

**WHITLEY COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION**  
**RESIDENTIAL CODE WORKSHOP MEMORANDUM**  
**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2019, 7:00 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Elizabeth Deckard (arrived 7:04)  
Thor Hodges  
John Johnson  
Joe Wolf  
Brad Wolfe  
Doug Wright

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Mark Mynhier  
Tom Western  
John Woodmansee

**STAFF**

Nathan Bilger  
Mark Cullnane

**VISITORS**

Tim Dygert  
John Meister  
Sonya Emerick

Kathy Hartman  
Ronda Salge  
Emily Studebaker

Mark Johnson  
Byron Lamm

The workshop began at 7:03 P.M. Mr. Cullnane read the roll call with members present and absent listed above.

Mr. Bilger welcomed attendees and reviewed the purpose of the workshop. Mr. Bilger made a presentation outlining the proposed Suburban Residential (“SR”) and Village Residential (“VR”) zoning districts. The presentation included the land classification map from the Comprehensive Plan, county zoning map, a map displaying the location of confined feeding operations in the county along with subdivisions and required buffers around each, and comparisons of existing and potential zoning districts with existing land classifications from the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Bilger began a discussion of market demand for suburban development in the county. Mr. Bilger introduced Kathy Hartman, a representative of Granite Ridge Builders, and asked Ms. Hartman to describe market demand for single-family dwellings typical of suburban development. Ms. Hartman stated that rising home prices and property values are leading potential buyers to look for smaller lots and smaller homes.

Ms. Hartman provided examples of other residential developments that Granite Ridge Builders has undertaken in the other ten counties, in addition to Whitley, that comprise the Northeast Indiana Regional Development Authority. Ms. Hartman stated that some of the developments she described were in proximity to agricultural areas.

Ms. Hartman stated that most often a potential seller approaches Granite Ridge Builders and indicates a willingness to sell a large tract of land for residential development. She stated that access to utilities is very important when looking at potential tracts of land to purchase for development. She added that the highest demand observed by Granite Ridge Builders is for properties located in school districts surrounding Fort Wayne: Southwest Allen County Schools,

Northwest Allen County Schools primarily around Hometown, and East Allen County Schools primarily around Leo-Cedarville.

Ms. Hartman stated that there is some demand for residential development in urban areas, but that such developments must be profitable for the developer, and that unknown conditions, such as potential soil contamination, can make such developments problematic for developers. Ms. Hartman used the Renaissance Pointe development in Fort Wayne as an example.

Audience members stated that there may be a need to conduct a housing study to determine future housing needs.

Those in attendance discussed what might constitute a balance between encouraging residential development and protection of agricultural areas in the county.

Mr. Bilger briefly discussed a third new residential district, formerly called Estate Residential. Those in attendance did suggest to rename the district "Homestead Residential" as it would be more fitting than "Estate Residential."

Mr. Bilger stated that the public, local government, and developers need to work together to come to a reasonable solution to address a lack of housing options in the county.

Audience members and the Commission stated that future discussions about potential new residential zoning districts should include other developers along with realtors.

The workshop adjourned at approximately 9:02 P.M.