14.01 Town Council

In order to effectuate the purpose of this Ordinance regarding the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and this Ordinance, the Town Council shall, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, including without limitation IC 36-7-4 et. seq. have the powers and duties to:

(A) Approve, reject or amend a comprehensive plan, or segment thereof, certified to it by the Area Plan Commission.
(B) Initiate amendments to the text of this Ordinance.
(C) Adopt, reject or amend proposals to amend or partially repeal the text of this Ordinance.
(D) Initiate amendments to the text of the Town of North Liberty Subdivision Regulations.
(E) Adopt, reject or amend proposals to amend or partially repeal the text of the Town Subdivision Control Ordinance.
(F) Adopt or reject proposals to amend zone maps.
(G) Adopt, reject or modify a PUD District Ordinance.
(H) Approve or disapprove all petitions for special exception uses after receiving such petitions from the Area Board of Zoning Appeals or Area Plan Commission with a favorable recommendation, unfavorable recommendation, or no recommendation.

14.02 Area Plan Commission

(A) Establishment. The area planning law is hereby re-adopted and the Area Plan Commission is hereby re-established as the plan commission for the Town of North Liberty, Indiana, in accordance with Indiana Code 36-7-4-200 et seq.
(B) Membership, Qualifications and Terms. The membership of the Area Plan Commission, the qualification of its members and the terms of membership shall be in accordance with Indiana Code 36-7-4-200 et seq.
(C) Duties and Powers. The Area Plan Commission is hereby vested with the duties and powers imposed upon and granted to an Area Plan Commission under the area planning law, including, without limitation, the powers and duties listed below. To effectuate the purposes of this Ordinance, the Area Plan Commission may, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable laws:

(1) Supervise and make rules for the administration of the affairs of the planning department;
(2) Prescribe uniform rules pertaining to investigations and hearings, and other matters authorized by Indiana planning and zoning laws;
(3) Keep a complete record of all departmental proceedings;
Administration

(4) Record and file all bonds and contracts and assume responsibility for the custody and preservation of all papers and documents of the planning department;

(5) Prepare, publish and distribute reports, ordinances and other material related to the Area Plan Commission activities authorized by Indiana state law or this Ordinance;

(6) Adopt a seal;

(7) Certify to all official acts;

(8) Supervise the fiscal affairs of the planning department;

(9) Prepare and submit an annual budget and be limited in all expenditures to the provisions made for expenditures by the legislative bodies of participating municipalities or the Board of Commissioners of St. Joseph County;

(10) Prescribe the qualifications of, with the consent of the Executive Director, fix the compensation of the employees of the planning department, which compensation shall conform to salaries and compensations fixed before that time by the Board of Commissioners of St. Joseph County;

(11) Delegate authority to its employees to perform ministerial acts in all cases except where final action of the Area Plan Commission is necessary;

(12) Designate a hearing examiner or a committee of the commission to conduct any public hearing required to be held by the Area Plan Commission;

(13) Appoint a plat committee to hold hearings on and approve plats and replats on behalf of the Area Plan Commission;

(14) Make recommendations to the Council concerning:
   
   (a) The adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and amendments to the Comprehensive Plan;

   (b) The adoption of this Ordinance, a text amendment to this Ordinance, a replacement zoning ordinance, or the Town of North Liberty Subdivision Regulations;

   (c) Special Exception Uses as provided in Section 15.08 Combined Hearing Procedure; and,

   (d) Zone Map Changes;

(15) Render decisions concerning variances from the development standards as provided in Section 15.08 Combined Hearing Procedure;

(16) Render decisions concerning and approve plats or replats of subdivisions;
(17) Assign street numbers to lots and structures or renumber lots and structures on streets or highways within the Area Plan Commission’s jurisdiction to conform with the numbers of structures on streets within cities within St. Joseph County, Indiana. The Area Plan Commission hereby delegates the assignment of street numbers to the Town Clerk-Treasurer;

(18) The naming or renaming of streets when performed in connection with a plat or replat (the naming or renaming of streets within the corporate limits of the Town, when not performed in connection with a plat or replat, shall be within the jurisdiction of the Council);

(19) Render decisions concerning development plans and amendments to development plans;

(20) Establish advisory committees of citizens interested in problems of planning and zoning which shall report to the Area Plan Commission and shall make inquiries and reports only on the subject and problems specified in the resolution establishing the advisory committee of citizens by the Area Plan Commission;

(21) Establish an executive committee which may act in the name of the Area Plan Commission as set forth in IC 36-7-4-408;

(22) Negotiate for grants-in-aid and agree to terms and conditions attached to such grants-in-aid;

(23) Establish a schedule of reasonable fees to defray the administrative costs connected with:
   (a) Processing and hearing administrative appeals and petitions for zone map change, special exception uses, variances, and development plan approvals;
   (b) Issuing improvement location permits; and,
   (c) Other official actions taken under this Ordinance;

(23) Invoke any legal, equitable, or special remedy available under this Ordinance or applicable law for the enforcement of the provisions of this Ordinance or actions taken hereunder;

(24) Exercise all powers conferred on it by state law, local ordinance, or rule in the manner so prescribed. This Section shall not be construed as a limitation on those powers.

(D) Commitments.

(1) Requirement of Commitments by the Area Plan Commission.
   (a) The Area Plan Commission may, when in the discretion of the Area Plan Commission it is deemed necessary either to assure the compatibility of a proposed development with
surrounding properties, or to minimize the potential for the occurrence of detrimental effects from any attributes of a proposed development on surrounding properties, require or allow the owner of a parcel of property to make written commitments concerning the use or development of the subject property in connection with:

1. A development plan approval as provided for in this Ordinance; and

2. A recommendation to the Council regarding a zone map change to any district classification contained in this Ordinance.

(b) The commitments shall be reduced to writing in recordable form and signed by the owner(s) of the real estate. The commitments shall be in effect for:

1. As long as the zone map applicable to the parcel remains unchanged;

2. The parcel is designed as a PUD under Chapter 7 Planned Unit Development District of this Ordinance; or,

3. Modified or terminated as provided below.

(c) Commitments required or allowed in connection with a zone map change shall be voted upon by the Council as certified by the Area Plan Commission.

(d) The commitments shall authorize their recording by staff in the office of the Recorder of St. Joseph County upon the final approval of the applicable petition. The staff shall be reimbursed by the petitioner for any and all fees associated with the recording of said commitments.

(e) Following the recording of the commitments, staff shall return the original recorded commitments to petitioner and shall retain a copy of the recorded commitments in its file.

(f) The Area Plan Commission, Town Attorney, Zoning Administrator, appropriate enforcement official, owners of all parcels of ground located within three-hundred (300) feet of the real estate and all owners of real estate within the area included in the petition who were not petitioners for approval, and other specially affected persons designated in such commitments shall be entitled to enforce such commitments pursuant to Indiana Code 36-7-4-1015 or as otherwise provided by applicable law.

(g) The commitments required or allowed by the Area Plan Commission shall be in substantially the form set forth by resolution of the Area Plan Commission.
(2) Modification or Termination of Commitments by the Area Plan Commission.

(a) Commitments required or allowed by the Area Plan Commission may be modified or terminated by a decision of the Area Plan Commission.

(b) Any modification or termination of the commitments shall not be effective until:

1. Reduced to writing;
2. Approved by the Area Plan Commission;
3. Executed and notarized by the present owner(s) of the real estate; and,

(c) The modification or termination of commitments shall be in substantially the form set forth by resolution of the Area Plan Commission.

(d) Procedures to be followed regarding form of filing, public hearing and notice, and reasons for modification or termination shall be those set forth in sub-Section 16.07 Modification or Termination of Commitments.

14.03 Board of Zoning Appeals

(A) Establishment and Jurisdiction. The Board of Zoning Appeals for St. Joseph County is hereby re-established in accordance with Indiana Code 36-7-4-900 et seq. The Board of Zoning Appeals of St. Joseph County shall have exclusive authority over all matters set forth under Indiana Code 36-7-4-900 et seq., within the corporate limits of the Town.

(B) Membership, Qualifications and Terms. The membership of the Board of Zoning Appeals, the qualification of its members and the terms of membership shall be in accordance with Indiana Code 36-7-4-900 et seq.

(C) Duties and Powers. The Board of Zoning Appeals shall have the duty and power to:

(1) Hear and determine appeals from and review any order, requirement, decision, or determination made by staff, hearing officer or administrative official under this Ordinance;

(2) Hear and determine appeals from and review any order, requirement, decision, or determination made by an administrative board or other body except the Area Plan Commission in relation to the enforcement of this Ordinance;

(3) Hear and determine appeals from and review any order, requirement, decision, or determination made by an administrative board or other body except the Area Plan Commission in relation to the enforcement of those provisions of this Ordinance requiring the procurement of an improvement location permit or a certificate of occupancy;
(4) Hear, and make a favorable recommendation, unfavorable recommendation or no recommendation to the Council on all special exception uses in accordance with the provisions of sub-Section 15.03 (I) Special Exceptions, below;

(5) Hear and determine all variances from development standards of this ordinance; and

(6) Hear and determine all conditional uses.

(D) Conditions.

(1) The Board of Zoning Appeals, in connection with its making of a favorable recommendation, unfavorable recommendation or no recommendation to the Council regarding the approval of a special exception use, may recommend that the Council impose certain reasonable conditions as a part of the Council's approval of any special exception use.

(2) Such conditions may include any reasonable site, development, operational standards, performance standards, requirements, and restrictions (including duration of approval) deemed necessary to ensure compliance with the findings of fact determinations.

(E) Amendments. The Board of Zoning Appeals, in connection with making a determination on a variance of development standards, may accept amendments to a petition which, in the sole discretion of the Board of Zoning Appeals, are necessary for the Board of Zoning Appeals to make the determination and findings of fact required by Section 14.03 (H) Variance of Development Standards, below.

(F) Commitments.

(1) The Board of Zoning Appeals may recommend or the Council may permit or require the owner of a parcel of property to make a written commitment concerning the use or development of that parcel in the case of a petition for a special exception use.

(2) The Board of Zoning Appeals may permit or require the owner of a parcel of property to make a written commitment concerning the development of that parcel in the case of a petition for a variance of development standards.

(3) Such commitments may include any reasonable site, development, operational standards, performance standards, requirements, and restrictions (including duration of approval) deemed necessary to ensure compliance with the findings of fact determinations.

(4) All such commitments shall be in recordable form and shall be recorded in the office of the St. Joseph County Recorder and shall take effect upon the granting of the special exception use or variance. A recorded commitment shall be binding on the owner of the parcel, each subsequent owner, and each other person acquiring an interest in the parcel.

(5) The commitments shall be in substantially the form set forth by the Area Plan Commission.
(6) A recorded commitment may be modified or terminated only by a decision of the Board of Zoning Appeals.

(7) The modification or termination of commitments shall be in substantially the form set forth by the Area Plan Commission.

(8) Procedures to be followed regarding form of filing, public hearing and notice, and reasons for modification or termination shall be those set forth in Section 15.07 Modification or Termination of Commitments.

(9) By recommending, permitting or requiring commitments, the Board of Zoning Appeals does not obligate itself to make a favorable recommendation nor does the Council obligate itself to approve or deny any request.

(10) This Section does not affect the validity of any covenant, easement, equitable servitude, or other land use restriction created in accordance with law.

(G) Rules.

(1) The Board of Zoning Appeals shall adopt rules concerning: the filing of appeals; applications for special exception uses and variances; the giving of notice; the determination of interested parties to receive notice; the conduct of hearings; the creation, form, recording, modification, enforcement and termination of commitments; and, the designation of which specially affected persons and classes of specially affected persons are entitled to enforce commitments.

(2) Rules adopted by the Board of Zoning Appeals shall be printed and made available to all applicants and other interested persons.

(H) Variance of Development Standards. A variance from any of the development standards of this Ordinance may only be approved upon the Board of Zoning Appeals making a written determination and adopting appropriate Findings of Fact, based upon the evidence presented at a public hearing, that:

(1) The approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals and general welfare of the community;

(2) The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner; and,

(3) The strict application of the terms of this Ordinance would result in practical difficulties in the use of the property.

(I) Special Exception Uses.

(1) Statement of Purpose. Certain land uses, while they may be generally appropriate in certain districts and under certain circumstances, may have characteristics and locational impacts which, if inappropriately located, may have a detrimental effect upon other land uses within the district and the Town. It is therefore recognized that such land
uses should be regulated in order to preserve property values, as well as promote the public health, safety, comfort, community moral standards, convenience and general welfare of the Town.

(2) Uses Permitted by Special Exception Use. Only those uses identified in each individual district as uses permitted by special exception use shall be permitted by special exception use in each district.

(3) Grant of a Special Exception Use.

(a) The Board of Zoning Appeals is hereby authorized to hear and make a favorable recommendation, unfavorable recommendation or no recommendation to the Council on a petition for a special exception use.

(b) The Council shall, within sixty (60) days of a recommendation by the Board of Zoning Appeals, vote on the petition for a special exception use.

(c) All petitions for a special exception use shall comply with the following requirements:

1. Petition for Special Exception Use. A petition for special exception use shall be initially filed with the Board of Zoning Appeals in accordance with the requirements for the filing of a variance, except as such requirements may be modified in this Section. Such petition shall include proposed detailed findings of fact pursuant to Section 14.03 (I)(4) Findings of Fact for a Special Exception Use, below, in support of the determinations required to be made.

2. Waiver of Development Standards. A petition for special exception may contain a request to waive development standards of the district determined to be inappropriate for the individual special exception use. The waiver may only be approved if such waiver is specifically requested in said petition and specifically approved at the public hearing. Any development standards which are waived in this manner shall require additional findings as specified in Section 14.03 (H) – Variance of Development Standards, above, for the grant of a variance of development standards.


a. In reviewing a special exception use petition with regard to compliance with the required findings of fact, the Board of Zoning Appeals and Council shall give consideration to the particular needs and circumstances of each special exception use application and shall examine the following items as they relate to the proposed use:

   i. Topography and other natural site features;
   
   ii. Zoning of the site and surrounding properties;
iii. Driveway locations and street access;
iv. On-site and off-site accommodations for vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns;
v. Amount, location and design of parking areas and loading areas;
vi. Building character, including height, intensity, materials and architecture;
vii. Landscaping, screening and buffering of adjacent properties;
viii. Compatibility of the proposed use, site design and architecture with the district in which the use is proposed to be located;
ix. Extent to which the proposed use, site design and architecture comply with the regulations and development standards that would be applicable if the site were zoned to an Office Buffer District, Commercial District or Industrial District of this Ordinance which would permit the proposed use as a primary use;
x. Open space and other site amenities; and,
xii. Availability and adequacy of streets, sanitary facilities, potable water, storm water management system and other utilities.

b. The Board of Zoning Appeals and the Council shall find that the above items are dealt with appropriately by the petition for special exception use such that Sections 15.03 (I)(4) Findings of Fact for a Special Exception Use, below, and 15.03 (I)(5) Requirements for the Grant of a Special Exception Use, below, are complied with.

c. In addition to the requirements of this Section 15.03 (I)(3), special exception uses shall be subject to any additional development standards as determined by the Council.

(4) Findings of Fact for a Special Exception Use. A special exception use may only be granted upon making a written determination and adopting appropriate findings of fact, based upon the evidence presented at a public hearing, that:

(a) The proposed use will not be injurious to the public health, safety, comfort, community moral standards, convenience or general welfare;
(b) The proposed use will not injure or adversely affect the use of the adjacent area or property values therein;
(c) The proposed use will be consistent with the character of the district in which it is located and the land uses authorized therein; and,
(d) The proposed use is compatible with the recommendations of the Town Comprehensive Plan.
(5) Requirements for the Grant of a Special Exception Use. The grant of a special exception use shall comply with the following requirements:

(a) The proposed use shall conform to all development standards of the applicable zoning district (unless a waiver of such development standards is requested as part of the special exception use petition and approved as set forth above).

(b) The proposed use shall conform to all conditions or commitments attached to the grant of the special exception use.

(J) Other Powers. The Board of Zoning Appeals shall exercise all powers conferred on it by State law, local ordinance, or rule in the manner so prescribed. This Section shall not be construed as a limitation on such powers.

14.04 Staff Agencies

(A) Establishment. The Office of the Area Plan Commission of St. Joseph County is hereby re-established as the planning department for the Town.

(B) Administration of Planning and Zoning Authority. The Office of the Area Plan Commission is hereby delegated the authority to perform all ministerial acts of the Area Plan Commission not required by law to be performed by the Area Plan Commission or the Board of Zoning Appeals within the Town.

(C) Duties and Powers of the Executive Director.

It shall be the duty of the Executive Director:

(1) To supervise the general administration of the Planning Department;

(2) To receive and review all applications required by this Ordinance for zone map changes, development plan approvals and planned unit developments;

(3) When requested by the Area Plan Commission or Board of Zoning Appeals, or when the interests of the Town so require, make investigations in connection with matters referred to in this Ordinance and render written reports on the same;

(4) To keep the records of the Planning Department, including, without limitation, records of applications and reports rendered. The Executive Director shall maintain records of all final determinations, decisions and recommendations of the Area Plan Commission;

(5) To transmit to the Area Plan Commission the recommendation of the Planning Department on all applications, petitions, or matters requiring official action by the Area Plan Commission;

(6) To transmit to the Board of Zoning Appeals the recommendation of the planning department on applications, petitions, or matters requiring official action by the Board of Zoning Appeals;
(7) To maintain the Official Zone Maps and designate on the Official Zone Maps all map amendments granted under the terms of this Ordinance;

(8) To provide and maintain information for the public relative to all matters arising out of this Ordinance;

(9) To designate staff to assist in the daily administration of the duties and responsibilities set forth in this Ordinance;

(10) To perform such other duties as the Area Plan Commission may direct in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance.

(D) Duties and Powers of the Zoning Administrator. The Zoning Administrator is hereby charged with the administration of this Ordinance and, in particular, shall have the jurisdiction, authority and duties described below:

(1) To conduct preliminary consultations with potential applicants regarding development proposals regulated by this Ordinance;

(2) To receive and review all applications required by this Ordinance for determination by the Board of Zoning Appeals;

(3) To review all improvement location permit applications for compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance; and

(4) To issue improvement location permits upon a determination that such permit application is in full compliance with all terms and provisions of this Ordinance, the Town Subdivision Control Ordinance, and all other duly adopted applicable ordinances, rules or regulations of the Town.

(E) Duties and Powers of the Town Clerk-Treasurer. The Town Clerk-Treasurer shall maintain records including, without limitation, records of all permits issued, certificates issued, and notice or orders issued.

(F) Duties and Powers of the St. Joseph County/South Bend Building Department. The St. Joseph County/South Bend Building Department shall have the jurisdiction, authority and duties described below:

(1) To maintain records including, without limitation, records of all applications before the Board of Zoning Appeals, and final determinations, decisions and recommendations of the Board of Zoning Appeals; and

(2) To transmit to the Board of Zoning Appeals technical advice on all applications, petitions, or matters requiring official action by the Board of Zoning Appeals.