

**PORTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**(The entire meeting is available to watch on the Porter County website.)**

The Regular meeting of the Porter County Board of Commissioners convened at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in the Commissioners' Chambers of the Administration Center.

Those present were: Commissioners Barb Regnitz, Jim Biggs and County Attorney Scott McClure; and Executive Administrative Asst. Melanie Massey. Recording Secretary Kathy Merle. Commissioner Blaney was out of town.

**Call to Order/Pledge**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Approval of Payroll – March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

**Approval of Claims – March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023.**

**Approval of Minutes for February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Com. Biggs, second.

**COMMISSIONERS**

**GIS – Property and Casualty Insurance Renewal.**

Mr. Webber, Matt Webber General Insurance Services.

Mr. Keen, Charlie Keene General Insurance Services.

Mr. Webber, Yes, we're here tonight to discuss the property and casualty insurance renewal coming up on April 10. We will be starting the sixth full year of our partnership as Insurance Risk Management Professional Consulting Services. Started way back in 2017, if you can believe it. We've had a lot of progress over those years in terms of going into a more high-performing safe culture from the top down in the county, safer employees. And it's due to everyone's efforts throughout the departments and their staff starting obviously. You folks up here. A lot of hard work and a lot of good results. So we thank everyone for their time and efforts in that front. That's what got us here. We look to continue those efforts. Use all available resources that we can offer and continue down that path. So we are pleased to bring forward a program renewal that is very favorable and a direct correlation to everyone's efforts. So tonight we seek formal approval for the 2023-2024 property and casual insurance program renewal. The program itself we are landing at a renewal total premium \$1,245,586.00. That represents just under a 2% rate increase which is phenomenal given the marketplace especially in public sector and the rest of that is exposure increase which is two things that are being insured. Autos property values some budget increases things like that open it up to any questions.

Com Biggs, Scott you got a chance to sit in on these meetings and so has Barb. Do you want to weigh in on it?

Com. Regnitz, I think that we've done a great job. GIS has done a great job.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the GIS Property and Casualty Insurance Renewal, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

**A Memorandum of Understanding between the Indiana Dunes National Park, Porter County Board of Commissioners and the Porter County Convention, Recreation, and Visitor Commission.**

## **National Park Lease Agreement.**

### **An Authorization of National Park Service Regulations on County Lands within the boundaries of Indiana Dunes National Park.**

Atty. Hollenbeck, Lorelei and I come before you tonight with two documents we would ask your acquiescence in. As you well know the Visitor Center that is well attended of late. How many visitors have we had so far this year?

Ms. Weimer, So our first year to (Inaudible) was 2016 and last year we almost went to 200,000 we had 193,000. We've almost doubled since 16.

Com. Biggs, I've been in it twice. Since the first year both times was full. A lot of people.

Ms. Weimer, It's amazing.

Atty. Hollenbeck, I have to admit that I underestimated what it meant to become a National Park. It just brings people and it's wonderful that we're showing off Porter County. In the past hasn't been wonderful is dealing with the General Services Administration which is the federal agency that takes care of all the leases and everything and buildings. They've been problematic to deal with. So we rejoiced here a while back when for whatever reason and Laurel I may have more of the particulars they have abdicated the responsibility on this particular building. They lease it from us and given it back to the National Park Service who we deal with regularly and have a much better longer relationship with. That has precipitated though because the handoff occurred in at the last minute. The inability to get a full lease negotiated and agreed to before the old one ran out. So on the lease side of the documents that were here tonight we're asking for a 13-month extension of the existing lease that expired to get everybody's juices flowing in terms of the National Park Service involvement in the building, which you own. The other document we're here is a bifurcation of the process that the National Lakeshore wanted and that's the MOU, the memorandum of understanding with no reference to rent sets and lays out the relationship between the two agencies, us and the National Lakeshore. That's kind of setting the table. Lorelei can add more particulars because she has dealt directly with the folks at the National Park Service.

Ms. Weimer, One of the biggest issues with GIS was we wanted to go into a long-term lease both us and the National Park. And they just were not doing it. What they would do is they'd get to that mark when it was time to negotiate and they didn't have enough time so it said let's just do another extension for three years. We've been operating under this extension model and neither National Park nor us want to do that we would like to have at least a 10 to 20 year lease. In addition to that the National Park had to pay a fee for GIS to negotiate on their behalf. So they would like to keep that internal, you know keep it towards the park. Those are the two drivers that why we wanted to get away from GIS and just go directly to the National Park. Now keep in mind when we say we're negotiating with the National Park there is a leasing unit out of Colorado that leases for the National Park itself. Our local National Park can be a part of those discussions but the lease itself will be with the National Park leasing office that's out of Colorado itself.

Com. Biggs, So that's why it's so easy to do. This is something we've done in the past.

Atty. Hollenbeck, We've done it regularly, really ever since the National Park Service joined us in that building. They have paid rent as they should. We have been before the Commissioners not that we don't enjoy seeing you, but more regularly than maybe we wanted to because we were constantly getting from GSA extensions and renewals on extensions and renewals. Nobody knew who was on first base. Like Laurel I said we're confident now with the National Park Service because they wanted us they want to be confident that they know they've got a place with us. We want them there. I mean they are a driver of people and of course we do the best we can to tell people who arrive at our Visitor Center that we then in Porter County we are more than just the Dunes. There's a lot to do in Porter County and that's our chance to grab these people is when they come into the Visitor Center.

Ms. Weimer, Then three years ago instead of GSA negotiating with us they sent us to the Army Corps of Engineer out of Detroit who knew nothing. Now you're trying to explain to him why we have a unique partnership that's not that common in the U.S. Then you have to try

to explain to him why didn't lease is different than other leases. So this should hopefully make things a lot easier in the future.

Atty. Hollenbeck, I'm completely digressing I won't take very long your time but we were I was categorically told by GSA that we were a unique special extraordinary and they weren't really happy with the relationship where the National Park Service rented from a local government the building. Not a month later I went to what back then was called a destination wedding in Montana and we drove through Yellowstone and we stopped at the Visitor Center and guess what it was it as a combination of the local government and the National Park Service. They didn't know who was on first base. What we're asking you to do tonight is approve the MOU which you have so we then have a framework to work forward collaboratively with the National Park Service and keep drawing millions of people.

Ms. Weimer, We are the fourth in the nation and visitors. That's a legitimate figure. We are ahead of.....

Ms. Weimer, Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Glacier just to name a few. And in 2021 we were the second out of the 63 National Parks.

Atty. Hollenbeck, We dropped to the third but the MOU provides the parameters of how this is all going to work and then this one last extension for 13 months of the lease will give us time to work with the National Park Service to bring back to you a longer term relationship and commitment, which is in the best interest of everybody.

Com. Regnitz, Scott I know we were talking about this before the meeting and you've had a chance to review both of these. I know this is a complicated situation you don't see any particular issues with either of these?

Atty. McClure, No I think this is actually good steps of going in the right direction to get us set up to get it to a long-term lease and to formalize the relationship between the National Park and the Tourism Bureau and that building specifically. I think everyone has been working hard for years to be able to get to this point. I think it's all very good.

Com. Biggs, So we so what are we approving here the MOU and a 13-month lease?

Com. Regnitz, Do we need to do two separate motions.

Atty. We can do both if we want to talk a little bit more about the lease.

Ms. Weimer, It is a pretty simple lease in the sense that they will pay a monthly fee. We have negotiated with that monthly fee. They pay right now 20% of the going rate. They pay on 66,000 square feet. The reason they're only paying 20% is because we used 80% of the funds were federal funds when we built the building. In addition to that they do pay 50% of the operational expenses and then they give us a monthly fee for long-term capital Improvement fees. All of that is wrapped up in one actual payment that we get for the month.

Atty. Hollenbeck The lease becomes a one-page sheet if everything else was in there it would be a 15-page document.

Ms. Weimer, What we did for the extension three years ago we put in a cost of living of 7%. For the extension we did another 7% for this rate. You're seeing the rate in the lease will be \$103,989.27 and that's broken out on a per month basis that is deposited into our account.

Com. Biggs, That's a pretty good deal.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the MOU and the National Park lease agreement.  
Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

Com. Biggs, We were contacted by the DNR and asked to approve an authorization of the National Park Service regulations on County lands within the boundaries of Indiana Dunes National Park. What are we approving there exactly?

Atty. McClure, They actually sent over something for us to sign. I believe it was an MOU. Basically the park is irregularly shaped. Within it there are portions of parcels that are county-owned land. For instance at the campground there's a couple of parcels in there that are technically in County property that aren't within the park proper. You get into a jurisdictional question of who has the right to arrest or not arrest. This only allows the DNR or

the National Park Service to enforce the regulations in and around the park on County owned property. We're not affecting cities or towns that might be in the area that would be their own agreement to enter into.

Com. Biggs, And we actually sent this over to Sheriff Balon to look at and he had no issues with it as well.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the authorization of National Park Service Regulations, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

### **Expo Event – Discussion.**

Atty. McClure, The Expo event discussion I think the last meeting we were on the process of on the precipice of being able to explain the issue directly of the Halloween Bazaar. I'm using the right terminology and the accompanying drag show. The Commissioners had heard the concerns from both sides. I had a conversation with our director of the Expo Center and also the individuals putting on the event. I think at this point we're just trying to clarify some facts that had happened. This event had been going on I believe this was the fourth year. This would have been the fourth year. There was a lot more attention on it. It was also advertised slightly different and it was depending on way you were reading it could have good or bad implications. So we talked to the actual individuals that were doing the event and what we had worked out was that they were going to obviously continue with the event. We were going to enhance our way of monitoring the alcohol consumption by the utilization of some wristbands that are pretty common at other events in and around this area. Just so we have a good idea who is allowed to and who isn't allowed to be having a drink. I think we had talked about potentially when we look at looking at the policy as a whole at our venue rental that that may be something we do. It's just in an overabundance of caution as to having alcohol around children. There's three two more things. One 18 and over was going to be allowed to enter the building obviously as an adult. 17 and younger because of the combination of alcohol in the event we're going to be required to have an adult or a guardian available. And then they was going to be a little bit of rewording on the advertising part as far as who was free and who wasn't free. We had come to that agreement and I believe it was in close time to the last Commissioner's meeting there was still a potential meeting with the event organizers coming up a couple days after that. We just hadn't quite got to the ability to be able to spew it out at the public meeting. As it stood before the event was canceled by the event organizers that was going to be the plan. The event was going to allow to be continued. It was going to be 18 and over we're entering. 17 and younger we're going to need a parent or guardian and they were going to slightly modify the advertising. And in of ourselves we were going to implement the wristbands on the alcohol and also consider that moving forward. That's where we were. That's what we were working on behind the scenes. Obviously balancing some significant legal issues. I can tell you that I had more than one group conversation with attorneys on attempting to reconcile all the different rights that we have playing together here. I mean we obviously have free speech. We have some parental rights. We have some laws that we need to follow obviously with our own alcohol. We don't make up our own alcohol rules. The State of Indiana tells us the law as it relates to alcohol when we follow those. That's why we're licensed through the state. So that's what brought us here today. Any questions or anything that I had forgotten?

Com. Biggs. No this is a work in progress.

Atty. McClure, And then overall this brought to the light that we probably need to take a real good look in calm times at our event and our venue policies that relates to these things and alcohol around children and things of those nature. I think we all had some learning experiences about the type of events that are happening that do have alcohol and kids together. This wasn't the only one by any stretch of the imagination. Ultimately, I think this Board needs to give our.... would be a help to our directors of these individual facilities. Whether it's the MOH or whether it's the Expo of having something to help them when they're dealing with the rentals and the issues that come up. I think we're going to be scheduling some meetings to talk about that policy when we are at that stage we're obviously going to have at a Commissioner's meeting and we will have more public comment as to what that policy would be. So tonight we're not diving into all those things. It's complicated. It's not as straightforward and as easy as it would first seem. I would say stay tuned for that more comprehensive venue policy after everyone's had an opportunity to weigh in. Then obviously the hardest part frankly on these types of issues is the legal review to make sure that we're balancing everyone's rights accordingly and appropriately. I would think that would be coming down the road here over the next several weeks or months and we can get that on the books.

Com. Regnitz, And we actually do have our first meeting scheduled so that will be happening soon.

### **Sheriff's Residence – Discussion.**

Com. Regnitz, I ask that this be put on the agenda just to give a fuller explanation. At our last meeting we voted to hire two certified appraisers to do a fair market lease appraisal of the Sheriff's residence. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the Sheriff's residence it's the old Poco Muse location. It's on the corner of Franklin and Indiana. Did I get that right? That building is a gorgeous old building. If you've never been in it has nine beautiful rooms I believe it was probably considered a mansion in its time. The museum shut down about three years ago due to the pandemic and it never reopened. Then in May of last year it actually moved out to a possibly better location across the street because they have an opportunity for better climate control and better temperature control in that location. As a consequence it really has not even been open to the public for three years. I felt that it was such a shame for it to sit vacant and not get utilized. Now that building does need work there is no doubt about it but I think its well worth restoring it. In discussing with our Atty. Scott McClure because it is a government-owned building there are some very strict stipulations as to what we need to do. I'm just wondering if you could just recap exactly what we must do. We can't just do whatever we want in this case.

Atty. McClure, The process starts with two appraisals from certified appraisers looking for the fair market rent right now. And then once those numbers come in then we have to have several different choices as to whether it's a closed bid or some different options but at the end of the day we put together what based upon what those appraisals come back at we have very little leeway within the statute to change or modify those numbers. If I remember off the top of my head I believe it was something, maybe 10 percent was the leeway we had but then we run into some other stipulations. If that rent were to be \$25,000.00 or more per year then it takes Council approval. If the lease is three years or longer than three years it takes Council approval but ultimately when we get the appraisals back and we put together a package and anyone in the public who would want to potentially rent it would have the ability to submit a bid based upon the appraisal and the parameters that were allowed to negotiate on. Then we're back to that familiar standard of the highest and most responsive bid as it relates to the rent would be able to start negotiating on a lease. I think right now we have our appraisals engaged. We're waiting for those to come back. Once those come back then we would go through the bid process to see who and what it would look like if someone wanted to rent it out based upon those appraisals. Those would come back and then we would start lease negotiation depending on the terms tells us which way down the tree we go. Whether it's back to Council or stays here with the Commissioners.

Com. Regnitz, Thank you.

Com. Biggs, But everybody should keep in mind is that Com. Regnitz pointed out that building for the last three years has sat vacant. We have never since that building has been built have never collected any kind of rent on it. The Sheriff's Department moved out of there in the early 70's to move into the Franklin site, which is now the old the old new jail. \$25,000 may not seem like a year to a lot to of people. As a matter of fact we heard some grumbings about that from a couple of members of the Council but just keep this in mind what we're not collecting any rent from it right now and the electric bill alone for that three period of time has ran over \$30,000.00 just in the electric bill. Getting some money back out of it plus getting somebody to lease it with the understanding that they're going to go in and make some improvements to the interior of the building I just think that's a win-win for the taxpayers.

### **FACILITIES – DANIEL SULLIVAN, DIRECTOR**

#### **RFP's Requirements for Architectural Design Professionals. To support the Facilities Director in expanding the Health Department's Main Office at the Admin. Building.**

Com. Biggs, As we've talked about here several times this year so far we're going take on pretty much a major renovation of the area the space that the Health Department currently occupies in the basement.

Mr. Sullivan, I would see that as number one as we're expanding because the Health Department needs has grown and needs to expand with the County. Number one is outgrowing its space and moving to contiguous spaces. I would also see it as an opportunity

to sort of do a first finish renovation of this 32 year old building. The first chance to sort of get a professional opinion on how we ought to look for the next phase of its life. We won't be doing much beyond the first floor but the first floor should get an update on its look as well the washrooms nearby and that sort of thing. Some security updates that I think are a good idea and just talking to the staff down there about what they need as a step one and how we can best improve circulation workflow and that sort of thing.

Com. Biggs, Scott have you taken a look at this?

Atty. McClure, Yes it is the Porter County's Facilities Department seeking proposals for qualified firms for our architectural design, bidding management with an alternative for construction management. Lays out the design phase and what we're looking for on scope budget and schedule. The scope goes on to include certain things and I think Daniel is just gone through most of them. Then the bidding portion of it. We are looking for the qualified firms that fit into that architectural firms that fit into that architectural design and bidding management or construction management or a combination of both to give us their proposals on what it would cost to do that. The Commissioners can take it up and look at it and make a decision. I believe what Daniel is asking for is this to be approved at today's meeting. The question would need to approve that and then also give a date of which you would like those back or when they are due.

Com. Biggs, Are you looking at a 30 day window?

Atty. McClure, I would think 30 is a little on the low end. It is hard to turn things around in 30 days. I think maybe 30 to 45. 60 is a little too long. I don't think it takes that long, but we are wanting the best response. I think it's a minimum of 30 days to get that response back.

Com. Regnitz, Why don't we do 45 days?

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the RFP as written with a deadline of 45 days for responses, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

#### **RFP's for repairs to the Admin. Garage - Discussion.**

Mr. Sullivan, At a previous discussion conditions of the garage came up. The Commissioners asked me to look into getting a professional evaluation of that. We did get a proposal for that evaluation. I think that is on the table right now but as a second to that is to decide whether or not to go for that right now. We also want to see what it would cost to replace the basics. Replace the seals. The transition points between the sections of the garage, which is it's (Inaudible) failure point at this point again, at 32 years. That will give us an idea is this the time to do that full 10 year outlook evaluation. Or do we just go ahead and spend the money. We know we need to do right now which is replace those transition seals between the control point and the buildings. Between the garage and the admin. building.

Com. Biggs, Did we have a structural engineer look at this?

Mr. Sullivan, Not yet. That is what the proposal would be. The RFP's to have them come out those under \$8000.00.

Com. Regnitz, What I'm recommending is that we get an estimate just to do the repairs to the joints and then we can bring that back into our meeting and decide if we want to use StructurePoint.

Mr. Sullivan, StructurePoint is the one that reached out and they gave us the proposal.

Com. Regnitz, That's just to do the 10 year evaluation of looking out 10 years or if we just want to fix it. I think today that I would like to recommend that we approve getting the estimate just to do the fixes and then we can decide which route we want to take.

Com. Biggs, I would be a little more comfortable if we had a couple of more firms and the opportunity to look at that. Not just StructurePoint. They're a great firm, but they are a very big firm. This is not a big job so I can imagine. I don't want to pretend to think that I know what they will cost it out at but it will be cheaper.

Mr. Sullivan, I think the evaluation is what you're talking about, getting more firms for that. Yes. It is worth comparing it to, is this the right time to do it? Do we just replace what we know we need to replace.

Com. Biggs, It is 30 plus years old. I want to be able to say that I know it's safe. We know it needs work. I want to know that it's structurally safe to park on and to walk on and under. Then we can go from there as far as what needs...

Mr. Sullivan, Do you think we should go for more proposals for the evaluation itself?

Com. Biggs, I would.

Com. Regnitz, Com. Biggs I would also still like for us to at least get an estimate of what it would be just to fix it just so we have a basis of comparison.

Com. Biggs, They would do that anyway but we can make that part of the RFQ.

Atty. McClure, To be clear I think what you are asking Daniel to do is do a request for proposals for someone to evaluate the garage and what might ail it. Correct?

Com. Biggs, Structurally.

Atty. McClure, And the also to go out and get some quotes on the known features, right now that you believe need to be fixed and the Commissioners can look at both and make a decision, right?

Com. Regnitz, Yes. Do we need to make a motion for that?

Atty. McClure, No.

#### **DEVELOPMENT & STORM WATER MNGMNT. – BOB THOMPSON, DIRECTOR**

**Lochmueller Group – An Agreement for Construction Engineering Services for the Calumet Trail, Phases 1 and 2 – Mineral Springs Rd. to the Dune Park Train Station in the amount of \$263,380.00.**

Com. Biggs, Bob is on vacation. Scott can you add a little bit to this?

Atty. McClure, This is for construction inspection services by Lochmueller. This is for Phases 1 and 2 from Mineral Springs Rd. to the Dune Park Train Station. This is for those construction inspection services that are part of the situation when we're dealing with the federal funds and matching to make sure that things are being constructed the way there are supposed to be constructed.

Com. Biggs, This is certainly something we saw coming.

Com. Regnitz, moved to approve the Lochmueller Group agreement for the Calumet Trail, Phases 1 and 2, Com. Biggs, second, motion carried.

#### **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Ms. Fuller, My name is Fran Fuller. I am from Valparaiso. What I have to say is on a very sore subject. I will just preference with what I'm about to say on that. Well I just want to say I do appreciate all the changes that you wanted to make to the drag show at the Expo Center. I do agree there needs to be some limitations on who's exposed to certain things and who is around the alcohol. I totally agree with that. The main reason I'm here is I just feel like there's some education that needs to be done so I have some statistics here. These were gotten from the Indiana Center for prevention of Youth Abuse and Suicide. I have the site here if anybody would like it. So just some of the statistics. These were worked on in evidence-based programming. More than 90 percent of abusers are people are people children know, love and trust. Offenders are 80 to 90 percent male. 10 to 20 percent female and 40 percent are adolescents themselves. Social media is 80 percent of where sex crimes start. It's not with the drag shows. Targets are children with low self-esteem, obedient compliant personalities, mental disability parents that are uninvolved and or preoccupied. Red flags for groomer's gifts, special privileges for no apparent reason, overly affectionate, gaining trust and access playing a role in the child's life, controlling, isolating and secrecy. They tend to be youth serving professionals, acquaintances and influential members of the community. The red flags and then tending to be youth serving professionals I got that from Victim of Crimes.org. Again I have all these sites where I obtained this information. The next part of this was from the Baptist News global on September 14th of 2022 there is an epidemic of predatory

pastors. That is not to say that drag queens are not a threat to gender norms. That subordinate women and vilify the LGBTQIA plus people. And that is what the right is really afraid of. That drag might cause people to rethink gender and sexuality. That they might further lose their grip on power over straight white women and general and sexual minorities. Again, it's a quote from the Baptist News Global. Not particularly my opinion. Again I did the research and I want there to be some education out there. From AP News drag show story errors have been deemed dangerous not because of the drag queens because of the right-wing attacks. The anti-LGBTQIA plus rhetoric has to be stopped using fears about gender and sexuality to enlist new followers is merely to distract from one's own current scandals. Again a quote from the AP News. And so this is my part of it. For me in reality all of this is because people are afraid of the LGBTQIA Plus Community. There is no fear to be had. They don't want to push their beliefs, their lifestyles on anyone least of all children. I know firsthand what it's like to see someone you love struggle with that. To watch them beat themselves up because they have different beliefs than most. To feel vilified by so-called friends. To be judged by strangers every day of their lives. Every day she has to deal with it and I as her mother have to sit by and watch because she tells me it happens every day. You'd be battling for me every day Mom. Everyone needs to educate themselves on gender and sexuality. Please just do the education and do the research. They don't choose these lives for themselves. I don't know how many time I heard her say why would I choose this? Why would I choose a harder path in life when life is hard enough? So just please do the research our God created them this way just like he created all the heterosexuals. And as Lady Gaga says Baby I Was Born This Way. You are appointed to these positions. You are voted into these positions by the people and you're supposed to be for the people. So please don't be afraid of what this is and do the work and try to understand it. In closing we're just talking about a drag show. disputing a drag show at a venue in the middle of nowhere and I know it hasn't been canceled by you but the production company canceled it because of all the threats that they received because of all the hub bub about it.

Ms. Miller, (Inaudible – interrupted)

Ms. Fuller, Excuse me.

Ms. Watts, Can you ask them to be quiet so we can hear her statement.

Com. Biggs, Let's all respect each other while we're in here. Otherwise I'm going to close it and go home. I don't want to be part of something like that.

Ms. Fuller, Where nobody has to be exposed to it. Where parents have the right to take their children or not. To me this would be like banning books. There are so many colors in the world that we need to expose our children. To learn, to teach, to enlighten them. To just make them better people and allow them to them to have the opportunity to make up their own minds about how they feel about life and not push your rhetoric on them. I don't expect everybody to think like I do but I'm not trying to push my beliefs on anyone. Please don't push your beliefs on me or my family. Thank you.

Ms. Watts, Cathy Watts in Valparaiso. So today in Nashville Tennessee at least three children and three adults were gunned down. And this month Tennessee became the first state to sharply restrict drag shows by banning the performances on public property and in places where they could be watched by minors. Seems to me Tennessee isn't doing a very good job of taking care of their children today. And yet in Porter County Indiana today we're listening to people discussing whether or not we should bring a drag show to Valparaiso and allow kids to attend rather than tighter gun laws and protecting our children in school. We live in a crazy country. Drag has been around as long as Shakespeare has been performed. This is an art form. This art form has cast a false light in recently by right-wing activists and politicians who complain about the sexualization or grooming of children. Opponents often coordinate protests at drag events sometimes showing up with guns screaming and yelling obscenities and threatening venues, queens and patrons. I will challenge that the opponents of drag do more damage than any drag performance could. Don't take my word for it. I decided to do some research something that obviously the opponents of Rogue Syndicate have not done. I looked at the number of known drag queens in 2023 that have been arrested for pedophilia. After searching for several hours and using many sources you know what I found zero. What I did find was a number of stories of drag queens being beaten, threatened or killed at the hands of right-wing extremists. In one week here in the United States 17 people were arrested for child pornography or pedophilia. 14 of them were pastors or youth pastors at Christian churches. That is one random week in 2023, but guess what so far in 2023 no arrests have been made for drag queens. But in one week 14 pastors or youth pastors have been arrested. It would be an abomination if I told you not to send your children to church. I'll leave that



decision for you to make but step aside sit down and allow others to raise their children as they see fit. You see this is America and you don't get to control what others do. Let's be respectful of each other and if you don't like drag don't go, but I can assure you you are missing out on a great talent and a fun evening and quite honestly in the most recent movie Elvis I saw a lot more pelvic thrusting than I have ever seen at a children's drag show.

Ms. DeWitt, Kathy DeWitt. I put something together that talked about the alcohol and that sort of thing. I appreciate all the things that you talked about tonight in terms of in terms of stuff that you've done but the fact of the matter is that the Rogue Syndicate folks canceled it because of the threats to not just them via phone and email but also to the people at the Porter County Expo Center. A couple of weeks ago this body was presented with the opinions of some voters regarding the halfway to Halloween event organized and promoted by Rogue Syndicate and hosted at the Porter County Expo Center. The concern among those who spoke was the drag show and the idea that children would be permitted. That it posed an unsafe environment for those children. I believe one woman equated it to grooming and people have talked about that today. Since then an article has appeared in the Chicago Tribune which included statements from all three Commissioners. Com. Biggs referred to the show as an adult themed show which what I imagine then that Mrs. Doubtfire, Tootsie, Some Like It Hot and perhaps even The Nutty Professor should be reviewed for adult writing but I know that's not your job.

Com. Biggs, If you throw my name up I'm going respond.

Ms. DeWitt, Okay.

Com. Biggs, Those are not my words. This is what we were told by the director. There's another Commissioner here that was told the same thing. That it was adult themed with a PG rating. I don't know how you get a PG rating with an adult themed. That's not my words ma'am.

Ms. DeWitt, In terms of the alcohol the venue where children would be presented I doubt that this is the issue really in terms of those folks who canceled the event. And all of the research that the County Attorney did since a number of the events always have alcohol at them, not always, often have including Three Little Birds Market which is Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup> there. I'm glad to be able to promote that for you food and drinks will be there and children under five for \$5.00 and less. Children 12 and under are free I'm sorry. Entrance is \$5.00. I am part of a group that let's face it is on Facebook. It's a private group but the women share lots of comments about the article that was posted today. One women suggest I want to share those with you. Alcohol and the presence of children well when you don't understand how your event venue works I suppose you need to stop everything to figure it out. It sounds like you have. I wonder if those opposed considered reaching out to the ATC. Maybe get the excise officer up here for consultation. It's not hard to get your questions answered if you know who to ask. It's government. There's a phone tree. I don't know about that but you guys probably do. In fairness in the article you did admit to needing to get a better handle on how the venue operates. So grace is given. One person said I recently attended a bridal expo at the Expo Center and there was alcohol being served along with kids running around. It's not about the alcohol I also attended the Christmas festival downtown. There was wine tasting, hot ciders available with no complaints and lots of children around. It's not about the alcohol. If you don't want your kids going to a drag show as Kathy Watts said don't take them. It's that simple. Another woman questioned I'd like to know how they reason the well-being of children as a concern for this event against oh, this is bad. The well-being of children as a concern for this event against appointing the most recent Health Board member who has a documented history of fraud allegations, removal of her insurance, this is from an attorney that wrote this and endangerment allegations Flannery versus Jepsen and who openly and confidently stated chiropractors are a better fit than medical doctors to make decisions about our children's health at a school board meeting. And then there's this.

Com. Biggs, So what does that have to do with the event that we're speaking about?

Ms. DeWitt, I'm just sharing comments sharing comments with you from these ladies who are concerned about it.

Com. Biggs, Go ahead.

Ms. DeWitt, And then there's this. I haven't attended the Popcorn Festival in several years but I'm guessing folks can still walk around with alcohol. Also what is the big event at the Pavilion in the early summer? I know you have to buy tickets but I don't remember. Its lots of

beer. I live downtown kids are all over where adults are imbibing in the open. I hope you did say this in the article. It says I don't believe I was put in this office to support these types of events.

Com. Biggs, Oh I said that.

Ms. DeWitt, He went on to say they got the wrong commissioner.

Com. Biggs, Wrong commissioner, wrong county.

Ms. DeWitt, Yes. Well the Republicans had a Get Out the Vote family picnic also has a bar. You didn't hear that from me.

Com. Biggs, It wasn't an adult theme ma'am. That wasn't government property ma'am.

Ms. DeWitt, It is still alcohol though.

Com. Biggs, It seems to be lost with some people. We get paid up here to look after the best interests of these properties. We've been contacted by an event sponsor saying that we want to have an adult themed event.

Ms. DeWitt, Did it say adult themed or did that happen later?

Com. Biggs, They talked to our director and that's what the director told these two Commissioners. It was 13 and under that's what was advertised. 13 and under in free. And there was no mention about adult supervision and the sale of alcohol. Now you got to remember this isn't a wedding reception. This is open to the general public. So we don't know who's coming in there.

Ms. DeWitt, Except it was a drag show that's going to be happening.

Com. Biggs, Can you imagine how much our liability jumps...

Ms. DeWitt, When there's a drag show.

Com. Biggs, When there's a...don't put words in my mouth. Let me finish. I was respectful and let you finish. When we have an event out there that we open to the public that we sanctioned that says 13 and under are free. Bring them come on in. No mention of adults and we're serving alcohol too. Imagine how the liability jumps on us. This wasn't an issue about a drag show, not with this Board. It was not an issue with the drag show.

Ms. DeWitt, It was a direct issue with drag show about the threats.

Com. Biggs, Let me finish. I've sat on this Board long enough to approve three of those before this fourth one come in front of me. You didn't hear me say anything then did you? And

Ms. DeWitt, Did you have complaints? People showing up?

Com. Biggs, There's a difference is that when it was pointed out to us and that's when I spoke to Lori. What's going on here it's another drag show. So what? Why is this one getting any attention? And it was about the way that they were advertising it. You heard Atty. McClure state that this one was a little different because of the way it came out advertised. There's no Boogeyman up here okay. If you're looking for one....

Ms. DeWitt, I wasn't looking sharing.

Com. Biggs, I'm just saying you're looking in the wrong direction. There's one thing that I'm going to do and I said it in that article. I'm going to respect people's constitutional rights but I'm not going to do it if means putting juveniles in this County and at risk from a liability standpoint. That I'm not going to do. Okay?

Ms. DeWitt, Got it. I'm not done.

Com. Biggs, Okay go ahead.

Ms. DeWitt, Final comment and support of the Porter County Expo Center. Before Lori, this is again a comment from one of the women in this group, Lori Powalski Daly that facility was falling down. Not just falling apart, falling down. She practically reinvented what it meant to have an (Inaudible). Froze for months in a trailer during the renovation and now manages is one of the biggest state-of-the-art revenue driving venues in Porter County. She clearly knows what she's doing and break checking her like this is so unprofessional and just wrong. Department heads are in those positions for a reason. These two need to let them do their jobs and not micromanage everything they don't like or understand. In closing, now this is me talking, in closing I attended a drag show hosted at the Memorial Opera House with my friend Cur. He was there my husband was there. Security was provided for three protesters that showed up. I believe those were Valparaiso police officers. There was nothing there other than fun spirited entertainment, costumes, laughter and singing. It was light-hearted and I'm fairly confident the only thing any kids would have been exposed to was just that. Entertainment and beautiful people living their best lives. So explain to me from those folks in the back what's so awful about that?

Com. Biggs, Let me say this again since you brought it up. Lori has done a good job out there. Lori didn't build that out there. The taxpayers of Porter County built that out there. The Commissioners didn't build that out there. The taxpayers of Porter County built that out there and they're going to have a say on how we're going to use that out there. Whether I don't like it, you don't like it, it doesn't matter. You just heard me say what we cannot and we will not violate people's constitutional rights. If we're going to be in the rental business, we're in the rental business. You can't be just a little bit in the rental business. We're in it but at the same time we're going try to do it in a way that doesn't leave us at a liability disadvantage. That it does also send the right message that we're not going to run an adult whatever out there. We want to have events out there such as drag shows we do it in a way that we send a message that it's done responsibly. That's all I'm asking to do. I don't care that there's a drag show out there. I really don't.

Ms. DeWitt, That's good to hear but let's do it in a way or set the example for the rest of the country how it's done without upsetting everybody else. I think there's a way to do that. I think there's a medium in the road that everybody can meet in if we respect one another but we got to make up our minds whether or not we're going to do that.

Ms. Miller, I wasn't prepared to come up and speak today but since Cathy Watts graced us with her presence let's go ahead and bring up the fact that I was personally attacked by the Nasty Women.

Com. Biggs, Dawn I need you to talk to us.

Ms. Miller, I will address you guys. I was personally attacked by the Nasty Women's group. They made a fake Facebook account and they put my name, my face saying oh let me get this because I want to be exact. That I had a problem with disability people. This was posted on Facebook. I haven't been on Facebook in over a year. We had on Valparaiso Now Dawn Miller let's see this was a disability awareness spotlight. We don't need disability awareness in awareness. This city runs just fine without accommodating these people. There's more of that. I'm not going to go through all of the other awful things that these people were saying but the whole point of me coming up and saying anything is they're on the attack. Not one time have I threatened anybody? Not one time have I felt that it's my place to do something like that? I feel that we should be protecting our children. I have been to drag queen shows before. I know what they're geared towards and as a matter of fact I got a gentleman right here that actually says why would you bring your children to our show? This is a drag queen right here and he's telling you why would you bring your children to our shows. These are disgusting and this is from his mouth not mine. So I'm being personally attacked by these people the Nasty Women's group and particularly Kathy Watts called Patrick Lyp. I don't know what the point of that was. I already made the police report regarding someone making the face Facebook account. They're tracking down the IP address.

Com. Biggs, Dawn, Dawn I understand. Look but we're not to officiate an issue between you and Ms. Watts. We're not here to officiate. Do you have something that addresses this?

Ms. Miller, Yes I do.

Com. Biggs, I see that you're upset. I'm not trying to put you off. You know we can be here until midnight. Let's try to keep it on point.

Ms. Miller, I'm going to try to keep it on point. If they've had these drag queen show for the past four years. Kind of doesn't add up time line wise considering wasn't everything shut down for the Coronavirus? It's just one little point I'd like to make. And at these other drag queen shows were there children there. Was that something that was acceptable then? And we may not agree. Like you have said it is a constitutional right for them to have the shows. Fine leave the kids out of it. That is all I ask. That's all a lot of people ask. Not one time have I ever threatened anybody. Not one time have I called people names but they don't have a problem calling me a big bible thumper, this and that because of my beliefs. I'm not pushing my beliefs on them just like they're saying they're not pushing them on me. In fact they are pushing them on us.

Ms. Garza, I'm Kelly Garza and I live in Valparaiso. I just wanted to come up especially about the adult content and kind of clear up maybe a little bit. Since I have attended this Bazaar every single year it's put on. I've been at the drag show. I have seen that yes there are children there and it's 12 and up but there is not adult content. The reason why it is 12 and up has more to do with the comedy at the show because in between the performances there will be an MC who keeps the crowd entertained with jokes and not with the dancing or costumes. Last year was the biggest show because more and more people keep coming out to them and the biggest crowd pleaser song was Monster Mash with a fully dressed Bride of Frankenstein.

Com. Biggs, Love that song.

Ms. Garza, its great song and it is not adult content. I'm sorry that you were misinformed and led to believe that there was adult content there. I would really urge everyone to actually see what is going on in our community shows with our community performers and what they are putting out there because it's not adult. It is absolutely appropriate for 12 and up and that's all I wish to say.

Com Biggs, Thank you.

Ms. Tomerlin, Com. Biggs and Com. Regnitz I think you for your time. I'm Rebecca Tomerlin. I live in Valparaiso Indiana. I have a seven-year-old child. I have lived in this town for a long time and I fully appreciate that the Valparaiso Community School District allows me an opt out signature for things I might think are inappropriate for my child. The same goes with Junior High and High School with the sex education, things like that. We are allowed to opt out because that is a public education facility. I fully appreciate that and I think I have a lot in common with the residents that have expressed emotional pleas used to protect our children. I want my son protected too but I have a different approach. I want parents to decide what their children are exposed to at school like with the opt-out policy. I want them to be in charge of what their kids see at home. I regulate my son's iPad. I have parental controls. I make sure he does not have any access to things and that's my right and my choice. Same with events. I won't take him to a certain rated R movie. It's at the movie theater. Like no I don't even care if it's showing downtown. Whether it's at the Memorial Opera House. There are certain things that other people can visit and go to and that's fine. I won't take my son down to something at the...I love the Pavilion my son did ice skating there it was great but there are events there he shouldn't go to and sometimes it's past his bedtime. But again there are events like at the Christmas event. I went there, there were no wristbands fine. If we decide or if you decide because it's not my choice though I am a taxpayer I want consistency. If we're going to require a wristband for one group we should do it for all. I also don't like government overreach but again this is your rental, it's a public facility. I understand that but we need to be consistent. If we're not going to allow children or if we need to focus on wristbands fine that should be at every event. I hate to say it but weddings too.

Com. Regnitz, We agree.

Ms. Tomerlin, I had a sip of alcohol when I was under 21 at a wedding. I mean it happens everywhere so I kind of want to know well I'm not asking questions because I know where we draw the line.

Com. Biggs, I just want you to know you're doing really really well right.

Com. Regnitz, By the way Rebecca we are planning to do a venue policy that will be consistent across all of our venues and we will not....

Atty. McClure, It'll just be our venues. Not the City of Valpo.

Ms. Tomerlin, No you're not going to tell me what movie I should take my kid to.

Atty. McClure, Other municipalities have their own policies.

Ms. Tomerlin, Oh yes this would just be the County that is different.

Atty. McClure, Just making the point.

Ms. Tomerlin, Even Rogers Lakewood is a city park but not Sunset Hill I understand that. So whatever we do at Sunset Hill we got to do it the Expo. I fully understand that.

Atty. McClure, To make that even more clear the Park Board is the Park Board and they're in charge of their....

Ms. Tomerlin, They answer to you.

Atty. McClure, No. The Park Board does not answer to the Commissioners. Commissioners has appointments to the Park Board. As the Council, as the Auditor. So really we're talking about our two venues. The Expo and the Memorial Opera House.

Ms. Tomerlin, Thank you for clarifying that. Well actually that does make a lot of sense since the county parks have something different. Heck I was on the Park Board you'd think I'd remember that. It's been a few years. I'm going to back up. I just don't want us to have double standards and I'm glad you're going to review that because as we know weddings can get rowdy too. When we're serving alcohol there are we going to be concerned about kids under 18 or are we going to have separate policies for weddings versus non-profits, versus you know an expo like this. My bigger concern was I would hate for anyone to want to cancel this event and I'm glad to hear it doesn't sound like you want to because I'm not a huge fan of the gun expo that they have but I wouldn't want anyone to cave to how I feel. I think all of us here are vocal minorities on both sides. The majority of people they're not here. They probably don't care but again I'm only here to show that I would love to have consistency and I don't want government to overreach because next someone's going to be telling me what my kid can read or not and I'd rather just have an opt-out. I was a librarian for 15 years. I can choose what my kid can read or not. It's my choice to let him have a card to check out same thing and it kind of it comes to this I probably would not take my seven-year-old to a drag show but that's my choice. I would hate for anybody to threaten my life, anybody else's life, anyone's safety for any reason in this County

Com. Regnitz, We don't believe in the threats either.

Ms. Tomerlin, Exactly.

Com. Biggs, We got them too.

Ms. Tomerlin, I bet you do. I think a lot of us. Well you know I'm very opinionated so I get them but whatever. It's neither here nor there. I just want to thank you for your time in allowing me to even speak.

Com. Biggs, You made a great point and I think where we get in trouble is if we're inconsistent with our rules and our regulations and I don't think our regulations they need to be tightened down. So everybody understands the playing field. That's where I think that the feeling of disrespect comes in is when one group feels they're being treated differently than the other group and quite honestly I don't blame them. We're going take some time with Scott's help and with Lori's help and we're going to review every all of our regulations and make a good regulation a better regulation.

Ms. Tomerlin, Wonderful, well again thank you.

Mr. Lunt, Scott Lunt, Morgan Township. A lot of the farmers who are in favor of the solar project have made a lot of statements and I feel that many of them have gone unchallenged. So I would just like to challenge a few of them and then just offer some insights as I think about this whole thing. One of the farmers who has a lot of land south of 150 towards Malden she had commented about how she's going to have farmland around the perimeter of the project, then all of the solar panels and the inverters would be towards the inside so it's going to have a very low visual impact. Not entirely a true statement in the fall after harvest in the winter time. In the spring before things start to grow it's going to have a big visual impact. I think she was trying to make the case because she is doing this and it would have a reduced

visual impact during part of a year that is going to apply to all the other solar projects in the area but that's simply not the case. Other solar projects you have residents who are on higher land, where they look down their property and they'll see acres of solar panels. My property I would be faced with seeing solar panels in front of my house and solar panels right in the backyard. So for me there's no way I could escape this. So I wanted to be able to challenge her statement about that. Another comment she had made and it may just be a small comment but she commented that given the fact that Michigan City coal plant is closing the potential phase out of the Schaeffer Plant in Wheatfield we have to have electric. She's saying we meaning the farmers. We need to provide this electric. It's just not the farmers business of providing electric. It's the utility companies and the government. This is a public utility it's not a private enterprise to supply electricity to the grid. I challenge that point. And the problem is if the government and the utility takes a power generating plant offline this is a tremendous amount of base load power that runs 24/7 365 that's offline and the solution is to take and put solar panels that have an effect I mean on their best day four hours of electricity and it's all use it or lose it it's got to go on the grid. That's not baseline power. Baseline power technically is the amount of power needed at night time when no one else is using power. It's the minimum power requirement at any given time during the day that's the baseline. Everything else is add-on. Surety bond, issues she made the comment that if the energy technology makes us obsolete they'll remove the equipment and restore it to the original landscape and that's the purpose of the bond. Well the problem with the bond can be many. We have a bond that I have not had seen any details of it. It's going to be quoted in today's dollars. What happens if we have 30 years of inflation and say its a million dollar bond? In 30 years from now its \$20 million to do it. Is the bond tied to inflation? Is there going to be any sort of mechanism to protect the cost of removing it? Secondly, we're going to be depending on a surety bond company to be solvent during these rough financial waters we're seeing right now. We're seeing bank failures and bailouts. What if surety bond companies see as a failure and there's no bailout. Well then there will be no funds and then these panels are going to be sitting there. So I find that to be a risk that is hard for me to accept because I don't see the assurances there. Private property rights, farmland is ultimately our private property and unduly contesting one's right to use your private property as you see fit threatens everybody's rights. That was a statement made at the big February 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. Well in my view building a solar farm across the street and behind my house will result in a substantial decline in my property value. Where are my property rights? I didn't buy into this. And in fact I've had some real estate background. I looked at the zoning. I knew I was purchasing a house in a rural residential area and I knew that the other land was A1 general agriculture. So I went to the data that's currently available on the Porter County site and I looked at the zoning and I looked at what's permitted and I look at what you could need a special exception for. There's nothing under general agriculture that says you can put solar in. So I looked at rural residential. It says something about solar but you need a special exception, well it doesn't say solder specifically but if you want to deviate from the zoning you need a special exception but nothing on solar. I didn't think to try to search the site for solar and I didn't think of trying to search the site for wind. I looked at the regulations as I saw them being current. I assume they were current. There's no data on it. I couldn't tell when it was last updated. So I don't know if that's my bad or what but I based my decision to purchase a property on having a peaceful tranquil existence, just kind of how it is now without any extreme change. Another comment about the private property rights is all Porter County properties regulated they're zoning on everything. My neighbor wanted to build a garage and he had to get permission from his neighbors. You can't just go out and do anything you want for any reason. There's regulations for a reason out there and it's to protect both sides of a change. Finally my last comment is if this did happen I don't even like saying that if this did happen. I have a concern about what happens after this farmland is converted to a solar farm? This becomes something that is a cash flow property. You've got farmland that's used as a farm but if you cover it with solar panels it starts producing an income and the income is protected by subsidy. So what they have is an enterprise that is something that you can easily sell. What I'm saying is you'd be saying hey look do you want to buy this property, this is what the income is. Oh you know does the income fluctuate? Well no not really because it's all subsidized. Now all of a sudden you have a property that's in an income enterprise, a cash flow. I like it to something like Section 8 housing. If I was interested in buying an apartment building, a four unit building and I knew I could get four families in there with Section 8 housing the government pays me. I know that's the most I can make and then all my expenses are whatever the cost is of the loan on the building and whatever expenses. I'm going to try to reduce my expenses because the gap is what I get to make. And if the farmers decide they're selling their property with these panels they're going to sell it to someone who says I'm buying this for one reason only profit. If they're buying it for profit then they're going to minimize their expenses. So does that mean they're going to keep up the fences and the weeds and the appearance? Or they're going to say I'm in this for the money. I'm not doing anything until someone makes me. That a concern I have. Secondly, if this property gets sold I understand that some of the farmers are making side deals with some of

the residents about I'll give you extra setback. This way you'll stop posting on Facebook or you'll be okay with this deal or you'll be quiet so you don't upset us and we take the setback back. Thing is if this isn't some sort of contractual agreement that would transfer to a new owner say I'm the new owner of the solar farm I'm like what do I have all this unused space around here. Let me check what the solar ordinance is. Oh I only have to have a 100 feet to a property. I'm going to bring all those fences to 100 feet to the property add more revenue, which means more panels. And now all of a sudden it's not what we were sold. It becomes something new. These are the concerns I have. I wanted to be able to make a challenge to some of the comments that farmers make and I thank everybody for their time. Thank you.

Com. Biggs. All good points. Thank you.

Ms. Shook, Elena Shook from Morgan Township, Indiana 316 S. 150 E. Just a few other things. According to these landowners who want to lease out their property. Well according to NextEra actually we're supposed to get a lot of jobs through this. Well I just found a requirement for a job, a lot of union jobs I should say I think he said that Matt Johnson at the big meeting. Well I just downloaded this from LinkedIn. This is for a PV solar field technician in Wheatfield Indiana for NextEra Energy Services in Wheatfield. Looking through this whole thing I come to the required qualifications, which are High School grad GED, experience. Two plus years with having a valid driver's license, non-dcl preferred. Qualifications Associates or equivalent experience in Six Sigma Yellow Belt certified, which I looked up and found that's an accreditation for the profession. I don't see any Union. I mean maybe they're talking about the people who are going to do the installation.

Com. Biggs, Yes they were talking about the people who are doing the installation.

Ms. Shook, Okay. Did they say that they would be local people?

Com. Biggs, No.

Ms. Shook, Because I think that matters. Are we going to have people in from other states?

Com. Biggs, I'm sure some would be local but there there's no way that all of them could be local.

Ms. Shook, I find that kind of concerning. Also they've said promises to the school. Well some of the landowners have made Morgan Township School seem like its just destitute, on its last leg. It's really a great school. It ranks so high in academic standing. Consistently with 90% graduation rate. No we don't have a football team. We don't have a pool but we seem to be getting this job done. The academics part done. Would more money be nice, yes it would but we know how these things work. You know they make it sound like it's going to go straight to Morgan. Well it isn't, it's going to East Porter County and then it's going to trickle in. So I don't know it's just it's it doesn't seem that great. Also, the Heartland Sunshine Center. It's very nice if you were going to be somebody who uses that. As a mother of a disabled son I mean yes it might have been great when he was young but I don't know that it's going to make up all these things. I don't know that they're going to make up for our loss of property value, environmental all those things that we keep bringing up and frankly we're just we're just getting our feet wet. Farmers have had they say two, three years to look into this and examine all these possibilities. I found out a month ago today that I may be surrounded on four sides. My property value will be nil. I mean it's just going to take such a hit. So we feel very blindsided by the whole thing. Our family has a responsibility to protect the future as well. So I mean there's so many unanswered questions. Like what Scott was saying are we 100 feet away, are we 200 feet away? Are these individual contractual agreements? The landowner in my case they never said anything. Frankly I believe they would have waited until the NextEra trucks came in and just installed. There was no conversation at all about this. So while it's nice that the farmers had all this time to make their decision I think we need more time as well.

Com. Biggs, Keep the faith.

Ms. Shook, I'm nervous really really nervous. Thank you for listening.

Mr. Eagle, Hi I'm Jerry Eagle living here in Valparaiso. On the solar panel. I just want one thing to add for the zoning considerations in the future. Obviously, we're being bombarded with this stuff because I think they're all working on this short timeline of two years since the

Biden Administration lifted the sanctions against China and the investigation to how these things are built. So they got two years to get as many of these things installed as quickly as possible. There's been cases now up in Wisconsin where these things have been put in you know 10, 20 years ago now they're obsolete. There's no really good sound (Inaudible) clause in these contracts as to what to do with these things when they don't produce. You know they say oh we'll just recycle them. That's all fluff. There's no sound contractual organization that's going to

be going out there recycling these things. It's going to be left. Up in Wisconsin they start removing these panels but they leave all the concrete and supports that held them up on these lands. The owners are stuck. They have nobody to sue to remove the stuff. It's going to be costly. I know maybe they took four years and they got all these glossy you know presentations and all these flowery words about sustainability, renewability all this stuff but they don't talk about the end game and what's going to happen to that land when these things are obsolete and don't produce the electricity that they did when they're spanking new out of the box. That's the concern I have.

Com Biggs, Thank you. Anyone else? Well thank you very much and thank you for being patient with one another.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
PORTER COUNTY, INDIANA

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Biggs

\_\_\_\_\_  
Barb Regnitz

\_\_\_\_\_  
Laura M. Blaney

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Martin, Auditor