

MINUTES OF THE KNOX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

April 8, 2025

Call to order: The April 8 2025, meeting of the Knox County Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Dean Wilken at 7:00 p.m. at the Knox County Courthouse Board of Supervisors meeting room.

Announcement of Open Meeting Act: Chairman Wilken announced where the Open Meetings Act is posted.

Roll Call: Members present: Jim Kotrous, David Arens, Robert Ganz, Neil Clausen, Dean Wilken, Robert Larsen, Greg Kuhlman, Keith Nielsen and Doug DeShazer. Also present were Zoning Administrator Kelsy Jelinek, Tony Dick representative of Heaven's Ridge, LLC, Brett Kennedy of Stockwell Engineering, Special Knox County Attorney David Begley, and one member of the public.

Approve Agenda & Public Notice in the Knox County News and Crofton Journal

Kotrous moved, DeShazer seconded to approve the agenda and public notice which was published in the Knox County News and Crofton Journal. Roll call vote showed all present in favor Ayes: Jim Kotrous, David Arens, Robert Ganz, Neil Clausen, Dean Wilken, Robert Larsen, Greg Kuhlman, Keith Nielsen and Doug DeShazer

Approve the Minutes from the March 11, 2025 Meeting. Ganz moved, Kotrous seconded to approve the minutes from March 11, 2025 meeting. Roll call vote showed all present in favor Ayes: Jim Kotrous, David Arens, Robert Ganz, Neil Clausen, Dean Wilken, Robert Larsen, Greg Kuhlman, Keith Nielsen and Doug DeShazer

Ex Parte Communications: Jim Kotrous stated that he's had a few phone calls.

Old Business: None

New Business:

- 1. Public hearing to receive public comments regarding the Preliminary Plat of Heaven's Ridge Subdivision owned by Heaven's Ridge LLC. This is located in Section 13, Township 33 N, Range 3 W.**

Chairman Wilken opened the public hearing at 7:05 p.m. Administrator Jelinek gave a brief background of Heaven's Ridge application. The pre-application meeting was held with the Planning Commission on March 11, 2025. Tony Dick and Registered Land Surveyor, Brett Kennedy from Stockwell Engineering were present to discuss phase 1

and answer questions regarding the potential new subdivision to be located on the south side of Highway 54C along the Commercial Corridor and Ag Transitional zoned area in the Lake Area Overlay. The parcel sits just west of the Cedar Ridge Estates subdivision and is proposed to be used for single family dwellings.

Brett Kennedy spoke on some issues that had been raised since the previous meeting, including drainage. Cedar Knox Rural Water will supply water services. The Planning Commission members asked questions regarding roads, drainage, utility services. Heaven's Ridge Rd and Heaven's Ridge Lane are both private roads within the subdivision. Nobody was present in opposition.

A motion was made by Claussen and seconded by Larsen to close the public hearing at 7:31 p.m. Roll call vote showed all in favor of closing the public hearing. Ayes: Jim Kotrous, David Arens, Robert Ganz, Neil Clausen, Dean Wilken, Robert Larsen, Greg Kuhlman, Keith Nielsen and Doug DeShazer

DeShazer made a motion to recommend the approval of Heaven's Ridge Preliminary Plat to the Board of Supervisors with the following conditions:

1. A fire safety plan shall be supplied.
2. Submit a subdivision agreement, covenants to be recorded and a copy to the zoning office.
3. With varying slopes and grades on the lots, limiting the acres available for leach field sites, Knox County requires that Heaven's Ridge Subdivision apply to NDEE for subdivision onsite wastewater review.
4. The entire area on the final plat would be zoned as AGT – Transitional Agricultural District, not Commercial Corridor and stated as that on the final plat.
5. Roads agreement with Cedar Ridge Estates and Herrick Township.

Arens seconded the motion. Roll call vote showed all in favor. Ayes: Jim Kotrous, David Arens, Robert Ganz, Neil Clausen, Dean Wilken, Robert Larsen, Greg Kuhlman, Keith Nielsen and Doug DeShazer

2. The board discussed setting a date for the proposed review of the Knox County Comprehensive Plan regarding a ban on all new commercial wind & solar developments.

Mr. Begley made a comment and answered some questions for the Planning Commission members.

A motion was made by Jim Kotrous seconded by Robert Larsen to hold a public hearing at The God's County Barn near Center, NE on Tuesday, May 6th at 6 p.m. for public input regarding a proposed ban on all new commercial wind & solar developments. Roll call vote showed all in favor. Ayes: Jim Kotrous, David Arens, Robert Ganz, Neil Clausen, Dean Wilken, Robert Larsen, Greg Kuhlman, Keith Nielsen and Doug DeShazer

3. The board discussed setting a date for the proposed review of the Knox County to the Knox County Zoning Regulations regarding a proposed ban on all new commercial wind & solar developments.

A motion was made by Nielsen, seconded by Kotrous to hold a public hearing at The God's County Barn near Center, NE on Tuesday, May 6th at 6 p.m. for public input regarding a proposed ban on all new commercial wind & solar developments. The Knox County Zoning Regulations portion will immediately follow the Knox County Comprehensive Plan public hearing to hold two separate public hearings. Roll call vote showed all in favor. Ayes: Jim Kotrous, David Arens, Robert Ganz, Neil Clausen, Dean Wilken, Robert Larsen, Greg Kuhlman, Keith Nielsen and Doug DeShazer

Public Comment: None

Zoning Administrator's Report: The March permit Report was reviewed.

Next Meeting: There will be a special meeting at the God's Country Barn Center, NE on May 6th at 6 p.m. for public hearings. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 13th at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m. by Chairman Wilken.

Kelsy Jelinek, Zoning Administrator

Approved by Planning Commission: July 8, 2025

Placed on File with Board of Supervisors: Will be placed on file at 7/23/25 meeting

