



**COLUMBIA CITY/WHITLEY COUNTY
JOINT PLANNING & BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

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To: (Preliminary) Code Development Committee
From: Nathan Bilger, Executive Director

Re: Purpose and direction of Confined Feeding Operation-Residential development code

October 2, 2017

Thank you for volunteering or being nominated to the Code Development Committee. While the final working committee composition is still being refined to reflect the geographic and topical representation discussed at the Plan Commission, everyone has at least some interest in the current issue regarding intensive agriculture and residential development. So, here is some background information on the planning process and some guidance on where this committee will be heading over the next few months.

Naturally, planning is something that is done with a plan, or more specifically, a process. Every type of planning (land use, fiscal, event, etc.) has a similar process that is followed to create solutions to a problem, though sometimes the process is intuitive and the steps blend together. For us and land use planning, the process is more apparent and the steps are taken more deliberately.

For our purposes, the planning process consists of:

- (1) Identifying the problem/need
- (2) Researching the problem
- (3) Developing alternatives
- (4) Evaluating and selecting an alternative
- (5) Implementing the selected alternative
- (6) Monitoring and ongoing evaluation

Even though our primary task is to be developing a code for the zoning code, the *planning* process still applies; some steps may just be already completed. For instance, the Whitley County Comprehensive Plan has identified the problems that will be need to be addressed (step 1), and that was further reinforced with the comments made during the meetings of the recent steering committee. And the state statute and the zoning code prescribe the implementation method for a code (step 5).

This development committee will be most directly involved in steps 3 and 4, as well as 2. The problem will also need to be restated so that we all will be working on the same topic. So, at this point, we will be recapping step 1 for clarity, engaging in step 2, and keeping an open mind for the upcoming step 3.

Given the level of involvement by interested parties, much research has already taken place and has been disseminated among some of you. However, since studies and data can be conflicting and contradictory, it will be prudent to limit our discussions only to that research that is directly related to the problem as stated in step 1. I and staff will be putting various materials and links on the committee's page for distribution and information.

As a first piece of information, I want to share an article that I found in my predecessors' files. The agriculture-residential development conflict has been an issue since zoning was adopted in the county 45 years ago. This particular article is from 20 years ago, and I think does a good job explaining the nature of what we're working on...but now that we have taken the initiative, it will not be an indication of how long the process will take!

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