

Franklin is a highly desirable place to live and work thanks to the longtime businesses who invest in our community and the local residents (many that volunteer) who continue to work hard to make Franklin a destination for shopping, dining and entertainment. Supporting those existing businesses is a large part of the responsibilities of all our county government entities.

Developers and realtors see our county's farmland as "vacant land" ready to cover with houses and warehouses. We are celebrating our city and county bicentennials this year and honor our forefathers who developed this special place. Beginning in 1823 our county's 201,600 acres were being purchased and homesteaded by families moving west with dreams of farming. By 1890, there were 2113 farms claiming 98% of the county's acreage. As of the 2017 census, there were 642 farms with 70% in agriculture. We are fortunate to have 59 Hoosier Homestead Farms in Johnson County. These are farms still in operation and continually owned by the same family for 100 years or more, with several close to 200 years. There are more that could apply for this award with a little family research. These families are proud of their heritage and invested in preserving the land for future generations. Agriculture is the county's largest industry and to see this productive land destroyed and perceived "vacant" is a tragedy.

Landowners certainly have the right to sell their property and fortunately many take the money and reinvest in farm ground. However, our city and county councils have the right to be sure that proposed development is both environmentally and economically beneficial to the area. I ask you to take time to seriously research any proposed business that is interested in the Dunn property before recommending a zone change.

It is not too late to push "pause" on new development, be very selective in what is approved, and demand nothing but the best in construction of what is already in the works. Please do not let our beloved town and surrounding area turn into another over-crowded Carmel, Noblesville or Fishers where the charm and open countryside is gone.

Remember a "no" vote can be changed to "yes" at a later date, but a with a "yes" vote you lose your leverage.

Thank you for your service to the community.

Sincerely,

Linda Norton