

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

111 North 7th Street, Vincennes, IN 47591

PRESIDENT: T.J. BRINK

VICE PRESIDENT: TIMOTHY ELLERMAN II

MEMBER: KELLIE E. STREETER

April 7, 2026 Minutes for Meeting of the Knox County Commissioner

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Knox County Commissioners was held on April 7, 2026 at Vincennes City Hall at 203 Vigo St. The meeting was held at 10:00 am.

Attendees

Voting members in attendance included Kellie Streeter, TJ Brink and Tim Ellerman. Also, Counsel Drew Porter and Auditor First Deputy Julie Lancaster. Lisa Clark/Benock not present.

Adoption of the Agenda

Motion: Moved by TJ Brink and seconded by Tim Ellerman to approve the agenda with the addition of g. Vincennes Mayor Joe Yochum, h. Scott Brown Director Community Corrections, i. Chad Reynolds Knox County Highway, j. Knox County Sheriff Doug Vantlin. Motion passes 3-0.

Review of Minutes of Prior Meetings (March 17, 2026)

Motion: Moved by TJ Brink and seconded by Tim Ellerman to approve March 17 meeting minutes. Motion passes 2-0-1

Appointments –

- a. PACE Community Action Agency – Tai Blythe CEO letter to Commissioners has a vacancy on PACE Board of Directors due to Lesley La Fon moving out of our service area. They request that the Commissioners appoint Brad Smith to fill vacancy. Motion: Moved by TJ Brink and seconded by Tim Ellerman for Brad Smith to serve on Pace Community Action Agency’s Board of Directors. Motion passes 3-0
- b. Resolution 2026-3: Energy Land Use Advisory Committee – Counsel Drew Porter presented Resolution 2026-3 An Energy Land Use Advisory Committee is created and shall consist of the following twelve members as invited by the Knox County Board of Commissioners:
 - a. Knox County Board of Commissioner appointed by the Board of Commissioners; b. Knox County Council member appointed by the Knox County Council; c. Knox County attorney; d. Knox County Director of Area Planning; e. Two Knox County Area Planning members as appointed by Area Plan Commission; f. Knox County Area Planning Commission attorney; g. Chief of the Vincennes Township Fire Department; h. Knox County Sheriff; i. Acting CEO of the Knox County Indiana Economic Development Corporation; j. A representative of the Knox County Soil & Water Conservation District appointed by the Soil & Water Conservation District; and k. A member of the public appointed by the Board of Commissioners. The Commissioner appointed shall serve as the president of the committee, organize the meetings, and preside over the meetings. The members shall serve terms at the pleasure of the appointing body, and the Energy Land Use Advisory Committee shall provide recommendations to the Knox County Board of Commissioners related to the intersection of land use regulations and energy. They serve only as an advisory committee to Knox County Board of Commissioners. All land use regulation powers shall remain vested in the Knox County Board of Commissioners and Knox County Area Plan Commissioner pursuant to Indiana law.

Motion: Moved by TJ Brink and seconded by Tim Ellerman to approve Resolution 2026-3 Establishing and Energy Land Use Advisory Committee. Motion passes 3-0

- c. Engagement of Barnes & Thornburg for Land Use Planning – Counsel Drew Porter discussed engaging Barnes & Thornburg to counsel the Board of Commissioners in connection with zoning and other matters with respect to possible solar energy development in the County. Motion: Moved by TJ Brink and seconded by Tim Ellerman to engage Barnes & Thornburg for legal services for solar energy matters. Motion passes 3-0

New Business

- a. Weight Limit Restrictions on Knox County Roads –Motion: Moved by TJ Brink and seconded by Tim Ellerman to lift the weight limit restrictions. Motion passes 3-0
- b. Ordinance 2026-3: Amending Ordinance no. 2020-2 Adopting Standards of Solar Energy Systems – Counsel Drew Porter highlighted the amendments defining section 152.261 “Major Thoroughfares” are public roads that are frequently used, have heavy traffic volume, and run in any direction, and/or connect with a U.S. or state primary highway. The Knox County Board of Commissioners or applicable local governing entity shall designate “major thoroughfares” on its master road plan for the political unit. Section 152.264 A 2. Buffer Zones: minimum setback of 300 feet from the foundation of any existing residence or Principal Structure to any SES Structure. A 7. Screening: In all instances that a CSES adjoins property with a residential dwelling, major public thoroughfare, or is located across a public road from a residential dwelling, screening shall be installed to reduce glare and inhibit view of the facility. The screening shall consist of the following: a. Opaque fencing, and b. Vegetative Screening to obstruct the fencing and solar equipment. The Vegetative Screening shall consist of plants approved by the Knox County Soil & Water District for solar projects to further the goals of native plant use, limit ecosystem impacts, ensure proper plant growth rates, establish minimum and maximum sizes, and establish proper conservation guidance. The purpose of the screening requirements is to obscure the solar equipment from exterior view from major public thoroughfares and adjoining residential properties. The screening must be of sufficient height to conceal solar panels from view. The screening mixture of fencing and landscaping shall achieve a minimum 80% opacity year-round starting from substantial completion of construction. TJ Brink Recommendation to pass this bare bone and come back to add commissioner regulations/recommendations added at second and third readings. Kellie Streeter okay to add a few recommendations: road use agreement, hazardous panels add language to use EPA protocols/ made in the USA, zoning districts, Hoosier Homesteads should have protections, require a community benefit, wildlife, water add well head study and environment assessment to be added and publicly available, battery storage, decommissioning, first responder training. Motion: Moved by Tim Ellerman to give Ordinance 2026-3 to Area Plan now and seconded by TJ Brink. Motion passes 2-1. TJ Brink agrees that Kellie Streeter recommendation need to be included but should move forward now for other battery, etc. changes. Motion: Moved by Kellie Streeter to appoint TJ Brink to Land Use Committee and seconded by TJ Brink. Motion passes 3-0
- c. Ordinance 2026-4: Ordinance on Food Establishment and/or Bed & Breakfast Establishments – Sanitarian Tara Hayden for the Knox County Health Department discussed Indiana Code changed in 2025 for food establishment. Recovery houses need inspected and priorities critical and vocab changes. Motion: Moved by Kellie Streeter and seconded by TJ Brink to approve Ordinance 2026-4. Motion passes 3-0
- d. Ordinance 2026- Moratorium on Utility Scale Battery Energy Storage System – Tim Ellerman discuss moratorium. Motion: Moved by Tim Ellerman to put Moratorium until additional ordinance updates are done. TJ Brink the moratorium not needed if the new committee does its job. Kellie Streeter moratorium not needed due to significant other issues due to specific time clock. Motion fails.
- e. Claims – Motion: Moved by TJ Brink and seconded by Tim Ellerman to approve claims \$1,934,593.59. Motion passes 3-0

- f. Payroll – Motion: Moved by TJ Brink and seconded by Tim Ellerman to approve payroll for March 27th, 2026. Motion passes 3-0
- g. Vincennes Mayor Joe Yochum – presented the Commissioners with letter as notification that effective May 7, 2026 the Vincennes Animal Shelter acting on behalf of the City of Vincennes is cancelling the Interlocal Agreement signed by the Vincennes Board of Works on March 9, 2026. After that date, no animals will be accepted that are found outside the city limits. Kellie Streeter thanked Mayor Yochum and the Animal Shelter for service over the years. TJ Brink also thanked the Mayor and the Animal Shelter.
- h. Community Corrections Director Scott Brown – Motion: Moved by TJ Brink and seconded by Tim Ellerman to approve Community Corrections 2027 Grant Request \$ 676,770.00, Project Income Request \$1,981,738.00 and signed letter of support Justice Reinvestment Grant Program for Knox County Drug Court through the Indiana Department of Corrections. Motion passes 3-0
- i. Knox County Highway Superintendent Chad Reynolds – opening CCMG Grant bids for paving for 2026: E&B Paving for CCMG \$1,587,427.25: Local paving \$78,127.25 and Milestone Contractors CCMG \$1,563,038.50: Local paving \$87,569.00. Chad Reynolds took the bids to look over to make sure all paperwork in order. Later in meeting Chad Reynolds presented the awards for CCMG to Milestone Contractors \$1,563,038.50 and for local paving to E&B Paving \$78,127.25. Motion: Moved by TJ Brink to approve pending the state distribution (CCMG) and seconded by Tim Ellerman. Motion passes 3-0
- j. Knox County Sheriff Doug Vantlin – discussed alternative options from Animal Shelter (Pet Port). Three different kennels outside the county are interested in providing housing. An interlocal agreement would be needed for whoever is chosen. Sheriff Vantlin says no to kennel at Sheriff Department due to disease, proximity to K9's, space, personnel. Cannot use inmates opens county to legal action.

Old Business

Announcements/Commissioner Reports

- a. Knox County Code Compliance Officer – NA
- b. READI 2.0 Grant – Amazon walls up.
- c. Knox County Emergency Management Operations Center – Tim Ellerman reported the reusable shell at the jail is not an option. The National Guard Armory maybe an option. It has a large lot, fenced, storage area. Waiting on assessed value. It is not for sale yet but could be after decision at state and federal approval. Kellie Streeter already have schematic drawing and have paid for plan and land already. Keep in mind.
- d. Knox County Judicial Center – NA

Public Comment –

Dr. Alan Stewart – April 18th tire (no commercial tires) collection for Knox County residents at Knox County Highway Department.

Robert Merydith – solar set back to 750 ft

Lou Ann Lindsey – solar set back stronger

Christina Spore – solar set back 750 ft – property value

Dana Lindsey – solar set back minimum 1,000 ft – property value decline

Ed Elliott – APC recommendation. who will enforce ordinance

Cathy Elliott – solar set back don't allow country feeling – maintenance of roads

Cindy Gilmore – solar set back 800 ft.

Eddie Felling – Felling Jones Weinke attorney – West Central Indiana prime development for taking due to lax ordinances. Get updates discussed earlier on books quickly

Phyllis Holscher – solar negative impact changing the country living landscaping

No name – small dairy farm – solar set back 1000 ft

Kristen Arnold – solar change landscape showing panels, a substation noise, lights all night long

Matt Pahmeier – solar questions Do solar projects require Area Plan approval and public hearings occur before approval? Abatements? Battery storage, black panels get hot. Also wind and data centers should be addressed. Who benefits most here?

Dan Gellefinger – solar near NK school; What is current permitting/approval status? zoning ordinance suggested Posey County

Mitch Meeks – solar set back 800 ft. and continue improving transparency

Brian Meyer – Land owners/farmers take offense to saying land owners that don't live there don't care

Charlene Grove – solar – near NK HS – will be surrounded by panels.

Cheryl McCormick – climate change has already changed without solar. Safety discussed what about farm chemicals. She has solar panels at her home they absorb heat not reflect the rays.

Ray McCormick – Thank you for creating the land use planning committee. Kellie Street brings up good points and they should be discussed. Lots of countries say watermelon grow better under panels.

Mike Burch – solar NK area – company owned by Singapore

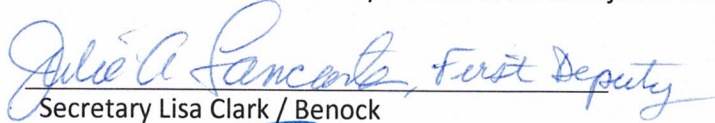
Tara Harrell – solar set back – two story homes

David Wilson – solar set back

Date, Time, and Place of Next Meeting

Tuesday, April 21st, 2026 at 6:00 pm at Vincennes City Hall 203 Vigo St. Vincennes, IN.

Adjournment – TJ Brink and seconded by Tim Ellerman to adjourn at 12:33 pm. Motion passes 3-0


Secretary Lisa Clark / Benock
Knox County Auditor

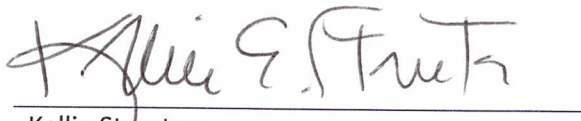
4-21-26
Date of Approval


President TJ Brink
Knox County Commissioner

4-21-26
Date of Approval


Vice President Tim Ellerman
Knox County Commissioner

4.21.26
Date of Approval


Kellie Streeter
Knox County Commissioner

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