

The Knox County Regional Planning Commission
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September 18, 2025

The regular meeting of the Knox County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) was held on Thursday, September 18, 2025 at 7:30 p.m. in the Knox Services building, 117 E. High St., Mount Vernon.

Vice chairman Steve Bratton called the meeting to order. Darrel Severns, Secretary for the Commission, called the roll.

The following voting representatives were present:

James DeChant	Berlin Township	Jared Yost	Miller Township
Steve Bratton	Brown Township	Dave Marietta	Monroe Township
Christa Ciotola	Butler Township	Alan Doup	Morgan Township
Ed O'Connell*	College Township	Curt Bechtel	Pike Township
Bob Elliott	Harrison Township	Ashton Walls	Wayne Township
Greg Lawson	Howard Township	Ray Brewer	Fredericktown
Scott Dugan	Jackson Township	Elizabeth Bonaudi	Gambier
Monica Severns	Jefferson Township	Robert Collins	Martinsburg
Marta Hill	Liberty Township		

Others present:

Darrel Severns	Knox RPC	Daniel Hardwick	Centerburg Council
Oksana Anderson	Guest		

**Alternate*

A quorum was present with 17 voting representatives.

Approval of Minutes – Steve Bratton

Ms. Severns moved to approve the July 2025 minutes. Mr. Bechtel seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Financial Report – Marta Hill

Ms. Hill presented the Financial Report for July 2025. The expenses were \$2,515.43. Income for the month was \$1,083.05. The month began with \$106,574.05 and ended with \$105,141.67.

Ms. Hill presented the Financial Report for August 2025. The expenses were \$2,404.26. Income for the month was \$1,325.00. The month began with \$105,141.67 and ended with \$104,062.41.

Mr. Dugan moved to approve the July and August 2025 financial report as presented. Ms. Severns seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Old Business

Null

New Business

Executive Committee Report – Darrel Severns

We will be meeting in early October and looking at the 2026 budget.

Secretary's Report —Darrel Severns

Mr. Severns stated in last meeting in July, we discussed and agreed to hire Compass Point Planning to help with the update to the Knox County Land Subdivision Regulations and have signed that contract. Ms. Moeller has been working on it. Mr. Keaton and Mr. Severns have been communicating back and forth with her on a regular basis to answer questions that she had. She has gone through most of the document and is trying to weed out things that aren't relevant. It is a large document and there are areas of it that don't get used in our area, and areas that get used a lot that need to be reformatted, etc. and that is what she is doing. We are hoping that at next month's Land Use Committee meeting will be going over these revisions so we can keep the process moving and have it ready to go to bring to the full RPC sometime this fall. The goal is to have it done and ready to go to the Commissioners' hearings by the end of the year. It has been a bit of a challenge because of the formatting of the document, and trying to weed out things that don't need to be in there. There is a lot of redundancy in it and things that conflict with each other throughout the document. This is the whole purpose of the update. She gave us pretty reasonable price to complete it.

There is an overview and charts of the lot splits reports for the past 4 ½ years through the RPC office. Mr. Severns put in his report that he would like to have a line chart that would show it better. Recently, it seems that the lot splits are going down slightly, which he thinks is a good thing. One of things that came out during our Comprehensive Plan exercise that we did, was the planners believed that we are being suburbanized through our minor lot splits all over the county. It's everywhere and there is no way to control it. Mr. Severns thinks that through our Subdivision Regulations we can try to bring it under control. But, with many being out in the unincorporated areas, is where township zoning is what rules the roost and we have things in place in the Subdivision Regulations that will slow it down. It is a fact of life that many people want to live in the country. Knox County is a very appealing area to move to if you are wanting to get out of the city.

The storm water permits kind of go hand in hand with the lot splits. If you look at the buildable lots, it's usually about 50 percent of those lots that get split, turn around and get built on. A lot of the lots we are splitting, some of them are non-buildable that is going to a neighbor or it's a lot in the back of the property. We don't really have a mechanism to track all the building that is going on in the county. This is something that came up during the update to the Comprehensive Plan. We need to come up with a way of tracking, so we know exactly where the building is going on in the area. It should be coming through the Auditor's office, but not everything gets there. When they do their reappraisal, it shows up with aerial photos and new technologies to see where there are new buildings. The Auditor has been after the Zoning Inspectors to make sure they are turning in their reports and all their zoning permits in a timely manner, because that kind of got left by the wayside. It was brought up that every time there is a new house going up, there are water issues. There have been a lot of questions and concerns about all the houses going up in Apple Valley. How do you stop it? They are building houses on lots that were not intended to be built on. When they were drawing out the lots back in the early 1970s, nobody thought about storm water or anything. There is a lot of work to be done on this sort of thing.

Mr. Bratton asked what was the contract price for Compass Point? Mr. Severns stated it was \$135 per hour, not to exceed \$8,100. Mr. Severns received a verbal commitment from the Knox County Commissioners that they would pay half of that amount when we receive the bill. We will pay for the entire amount, and they will reimburse us for half of the amount.

Mr. Hardwick asked what the precedent is for a county that is exploring urban sprawl loss? Is there a precedent for that? Mr. Bratton stated he didn't think there was anything in the surrounding counties that limit urban sprawl. Look at Delaware County and it is worse than here. Would it be worthwhile to look into it as for a precedence? If you increase the lot sizes, it just takes more out of farmland production. There are things to look into. Incentivizing people to live and stay in the urban areas by decreasing property taxes, or other benefits through cities and villages, etc. We do not see this at all in Knox County.

Ms. Ciotola asked what the process was on splitting large parcels of land. We see so much with giant parcels being split up into many lots through auctions. Then there is the issue of large parcels that are split up into smaller large parcels, with people unable to purchase that much land because of the price. You can't buy that kind of land because of the price and then farm it. The cost is too great. The process goes through the Regional Planning Office. The

county has minimum standards, and some of the process has to go through the Health Department for soil requirements for onsite sewage systems. If more farmland is put into easements and then they won't get split. Often times landowners are wary to do this because they don't know what future generations are going to want to do it because it handcuffs the future owners as to what they can do. The lot has to meet the standards of the location it is in., via zoning for city, village, and township.

It was asked how many foundation permits were issued this year. Mr. Severns stated that we do not have a foundation permit, we have Storm Water Sediment Control Permits for new builds/additions. The townships, villages, and city issue zoning permits for building. We do not have a building department for residential in Knox County. The Zoning Inspectors go out and make sure the floorplan meets their square footage requirements and setbacks are met. These permits get reported to the County Auditor at the end of the year for the zoned townships. The Auditor uses these permits to verify that it is a taxable lot, taking it from a vacant lot to a residence. Taxes are higher for a residence than it is for bare ground. The Zoning Inspectors can be contacted and can tell you how many and where the permits were issued. There are townships that are unzoned that do not have to get a zoning permit. There is no one place where all this information is stored in current time. The Auditor's office would have the best handle on how many houses are being built, but it is after the fact.

Land Use – Steve Bratton

Null

Social Improvement and Economic Development Committee – Darrel Severns

No one has taken this over since the City of Mount Vernon left the RPC. It is open for anyone that wants to be a part of the committee.

Education and Outreach Committee – Darrel Severns

We have a speaker, Heather Doherty, ODNR Scenic Rivers Coordinator.

Transportation Committee

Null

Knox County Commissioner – Barry Lester

Null

Knox Public Health – Landon Magers

Null

Knox Area Development (ADF) – Sam Filkins

Null

Knox Soil and Water Report – Darrel Severns

Last week, KSWCD had their annual banquet and had a good turnout with about 120 people in attendance. The Board of Supervisors, at the end of the meeting, moved to create another scholarship fund in the name of Lee Walker. He has been an employee of the KSWCD for 54-55 years. He started right out of high school. They have been working on H2Ohio Program, which is a water quality incentive program for farmers. Knox County has 16,000 acres enrolled in the program. There will be soil judging contest on Tuesday for the local FFA Chapters. It is more of a practice for the local schools. It is a qualifying thing for the district contest. Knox County has been pretty prevalent in the state soil judging contests over the past few years. There is usually one (1) school in Knox County that qualifies for the national event in Oklahoma City.

County, City and Village Reports

Brinkhaven/Gann – Christopher Wyant

Null

Centerburg – Daniel Hardwick

The mayor stepped down on August 31st. The Administrator has resigned effective October 3rd. The appointed Mayor is now Tom Stewart who is doing a great job. He will be on the ballot, unopposed this November. We will be looking at applications for Administrator on Monday.

Danville – Jeff Furay

Null

Fredericktown – Ray Brewer

Null

Gambier – Elizabeth Bonaudi

The Village Administrator's last day is the end of this month. Gambier is also deer hunting, bow hunting, like Mount Vernon has started. You can get the nuisance permit through the Village with six (6) being the limit and \$15 per permit. Hunters, please come to Gambier. The students are back in the Village.

Martinsburg – Robert Collins

Null

Speaker – Heather Doherty, ODNR Regional Manager of Scenic Rivers Program

Ms. Doherty gave an overview of the Scenic Rivers. We are in the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves. We run State Nature Preserves and State Scenic Rivers, so conservation is our mission. Kokosing River is one river that they work on. Ms. Doherty has also worked at the Brown Family Environmental Center and has spent a lot of time at the Kokosing River. The program's goal is to protect the high quality of the rivers in the state. The Ohio Scenic River Program is the first one created in the country in 1968. There is a National Scenic River Program as well that happened that same year. There are 16 scenic rivers in Ohio.

Others from the floor

Null

Ms. Severns moved to adjourn, Ms. Hill seconded motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

The next meeting of the Knox County Regional Planning Commission will be October 16, 2025, in the Knox County Service Center 117 E. High St., Mount Vernon, OH at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Darrel Severns
Executive Secretary

Attachments: