policies many politicians are promoting, as I fully understand how many of those policies are making electricity less available and more expensive.

If you are not aware, Wabash County is on the electrical grid managed by MISO (Midcontinent Independent Systems Operator). The MISO grid spans from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, traveling through 15 states, and has the longest transmission run of any of the 10 grids in the US. Because Ford Meter Box incurs several power reduction notices a year, I monitor the grid through alerts from MISO 24/7, as well as their dashboard. Often times I know of power issues well before Duke contacts Ford.

How reliable do you think the power is on our grid? Most homeowners have no idea of the scarcity of power during the summer months. Homeowners currently have not been called to shut down their air-conditioners or curtail their power usage because there is not enough electrical power. Ford gets that call 1 - 2 times per month in the summer and multiple times per week if there is a long hot spell. Two summers ago, when the northern states in our grid needed power because of the sustained heat, we were forced to curtail power (shut down operations) for four hours in the factories in Wabash. Reducing power effects employees pay, working conditions, and the businesses that support Wabash County. If you do not comply with the request, they can decide to not provide power to you. Did you know MISO announced a conservative operations notice on 3/31/2023? What about the alert on 3/28/2023, of a System Status Level 1 YELLOW because Minnesota Power SE/RTCA Security Analysis process had failed? The fact is, we all are connected on the grid and Wabash County is not immune to what is happening on the grid. The fact is, more power needs to be added to the grid.

The closer the power generation is to our area of the grid, the less likely we will be effected by power issues from other areas – like a cyber-attack to the grid in Minneapolis. Today, nearly a third of the power on our grid is produced by coal, and we all know where that is going. In 2016, 54 % of our power was produced by coal. While regulatory and government agencies are reducing the supply of power by shutting down coal plants, we as consumers and industries continue to increase demand and pay more for it. My faith is so low in the grid, I installed a natural gas fired home generator for electricity.

I support electrical power generation as close to Wabash as we can get it. The proposed solar farm will help – especially when it is needed most – during the summer.

Sincerely,

*Christopher J Shanks  
Executive Vice President & G.M.  
The Ford Meter Box Co., Inc.  
775 Manchester Ave.  
Wabash, Indiana USA 46992-0398  
Company: 260.563.3171  
Direct: 260.569.3743  
Mobile: 260.579.5597*



## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Blair Tiffany <blairtiffany@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 13, 2023 2:44 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Solar

*46 Chrysler Dr.  
Wabash, IN 46092*

I support Solar in Wabash County!  
Sent from my iPhone

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April 13, 2023



Brian Campbell  
Director – Wabash County Plan Commission  
Via email: [plandirector@wabashcounty.in.gov](mailto:plandirector@wabashcounty.in.gov)  
CC: Wabash County Plan Commission Members; Wabash County Commissioners; Wabash County Attorney

Dear Brian,

I am writing today on behalf of Grow Wabash County to express the organization's support for amending the zoning ordinance to allow solar projects in an A-1 Zoning designation the ability to apply for a special exception for permitting purposes.

For those unfamiliar with our organization's work, Grow Wabash County is the combined the county-wide economic development organization and Chamber of Commerce for Wabash County. The work we do to achieve our mission of "Growing a prosperous Wabash County," revolves around five main pillars of service including: *investor services, livability, workforce development, business development, and entrepreneurship*. Within those pillars, we focus on supporting community and economic development projects while simultaneously growing our local workforce, tax base, and competitive business climate. These efforts in turn provide opportunities for the our citizens, schools, and the business community to grow and improve our quality of life. In that vein, when we have an opportunity to bring a project to the community that could potentially benefit landowners, our schools, grows our tax base exponentially, helps to secure energy independence in our country, and increases the supply and electrical capacity available to our community we should let it be heard.

Through a series of public meetings in 2022, the Wabash County Plan Commission met with several community members working to create an opportunity for a potential solar farm development to occur in Wabash County. The ordinance that was in effect at the time did not allow for a development to occur due to setback requirements and several other factors. At that time, Grow Wabash County made the case along with others that our ordinance would essentially "lock" Wabash County out of the running to even have a solar project consider building in our community. The Wabash County Plan Commission agreed, and modified the ordinance that was in place over a series of public meetings to put in place restrictions and an in-depth ordinance that would allow a potential solar project to apply for a permit and allow the project to be heard publicly – and be judged upon its merits as to whether the project was a good fit for Wabash County rather than a blanket rejection.

What we are asking for today is much the same - recommend that the newly adopted ordinance be modified to allow for a solar project in an A-1 zoning designation to apply for a special exception rather than rejecting it out of hand. The intent of the Wabash County Plan Commission, indicated through your actions in early 2022, were to allow a project to be heard – for a potential project to apply for a permit that meets our very strong restrictions that ensures land owners, the county, neighbors, our schools, and others are protected.

We are not asking the county to approve a particular project tonight – far from it. We are, however, requesting that you allow that a project with a sizeable potential positive impact to the community be able to be heard in public – to allow the specifics to be submitted for your review – and be judged against the criteria in Wabash County's very thorough solar ordinance to determine if it will work in the community.

Sincerely,

Keith Gillenwater, President & CEO  
Grow Wabash County

214 S. Wabash St. Wabash, IN 46992 | Tel (260) 563-5258 | Fax (260) 563-6920  
[Info@GrowWabashCounty.com](mailto:Info@GrowWabashCounty.com) | [www.GrowWabashCounty.com](http://www.GrowWabashCounty.com)



## HALDERMAN

REAL ESTATE & FARM MANAGEMENT

April 19, 2023

Wabash County Plan Commission  
1 West Hill Street, Ste. 205  
Wabash, IN 46992

1700 N. Cass St.  
Wabash

Dear Wabash County Planning Commission:

The Halderman Companies represent farmland owners across 19 states and have for more than 90 years. We manage many farms in Wabash County, as well as own farmland in the county. I understand the importance of farming in our community and appreciate that each landowner should have a right to do with their land what they want, as long as it is legal and does not harm a neighbor.

I'm writing to you all today to express my support of solar in Wabash County. Landowners in the county should have the opportunity to determine what goes on their properties. A governing body shouldn't be allowed to tell landowners what their land is best suited for – corn, soy, or solar – that decision should be afforded to the landowner themselves, the essence of private property rights. In addition Wabash County adopted a comprehensive solar ordinance with many requirements for a solar developer to protect the landowners in the project and those in the surrounding area.

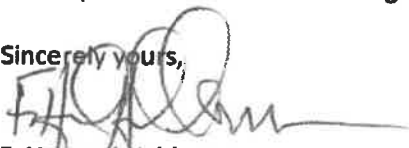
A solar farm lease can provide landowners current income while preserving the land's long-term appreciation potential. Additionally, solar farms get their energy from a renewable source and do a minimal amount of damage to farmland. If a solar lease is properly negotiated it requires the lessee to restore the land to its original condition, without compromising agriculture potential. During the term of a solar lease the ground cover grown reduces soil erosion and may enhance organic matter.

Solar farms allow farmers and landowners to diversify their portfolios and a solar farm is an excellent, stable way to lock in a return for the life of the solar lease. The financial returns from a solar farm are competitive and offer a more consistent form of payment. Agricultural returns vary with demand, weather, trade agreements and other variables outside a farmer's control. With a solar lease, a landowner receives a consistent payment stream, including lease bumps, over the term of the project.

In addition to the benefits for landowners, Wabash County will also be positively impacted by solar development in the county. The additional tax revenue brought in by the solar farms can be leveraged for a number of things in our county – fixing our roads, money for our schools, and public services like fire and EMS. Solar farms are a big investment and provide indirect revenue to local businesses. These projects can help drive economic growth in the area.

I urge you to support landowner rights and economic growth in Wabash County and allow for a solar development on land zoned for agricultural uses.

Sincerely yours,



F. Howard Halderman



Statements received  
by the Plan Commission Office  
against proposed amendment

## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Connie <congeorge@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 4, 2023 7:47 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Solar Farm Wabash County,IN

April 4, 2023

To: Plan Director  
Wabash County Commissioners

This letter is my intent to express a few of my concerns for the ORDINANCE No. 2022-85-14 for Wabash Co.,IN. The proposed amendment is to allow a Commercial Solar Energy System "(C-SES)" aka "solar unit, commercial" in an A1 District as a special exception. Please refer to the notice published.

Questions: Is this the only area that can be used from Prime Farmland in the County if this Ordinance is passed?

Why have so many Counties in IN denied Solar Farms?

What proof do you have regarding the energy produced at this Solar Farm in Wabash Co., will stay in Wabash Co., to BENEFIT local residents? I've been told the Energy produced will go to other States.

What Indiana County has actually received the promised revenue or monies as promised?

Will this project de-value properties values, both Residential & Farm land?

The Corn & Soybeans the current PRIME FARMLAND produces is used to provide FOOD and FOOD PRODUCTS for our Country. These two commodities are also used for Ethanol and Bio Diesel which are renewable energy products.

I worked 31 years for a Supplier Company that sells Seed, Chemicals, Fertilizer and Fuel to local farmers. With the loss of cropland that will eventually run a location "out of business".

Most of all, our Prime Farmland in this County is valuable. If Solar Farms take it over, the land will never be used again for producing crops. At least for the Contract period.

We can NOT make more farm land.

Respectfully,

Connie George  
33 E 900 S  
LaFontaine, IN 46940

## Brian Campbell

---

**From:** Gay Shoemaker <lgshoemaker56@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 5, 2023 12:39 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Solar Panel Farm

My name is Gay Shoemaker. I live at 1966 W 850 S, Wabash, IN. This letter is in response to the solar farm that is in the planning stage for southern Wabash Co. While I'm not against trying to come up with alternative energy, I am against putting it in prime farm land that surrounds my property. This is not a good decision making idea and feel it will affect our property values.

While the voices of the property owners surrounding this proposed area will most likely not be heard or cared about by what is going to happen to our area, I would ask 2 things that should be considered by this committee.

1. That the solar company be forced to maintain the area so that it does not become an eyesore by mowing and weed/grass control. Repairing any broken panels/equipment. A stiff penalty or breakage of contract should be implemented at once and removal of panels if it happens.
2. A huge discount of electricity to affected property owners whose land values will diminish should be given, so that if we should move it would be an incentive to prospective buyers.

I don't think either of these 2 requests are unreasonable considering what you are taking away from our prime location. I feel if this were any of your properties you would ask the same.

Please listen and make wise decisions based upon if this were in your backyard, for us and our future.

Thank you,  
Gay Shoemaker

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April 5, 2023

To the Wabash County Planning Commission:

My name is Debbie Sweet. You will find my name on signed contracts along with my husband's in regard to Nextera's rental agreements for a little over 150 acres...for 30 years. Writing these signatures was one of the most difficult things I have done in our nearly fifty years of marriage. I pray daily that God will help us to be a good steward of our time, our money, and our resources. I did not have peace with signing this contract but out of submission to my husband's wishes, I signed it.

For me, my heart is broken over the idea that this contract will take away from us our use of the very best farm ground that we own. I am not just a joint owner of the farmland; I have been tilling the soil in the Fall and in the Spring during most of the years of our marriage and I love helping in this way. This ground has provided the cream of the crop.

<sup>1/2</sup>  
This project will also take away the beauty of watching the land produce its crops and replace it with chain link fence and glaring panels all neatly arranged in rows...This project will actually end up wrapping <sup>1/2</sup> of the way around my brother's home property which has been in our family for at least three generations. ...Again, the idea of my family having to look at this "project" every day for the rest of their lives *breaks my heart*.

I am also very concerned with the reports I hear about a shortage of food supply...it seems to me that farming less ground will make this shortage even greater which will then contribute to **further inflation of food costs**.

Lastly, my understanding is that we have no idea who will actually benefit from the energy that these panels will generate... it will go to the highest bidder? This will guarantee a profitable benefit for the company, not our community.

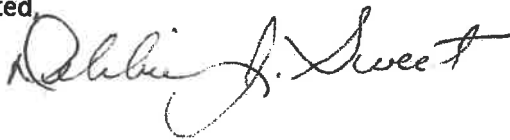
These are my concerns,

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Sweet

3517 W 1000 S

Wabash, IN 46992



## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Debbie Sweet <drsweet55@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 6, 2023 1:52 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** Re: [External Email] Letter from Debbie Sweet

To the Wabash Planning Commission,

I was thinking incorrect concerning the amount that the project would be around my brother's property; it would encompass half their property lines..the project would line the entire north side and east end of their property. So sorry for this previous misinformation!

Sincerely,  
Debbie Sweet

Sent from my iPhone

> On Apr 5, 2023, at 8:01 PM, Debbie Sweet <drsweet55@gmail.com> wrote:  
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## Brian Campbell

**From:** Sheila Butcher <sheilarbutcher@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 5, 2023 8:50 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** Fwd: [External Email] Solar Farm

Sheila Butcher  
4890 W. Millcreek Pike  
Wabash, IN 46992

Please make sure all have a copy and is include into written record of County Council and Commissioners meetings:

Plan Director:

I am against the Solar Farm, as a property owner of 2 acres in the country that will now become surrounded by solar panels. I am a strong property rights "yes" land owners should have the final say on how their land is used. I am also a community minded: How does this effects our neighbors?

I am a generational focused person: how does this decision affect the next seven generations. Why take farm land that produces food out of service, when we are losing farmland because of urban sprawl. This is not just in our community how much land will we give up in the heartland, breadbasket, crossroads of America in the name of easy money for next 30 years. Thirty years of children not learning about farming, working together as a family, and being taught good work ethics.

I would like you to be informed to do the research:

Northern Indiana:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/oct/30/its-got-nasty-the-battle-to-build-the-uss-biggest-solar-power-farm>

[https://www.kpcnews.com/newssun/article\\_5a3528d1-9a58-5f6e-8691-b7e1f87501bc.html](https://www.kpcnews.com/newssun/article_5a3528d1-9a58-5f6e-8691-b7e1f87501bc.html)

Southern Indiana:

<https://www.facebook.com/B4CSF/>

Our Nation

<https://www.rfdtv.com/the-nation-is-losing-farms-at-an-alariming-rate-due-to-solar-panels>

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What are the disadvantages of liv

**Disadvantages of Living Near  
Farm: The Dark Side of Livin**



## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Sarah Sears <sarahd.sears@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 6, 2023 8:29 AM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Solar farm

I am OPPOSED to solar farms in Wabash County.

Thank you for hearing my input.

Sarah Sears  
7708 S 50 E  
Wabash, IN 46992

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing because my health prevents me from attending the meetings. I am opposed to Solar coming to Wabash County. I believe this to be very poor, irresponsible stewardship of the land and harmful to all living things. I believe it is harmful to the planet and all life.

I am surrounded by farmland and I love to look out across the fields in every direction and see the ground, the crops, the wildlife. In the past 2 years, bald eagles have been seen on or above the property hunting. This is a threat to our national bird as well as our state bird, the cardinal. Cardinals are known for flying into windows to defend their territory from their reflection whom they perceive as a threat. The eagles will be losing hunting ground and the cardinals will die defending their territory. I'm sure the same applies to our songbirds as well. The bees and migrating birds will have their paths disrupted.

I'm greatly concerned about the impact this will have on the land, water ways and air. We don't know the long term impact this will have on the land itself. We will be losing prime agricultural land, with no guarantee that it will be viable for crops again in the future.

The impact on people exposed to the following chemicals that are in the solar panels, should they leak or burn, would be detrimental to anyone exposed. These would impact not only those living near, but everyone downstream and downwind from the effects.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Act (EPA), solar panels contain lead and cadmium, which are harmful to human health and the environment. (<https://www.epa.gov/hw/end-life-solar-panels-regulations-and-management>)

According to <https://sciencing.com/toxic-chemicals-solar-panels-18393.html>

"The toxic chemicals in solar panels include cadmium telluride, copper indium selenide, cadmium gallium (di)selenide, copper indium gallium (di)selenide, hexafluoroethane, lead, and polyvinyl fluoride. Additionally, silicon tetrachloride, a byproduct of producing crystalline silicon, is highly toxic." Health issues listed as results of exposures to these are: lung inflammation and hardening of the lung tissue. When you Google each one of these chemicals individually, you find the following

cadmium telluride Safety Data Sheet - Vanderbilt University: "**Hazard statement(s) H302 + H312 + H332 Harmful if swallowed, in contact with skin or if inhaled. H410 Very toxic to aquatic life with long lasting effects.** Precautionary statement(s) P261 **Avoid breathing dust/ fume/ gas/ mist/ vapours/ spray.** P264 Wash skin thoroughly after handling. Aug 31, 2018"

copper indium selenide - <https://ltschem.com/attachments/sds/> - download PDF for MSDS

hexafluoroethane - <https://cameochemicals.noaa.gov/chemical/3568> " Health Hazard

Excerpt from ERG Guide 126 [Gases - Compressed or Liquefied (Including Refrigerant Gases)]:

"Vapors may cause dizziness or asphyxiation without warning. Vapors from liquefied gas are initially heavier than air and spread along ground. Contact with gas or liquefied gas may cause burns, severe injury and/or frostbite. Fire may produce irritating, corrosive and/or toxic gases. (ERG, 2020)"

lead - we have been warned about lead poisoning in paint, pipes, etc. for years. Lead exposure **attacks the brain, liver, kidneys, bones and central nervous system causing developmental delays, neurological changes, irritability coma, convulsions and death.** <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/lead-poisoning-and-health>.

## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Carol Cly <carolcly@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 6, 2023 8:36 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Solar farm

I attended the meeting tonight concerning an amendment to allow a commercial solar energy system as a special exception. I am extremely concerned about the negative impact of allowing solar "farms" on farm ground. Judging by the presence of approximately 150 rather angry people at the meeting, I think this move is ill advised. Solar power works well on roof tops, highway medians, air port set backs, hospital grounds, school grounds, flat roof tops etc. It does NOT need to be on productive farm ground! You can't eat electricity! Once the farm ground is re-purposed, where will the food be produced? America is known for "feeding the world" and is a necessary part of the food chain. Keep the solar energy sector AWAY from the farming sector!

Sincerely,

Carol Cly  
1722 Glenn Ave  
Wabash, IN.  
Sent from my iPad

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## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Nicky Burnsworth <nburnsworth@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 16, 2023 12:17 AM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Commercial Solar Farms

Dear planning director,

This letter pertains to the Commercial Solar farms that are being proposed in Wabash County on Prime 1A crop ground. This is a bad idea. We need production of food now more than ever not panels taking up precious prime crop ground. The environmental impact is so damaging to the soil from Hazardous materials and ruins the ground from being fertile for a long long time. The wildlife will be nonexistent from the horrible, annoying sounds from the batteries and the heat and glare from the glass panels. Our homes will lose value and will not be our sanctuary to live as we want or expected to have peaceful, comfortable enjoyment of our homes and land. There are unknown health concerns but then again, we do know enough about EMF, or toxic metals that shows there could be health concerns and I do not give my consent on being a participant in the experiment to find out years later "Oh by the way you might get cancer or something from exposure to Commercial Solar Farms". There is fire and explosion concerns with so many acres that could potentially be put in to Commercial Solar Farms, it would take a lot of water to put that kind of fire out. The damage it could do to surrounding property especially since it has been revised too only 350 feet from neighboring property. It had been 1/4 mile from neighboring property and should be reversed and go back to 1/4-mile if not farther away for safety reasons. I have voiced my concerns here and I'm sure there is some I have missed but these are valid concerns that should be taken in to account for making good sound decisions of what the people of Wabash County want for their community to live in. Do what is right and use common sense.

Respectful,  
Nicky Burnsworth

Sent from my T-Mobile 5G Device  
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## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Nicky Burnsworth <nburnsworth@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 15, 2023 11:35 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Commercial Solar Farms

Dear planning director,

This letter pertains to the Commercial Solar farms that are being proposed in Wabash County on Prime 1A crop ground. This is a bad idea. We need production of food now more than ever not panels taking up precious prime crop ground. The environmental impact is so damaging to the soil from Hazardous materials and ruins the ground from being fertile for a long long time. The wildlife will be nonexistent from the horrible, annoying sounds from the batteries and the heat and glare from the glass panels. Our homes will lose value and will not be our sanctuary to live

Sent from my T-Mobile 5G Device  
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

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## Amanda Lyons

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**From:** Roger Peebles <neverfailfarms@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 18, 2023 9:56 AM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Cc:** Amanda Lyons; dawes\_jeff@hotmail.com; Barry Eppley; commishhbrian1@gmail.com  
**Subject:** [External Email] Commercial Solar Farms

To Whom It May Concern:

With the current solar project being proposed in my neighborhood, I wanted to share some thoughts that I have as a farmer and neighbor to this project.

Most of us have always been cautioned "If it seems to good to be true, it probably is...". I would contend the excitement brought on by the money that is being put in front of our county officials is bait that will bring very little positive outcome to our community. My family has been farming in this area for over 170 years and have existed as contributing members of our county. Now as we look at changing the face of our county, I'm questioning whether I even want to remain a part of this area, if we have chosen to cave in to the lure of a financial spring of solar fields.

I know in your position you don't represent the citizens of the county, but are more inclined to look at the benefits for Wabash County. I would still suggest you listen to those that oppose this idea moving forward and make a stand against this current frenzy of excitement for a facelift of my neighborhood. I also find it disheartening that no one that will place the panels on land they own will actually live within view of the new scenery that will be prevalent.

Thanks for your time.

Roger Peebles  
Never Fail Farms, Inc.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

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## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Randy Denney <randy@denneymotorsales.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 19, 2023 5:46 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell; dawes\_jeff@hotmail.com; commishbrian@gmail.com; Barry Eppley  
**Subject:** [External Email] Amendment to Ordinance 2022-85-14

Commercial solar energy systems (C-SES) should not be permitted in Wabash County A1 zoned areas as a special exception. If this ordinance is amended and C-SES projects are allowed to proceed, a precedent is set. All A1 zoned property will be at risk and C-SES companies will no doubt attempt more projects in Wabash County. The total number of these landscape changing C-SES projects that could occur in Wabash County is unknown. The long term environmental damage to C-SES sites and surrounding areas is unknown. Effects to the value of property surrounding C-SES project areas is unknown. I do not support changing zoning ordinance 2022-85-14 to allow special exception C-SES on A1 zoned areas in Wabash County.

Randall S Denney  
3550 W 700 S  
Wabash IN 46992

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## Brian Campbell

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**From:** lsiders@premiereprop.net  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 20, 2023 10:02 AM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Solar Farms

Please, vote NO for Solar farms. This is not the direction the community wants out county to go.

People buy homes in rural areas for the peace, quiet, nature. To get away from big city. We have had so many people move to our area because of the county we are, they moved out of the big city to our community. If we have solar farms next to the homes, they will no longer be desirable to locals or people coming to our community from other areas. Those that just purchased property or lived here for many years will have more trouble selling homes. Buyers will find other counties that were smart enough to say NO.

Please don't do this to our friends, family, neighbors, community, Please.

**Lori Siders, RB14038109**

**Managing Broker/Owner**

**Siders Premiere Properties, LLC**

1245 Orchard St.

Wabash, IN 46992

260-225-0432 - Office

260-571-5568 - cell

800-707-0054 - fax

[lsiders@premiereprop.net](mailto:lsiders@premiereprop.net)

[www.siderspremiereproperty.com](http://www.siderspremiereproperty.com)



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## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Josh Butcher <joshwbutcher@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 20, 2023 10:43 AM  
**To:** Brian Campbell; dawes\_jeff@hotmail.com; commishbrian@gmail.com; Barry Eppley  
**Subject:** [External Email] I'm against solar farms on AG 1 Prime farm ground in Wabash County

Hello,

I am emailing today to voice my opinion that I am against allowing solar farms on AG 1 Prime land in Wabash, County. Where I live will potentially be surrounded by solar farms. I have the following concerns:

With concern of the runoff of rain from the solar panels. What will happen to the quality of our drinking water if these solar farms are built?

What will be the impact on wildlife? I have heard that Bald Eagles can mistact the glare on the panels for water and try to dive into them.

I believe that our county is a beautiful place and I for one do not like the idea of telling people that I'm from Wabash and they respond "that place that is littered with solar farms".

Humanity as a whole has enough problems raising the crops to feed the world's population and here we have a proposal to basically eliminate farm ground in our county.

Wabash county is built on a farming community. What will be the impact on all of the agricultural related jobs if all of our farm ground is turned to solar farms?

Wabash county has been all about new growth and development in the past few years since reviving the downtown area and many other areas to bring in more tourists and new members to our community. I can't imagine that the massive development of solar farms will attract those people to the area. All that money and hard work spent on reviving Wabash County will have gone to waste.

I am out of town on business this week so I will not be able to attend tonight's Plan Commission meeting but I wanted to voice my option.

Thank you for your time,

Josh Butcher  
8130 S. Meridian Rd  
Wabash, IN 46992

## Brian Campbell

---

**From:** curt simpkins <simpkinscurt@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 20, 2023 12:15 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Solar Farm

Absolutely no solar farm in wabsh county!!!

If you want a solar farms put them on all the big box store parking lots and on top of their buildings. Leave the farm ground alone

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## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Kristy Good <grandmakristy@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 20, 2023 12:17 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Say NO to solar fields

Please do not allow these solar fields to be constructed in our county. They are not only ugly to look at but they make an awful noise.

While I agree a person has rights concerning their property, their rights cannot infringe on the rights of their neighbor's rights. We should not have to look at those things and we should be able to sit outside without being subjected to that noise.

Indiana doesn't have enough sunny days to justify these.

Once they are installed, the land is pretty much ruined. I can see the company finding out it's not a money making proposition, pulling out, and leaving the mess behind.

The company is getting money from the government (tax payers) to put this in. They don't care about the environment and they definitely don't care about ruining our beautiful countryside.

Please stop this.

Kristy Good  
Lagro,IN

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## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Patty Conley <pattyconley64@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 20, 2023 2:56 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] Zoning for solar farm

Director Campbell,

I am unable to attend tonight's meeting and have been informed that you are comprising comments from concerned citizens.

I would like this opportunity to have my voice be heard regarding the solar farm the county commisioners are wanting to allow in our county. I am staunchly against this for several reasons. This nation has lost way too much prime farmland either in the name of "progress", or foreign countries as well as Bill Gates buying it all up. We cannot afford to lose even more especially since this land is of the best that is in Indiana, also, based on what I've read so far, these farms are NOT environmentally friendly and much more research needs to be done including the after effects on the surrounding soil, water, and wildlife. Furthermore, there has been talk that two of our commisioners have invested in this and stand to make money from it. This is morally and ethically wrong if not criminally!

I'm urging you to listen to the voices of the citizens of this county who actually have the best interests of our beautiful county, and its' citizens and not the money that is to be made from a blight on the land that will completely ruin its' use for many years to come.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,

Patricia Conley  
Wabash County Resident

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## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Carrie Rees <crees@chittickag.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 20, 2023 3:37 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** Re: [External Email] Solar panels

4181 S 800 W ,  
Peru, IN 46970 (wabash county) thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 20, 2023, at 2:07 PM, Brian Campbell <plandirector@wabashcounty.in.gov> wrote:

Carrie,

I will need an address to add to the minutes if you want this statement read tonight.

Thank you

**Brian Campbell**  
Director, Wabash County Plan Commission  
Wabash County Gov.  
260-563-0661 Ext 1267  
[plandirector@wabashcounty.in.gov](mailto:plandirector@wabashcounty.in.gov)

**From:** Carrie Rees <crees@chittickag.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 20, 2023 1:59 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell <plandirector@wabashcounty.in.gov>  
**Subject:** [External Email] Solar panels

Dear commissioners: As a life- long Wabash County resident who has invested into farm land, one parcel at a time over the last 30 years, I am 100% against the push to allow the solar panel invasion into our area. It seems people who do not have a vested interest in the adverse consequences are the very people who want to vote this in. Would you like to be next to a farm and hear the constant buzzing from the panels? We enjoy hunting our land. This will affect the wildlife very much. We have had a direct situation with the aftermath of an "environmentally friendly" farming situation that has continued to have residual residue in our fields every year for 15 years after that farmer has not farmed the ground. Cannot the commissioners understand when they are promoting a "easy way to make money" scheme, that there is more than meets the eye! What the government promises today will not be what actually transpires 15, 20 or 30 years from now when the contract is up and the farmer is left with the cleanup/removal. (Even though they state they will be responsible for removal. ) We request the commissioners vote NO to permit unlimited farmland to install solar panels. Thank you, Rees Farms.

## Brian Campbell

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**From:** Christy Briney <christyl327@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 20, 2023 3:42 PM  
**To:** Brian Campbell  
**Subject:** [External Email] NO SOLAR IN WABASH COUNTY

Why would any LOCAL resident desire to take the livelihood from a farmer? Why would you choose to destroy productive farm land to provide energy to other states? It is WRONG! PERIOD!

As a resident of Wabash County, I protest against such actions!

Respectfully,  
Christy Briney  
Somerset, IN

Sent from my iPhone

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Plan Commission  
Director's Statement

Hello, my name is Brian Campbell and I live at 665 S 475 W Wabash, IN. I am also the current Plan Commission Director of Wabash County. Because of my position, my office has been caught in the middle of a Solar Farm debate.

I want to make my position clear, I am not against solar at all. As a matter of fact, I have solar panels at my home which I plan on using on my personal property.

However, I am opposed to changing a 5-month-old Zoning Ordinance to allow ANY project of any type that plans to take a huge footprint out of AG1 ground. This possible change could have far reaching consequences for any property in an AG1 zone.

Does this mean I am against personal property rights, no to the contrary. I would not want anyone telling me what I can and can't do on my personal property outside the confines of the current Zoning laws.

Wabash County might never see another project of this magnitude in our lifetimes that in one fell swoop would take thousands of acres of what is currently considered prime farm land out of production. The majority of the changes to the new ordinance which THIS board voted unanimously to accept and pass were put into place for the sole reason of protecting the prime farm land in Wabash County.

From my standpoint of the position I hold with this county I don't believe this is a solar issue at all, I believe this is an AG1 issue.

Some might say the Solar company is only going in this area because the overhead transmission lines are directly under or in very close proximity to these lines. I don't disagree, but why pass an Ordinance 5 months ago knowing what was on the horizon and where it was going to only come back before the Plan Commission board and the Commissioners to change it.

The former Wabash County Plan Commission Director, Mike Howard who was instrumental in creating and helping with this ordinance stated that as the ordinance is written, Commercial Solar is not allowed in an AG1 zone. I looked back in meeting minutes and found 4 different occasions after the original Solar Ordinance had been passed between 2021 and mid 2022 that Mike stated this fact in Plan Commission meetings. What has changed?

How about a hypothetical? What happens when someone who just purchased property in an AG1 zone at an auction comes in to obtain a building permit for a new home and I have to tell them we can't grant them a permit because they didn't gain enough points thru the ordinances Factor Point System. If this is eventually passes any Solar Company will have to bring in all the leases or leased areas and have our office evaluate every site for the Factor Point System. I would be very surprised if any of the leased parcels gain enough points to get approval. So where does that leave us? A variance can be applied for.

I was hired in this position the first of the year to uphold the currently approved Zoning Ordinance and administer, with help from this board and the BZA board any and all regulations within this ordinance and I intend to do so with the utmost fairness. I didn't come here tonight to pick a side, I came here tonight to do my job which is to help disseminate the information needed for this board to make an informed decision and hopefully I have done the same thing with anyone that has called, emailed, or come into the office with questions, who are on either side of this issue.



Yesterday I was asked to investigate a complaint that a solar panel and a fence (Both permitted uses) has been placed on a property that has a signed lease by the solar company. I found no permit on file for a solar panel on this farm, nor did I receive a phone call asking our office permission to do this and neither did the previous Plan Commission Director Mr. Howard. Now I have to send a letter to a homeowner that has signed the lease with the Solar Company stating they are in violation of Wabash County Zoning Ordinances by placing a non-permitted solar panel and fence on a leased property and possibly within the required setbacks from a property line.

If this is eventually approved will another Solar Company now be able to come into Wabash County and be able to submit plans for a solar project in an AG1 area? Yes, and it's going to be here before you know it because we have heard that at least one other Solar Company is already asking around about another area of Wabash County.

Again, I am only against this recommendation to the commissioners because it is taking up Prime Farm Ground. My recommendation is that you vote NO, on this issue to ensure we as a board are voting in-line with not only the current zoning ordinance but also the County's Comprehensive Plan. Which has many sections stating the same fact that our prime farm land needs to be preserved.

Thank you