



MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: October 21st, 2025

Location: Salmon Room, 201 Locust Lane

RDC website: www.choosebrowncounty.com

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order with the following members in attendance:

- Sue Lindborg - President
- Chris Schneider - Secretary
- David Coucke
- Amy Oliver - School Board Representative

Absent Members: Alyn Brown, Jeremiah Reichmann - Vice President

Additional Attendees: Tim Clark - **Brown County Commissioner**

Review/Approval of Minutes

The commission reviewed the minutes from the September 16th meeting. Two corrections were identified: Jim Snyder's name was misspelled (Snyder with an "I" instead of "Y") and Allan's name required correction to use "Y" spelling. A motion was made to approve the minutes with the noted corrections, which was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

1. Helmsburg Land Inventory

The Helmsburg land inventory was not completed. The commission noted that Jeremiah and Alyn were not present.

2. RFP for Comprehensive Community Plan Engagement

The commission conducted an extensive review of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for community engagement related to the County Comprehensive Plan. Chris had prepared the draft RFP, acknowledging it as a good starting point despite potential refinements needed.

Background Discussion: The community engagement plan aims to gather comprehensive feedback from residents to be incorporated into the county's comprehensive plan. Previous planning efforts resulted in limited public participation, with only approximately 40 attendees at two public meetings. The commission emphasized the importance of ensuring all community members feel heard in the planning process.

Key RFP Components Discussed:

- **Purpose and Goals:** Collect diverse, representative input; ensure geographic equity; leverage both in-person and online tools; and use community feedback to inform the comprehensive plan's vision, goals, and strategies.
- **Engagement Structure:** The plan proposes 10 meetings total:
 - Five topically-based meetings targeting key stakeholder groups
 - Five geographically-based meetings covering different communities throughout the county
 - Consideration of using vote center locations (five strategically located throughout the county at schools) as meeting venues
- **Additional Engagement Methods:** The commission discussed adding:
 - Written comment submission options via email or PO box
 - Virtual meeting options to reduce participation barriers
 - Online engagement portal
 - Print surveys distributed at community centers, post offices, schools, and other public locations
- **Meeting Format:** Proposed 90-minute sessions including:
 - Welcome and project overview
 - Brief presentation on the relevant topic or geographic area
 - Interactive components (zoning maps, breakout sessions)
 - Facilitated feedback collection
 - Q&A and wrap-up
- **Materials:** The RFP includes requirements for:
 - Printed and digital zoning maps
 - District information handouts
 - Descriptions of what uses are permitted in each zoning district

- Infrastructure information for relevant areas
- **Timeline:** The commission discussed establishing a completion deadline of July 1, 2026, allowing approximately six months for the engagement process. Specific milestone dates will be added to allow potential contractors to provide realistic proposals.
- **Educational Component:** Significant discussion emphasized the importance of educating residents about existing zoning, what can be built in their neighborhoods, and how zoning changes occur. Commissioner Clark provided examples of past controversies (Pumpkin Ridge, Collins Road, Bean Blossom Boogie) where community education could have improved the process.

Next Steps for RFP:

- Chris will make identified corrections including:
 - Adding written comment submission options
 - Including virtual meeting options
 - Inserting timeline dates with July 1, 2026 completion target
 - Removing references to the inactive RDC Facebook page
 - Obtaining county RFP template from appropriate sources
 - Reviewing other county RFPs for formatting guidance
- The revised RFP will be reviewed by the Area Plan Commission (Kaylin) for initial feedback
- The final RFP must be approved by the County Commissioners
- Advertisement costs for the RFP will be covered by available RDC/APC funds

A motion was made to proceed with the community engagement plan process. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Economic Development Commission and Quality of Life Update

Amy Oliver provided a comprehensive update on the **Quality of Life Commission** and progress toward establishing an **Economic Development Commission (EDC)**.

Background: Effective July 1st, Brown County began collecting an additional 3% innkeeper tax (on top of the existing 5% that funds the Convention and Visitors Bureau). This new revenue stream generates approximately \$250,000 annually when fully realized. The

Quality of Life Commission was formed to determine how these funds should be used for economic development and tourism-related purposes.

Initial Priorities: The commission's first priority is addressing deferred maintenance at tourism-related county facilities:

- **Pioneer Village**
- **County Fairgrounds**
- **Covered Bridge**
- **Overlook**
- **Deer Run**

Economic Development Commission (EDC) Development: The Quality of Life Commission is working to establish a formal Economic Development Commission or Council. Recent activities include:

- Hosted representatives from similar-sized counties (Martin County, VCO) to learn about their EDC operations, staffing, funding, and daily functions
- Developed draft bylaws for the proposed EDC
- Created an RFP seeking guidance on proper EDC structure and function
- Applied for a grant from **IU Center for Rural Engagement** with a September 30th deadline (grant details to be provided when located)

Proposed EDC Structure:

- One full-time staff person serving as a point of contact for businesses and developers
- Office space available at the Convention and Visitors Bureau facility
- Focus on providing information about economic development opportunities, property availability, and navigating county processes
- Access to county comprehensive plan to guide development recommendations

Grant Application Process: The commission is developing a formal grant application process, with assistance from the Brown County Community Foundation sharing their established procedures to ensure fair and equal access to funds.

2. November Agenda Planning

The commission briefly discussed upcoming meetings:

November 18th Meeting Topics:

- RFP update on comprehensive community plan engagement
- Continuation of land inventory discussion
- Commissioner Clark will provide zoning maps and exhibits for review
- Zoning materials for educational purposes

Follow-up Actions

- Chris Schneider to revise the comprehensive community plan engagement RFP with corrections discussed (written comment options, virtual meetings, timeline dates, removal of Facebook reference)
- Commissioner Tim Clark to provide zoning maps and exhibits for November meeting
- Commission to continue work on Helmsburg land inventory

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.