

# Osage County Planning and Zoning Meeting

Osage County Courthouse

717 Topeka Ave.

Lyndon, KS

March 26, 2025

7:00 PM

**Opening** – Rodney Bergquist called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

**Board Members Present:** Rodney Bergquist Jan Davis  
David Thompson Sara Hogelin  
Jason Gilliland

**Staff Present:** Tricia Webb Russ Ewy  
Colleen Mendoza

**Approval of Agenda** – David Thompson motioned to approve the agenda. Jan Davis seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

**Approval of the Minutes** – Jan Davis motioned to approve the minutes; David Thompson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comment** –

**New Business** –

## Old Business – Comprehensive Plan

- Public Comment for the Comprehensive Plan was opened
- Stan Hart – Solar popped up in meeting with Dept. Heads. Last he knew county had a prohibition. At least two commissioners have publicly stated they were against solar. With federal subsidies going away, we as citizens ultimately pay for the rate hike. Knows the county is looking at ways to raise funds/revenue. Manufacturing is a good way to go. It will also create jobs. If we can get someone to contact Hyundai/Apple or get a petition of citizens to come. AI – needs stable reliable energy.
- Russ Ewy – Stanley has brought up good points. This comp plan today is still in the prohibition of wind/solar. Did we already take care of it? Yes. Caution. The same path we took to prohibit is the same path to overturn it. These types of land use are variable. Has information over the last few years changed? Told Sara she did a good job bringing up the elephant in the room. We are needing the info from you to know that the citizens still don't want renewables. There's not a way to change course without knowing it. There was a time and place to bring up the topic. It took some courage to bring it up. I have heard nothing that we are going to change course. It was an important thing to get feedback. And we have also received some other good feedback/manufacturing.
- Alex Zerbe – Was on the board, not too long ago. One of the last CUP of his time on the board. The board voted unanimously to prohibit them. He hasn't seen any new information that shows anything has changed concerning the viability of these projects. He would like to warn one or two commissioners that dangling carrots is typical of these organization. Not opposed to

residential solar. If OC is going to start going back and forth, it's not going to help. If possible, put it up to county vote. We should be a recreational area with the lakes. If anyone who is employed by the county is financially benefitting from this, they should resign.

- David Thompson – this is 5700 acres. Not a small project. From the meeting I think it's being looked at strictly tax wise.
  - Sara Hogelin – The commissioners hold the keys; you should be showing up at the commission meetings.
  - Russ Ewy – you can hold a referendum, but it's not binding. Why would you spend that money when it's not binding?
  - Edye Freund – we had over 600 petitions against solar and wind.
  - Diane Denham – The purpose of the current zoning regulations / to promote the health and wellbeing of the county. Please keep the county as ag / rural. Please don't turn it into an industrial complex. Doesn't believe the county will get the tax dollars they think we will. A windfall for the county will cause the residents hardship in rate hikes. Even with the federal subsidies going away, we pay the subsidy in rate hikes. The vast majority don't want this industrial complex.
  - Rodney Bergquist – Closed Public Comment
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- Jan Davis – Went to Franklin County Planning Meeting. They have approval for the townships for anything we have come up.
  - Russ Ewy – explained how the CUP notification happens.
  - David Thompson – The problem is nobody has ever told the township they can do a road agreement.
  - Rhonda Harmon – her township didn't know that the solar was going until it was done. That road is a mess and is in a battle with Evergy to get it taken care of.
  - Tricia Webb – explained how she has started contacting / sending notices to the townships and other counties if there is a CUP that will affect them.
  - David Thompson – Would like to see it added to the plan that the townships be contacted and they can give their input.
  - Russ Ewy – That can certainly be added. He still doesn't have notes from some of the commissioners / dept. heads. Advise to table decision until April to get their input.
  - David Thompson motioned to table voting on the Comprehensive Plan until April. Jason Gilliland seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
  - The question was asked about a summary of changes that are being considered.
  - Colleen Mendoza – has some clarifying questions, some of them will be no action at all. Does Russ want to have a separate meeting or is he going to host a business call that we can ask questions or should she just schedule her own meeting with him?  
She is concerned about making wholesale changes without discussion or understanding before a next draft might be published.
  - Russ Ewy – Explained how he would receive comments, show strikethroughs, take all the changes and send it out.
  - Jan Davis – On page 80, goal #2 “limit intrusions of residential development at urban densities in the rural sections of the county” – is that a bad thing?
  - Russ Ewy – It is without infrastructure, that's how we got South Shore. Urban density is ½ acre lots. Unless you have rural water system that has capacities, waste water. Not a good idea.
  - Tricia Webb – Talked about the problems she sees with the housing projection map on page 69. It is the area that has been identified as housing (where to focus rural residential growth). KDOT has the control over Access Permits, there are not many available. We are already limited on how many residential permits we can give off different roads.  
We did not go over the Housing Section. The housing study that was done by QRC said that we had 53 new homes built in the county since 2014. Went back and in 2019 – 28 new builds,

2020 – 17, 2021 – 51, 2022 – 45, 2023 – 26, 2024 – 37. The majority of the housing shortage is not in the county, it's the cities. Dealing with KDOT is going to be an issue here pretty soon.

- Russ Ewy – KDOT's traffic studies will be a wet blanket on residential development in the county.
- Tricia Webb – went over the differences between the old plan and the proposed plan. Most of the Land Use portion didn't see big changes. The biggest changes were in the Socio – Economic portion. What Ryan fine had to say at the Department Head meeting was very good. His points need to get added into the plan. It will consolidate parts of his department, as save money and protect the equipment investments.  
Went over building codes and an inspector. Concerned about lack of enforcement with the County Attorney. Thinks that until we can enforce what we currently have, why make more restrictions and codes?
- Sara Hogelin – On the building codes point, we had talked about having them licensed. Concerned with some of the Mennonite and other groups who do quality work, but getting them to get licensed. Also thinks we need something to protect the person who's building the house and the investment of who buys it in the future.
- Tricia Webb – Went over areas of the comprehensive plan that looked good and areas of concern.
- Dave Norton – Asked if he could ask a question. He works at Evergy and came to hear the comprehensive plan and not to do a solar discussion which is why he waited to say something. Hopefully, there is a project that is viable they would like to bring forward when the time is right. Tonight, was not the time. He hopes that the board will be open when they do bring the project forward.

## **Board Members –**

### **Staff –**

- Tricia Webb – Asked if it was possible to put in somewhere the Board do some sort of a class every so often.
- Russ Ewy – He can do that. He discussed changing the bylaws, creating a handbook and include the role of the chair. Different options were discussed.
- Colleen Mendoza - Couple of questions, it's related to comp plan. Wants to clear up the trails. What's the county's plan say? We do have tourism that is a major effort in economic development and we want to grow it. In many people's minds bike trails and hiking and those things we can leverage across the county.
- Russ Ewy – As a planner you throw some of these things in there. Demographics are different in different counties / areas. I like to throw more into it and take it out rather than miss something. I can take the trails out of there.
- Colleen Mendoza – We are open to listen. Our encouragement to the Board of Commissions is to have an open... to listen basically.  
Talked about the support for a countywide parks and recreation plan. She wanted to hear from the Planning Commission that they are good with it being in the comprehensive plan for consideration at the county level.
- Russ Ewy – The comp plan isn't going to get into the depth of detail of what funding actually looks like. If there is support for something in the comp plan, you look to see what's been done with it? If nothing, then the county would budget to hire a consultant that specializes in that area.
- Colleen Mendoza – Would like input on an electric charging station on the 75 corridors.
- Jan Davis – Likes the idea of Parks and Rec.
- David Thompson – Discussed how much the Rails to Trails has cost the county. The county had to pay for the bridge that goes over 75. How the different trails are a mess.

- Jason Gilliland – Talked about how the trail that is next to his property went from being a rail conservancy to under the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. Had somebody on their bicycle decide to ride through his shop. Usually, the issue is ATV's.

**Adjournment –**

- Jan Davis motioned to adjourn. David Thompson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

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Rodney Bergquist, Chairman

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Jan Davis, Vice Chairman

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Tricia Webb, Land Development Director