

# Lighting Considerations for Developers

- For St. Joseph County, IN, see [Lighting Regulations \(Article 8.08.02\)](#).
- For a list of State statutes and local lighting ordinances in the United States, see <http://home.att.net/~icole/links.html#anchor3>.
- For material related to developments along Gumwood Rd. in St. Joseph County, IN, in particular, and for all developing regions in general, see [gumwood.htm](#). Developers and homeowners and other affected parties gathered to share concerns about the outdoor lighting planned for a proposed retail area.
- For links to manufacturers of sky-friendly fixtures, see [solutions.htm](#).
- For considerations specific to development throughout St. Joseph County, Indiana, see **below**.

## Lighting Ordinance Enacted:



*St. Joseph County, Indiana, has acted to protect the night sky.*

On May 10, 2005, the St. Joseph County Council adopted a new **St. Joseph County Zoning Ordinance** that includes [Lighting Regulations \(Article 8.08.02\)](#). In introducing the legislation, Councilman Dale DeVon stated that, even though changes will need to be made to the new lighting ordinance, it merited approval by the Council. Prior to the vote, comments ([below](#)) addressed shortcomings in the proposed ordinance. The County Zoning Ordinance had received a favorable recommendation in committee, and the final County Council vote was 9-0 in favor of passage.

Chuck Bueter thanked supporters of the lighting ordinance at the conclusion of the May 10th meeting:

"Thank you Councilman Dale DeVon, County Commissioner Mark Dobson, Building Commissioner Don Fozo, Area Plan Director Bob Sante, and unknown and unnamed persons for your roles in bringing the Lighting Ordinance to its successful adoption tonight. Yes, it's long overdue. As Mr. DeVon noted, you can expect that these parties and I will be proposing alterations to this inaugural lighting legislation. Congratulations on bringing St. Joseph County in line with modern lighting ordinances and for encouraging efficient lighting practices and technologies. Your actions will work toward saving energy and money (which, to your credit, is a major feature and should be included in the ordinance's Intent); will improve safety for motorists and pedestrians; will help preserve the heritage of our night sky; and will improve the quality of life in St. Joseph County. When you exit the building tonight, that bright star overhead to the south is actually the planet Jupiter. Hopefully we'll see more of the stars in the future. Seize the night. *Carpe noctem*."



Below are Chuck Bueter's comments about lessening the impact of light pollution, with particular reference to new developments; read at [Gumwood Road Forum](#) public meeting on November 16, 2004.

(Available as MSWord document at [gumwood.doc](#).)

[Note: The developer Ron March cited below has since transferred his interest in Greentree Crossing to a new developer, Holladay Properties, which renamed it Heritage Square.]

Good evening, and thank you all for attending. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to gather the concerns of the community. We all bring a personal agenda to public forums like this, and I wish to share my mine.

Your house's proximity to the new development and to Gumwood Road may influence your emotional commitment to the issues raised here, for the closer you are, the more you have at stake. While we have discussed some of the issues, I wish to raise your awareness of another that affects us all. Though subtle, the encroachment from light pollution lessens our quality of life.

Last week were the most beautiful northern lights I've seen in 20 years. Throughout the night I and my kids were privileged to see Nature's display because there is some semblance of dark skies here. But as our community grows, that majesty overhead is slipping away.

When it's cloudy out, like tonight, we have to concede defeat knowing that we won't see the stars. We know the clouds will eventually clear and the stars will return. But when cavalier lighting overwhelms our local sky, there will be no return of the stars.

With new retail comes parking lot lights and signage; with expanded roads come streetlights; next are transmission towers with those obnoxious, unrelenting white strobe lights. It goes on and on, unchecked. Light pollution is impinging on our natural resource overhead as much as unchecked growth will impinge on any other natural resource.

I am not seeking to stifle growth. That would not be fair to property owners, businesses and churches, taxpayers, and residents seeking amenities. I am asking that we work together to lessen the impact of that growth.

To their credit, Ken Prince and the City of Mishawaka have already addressed lighting issues to some extent at Greentree Crossing, and the developer Ron March told me he will be putting in shorter, shielded lighting in the parking lot. That is a fine start, and I thank Ken Prince for advocating it. But please do not check it off a list as a bone thrown to pacify a few squeaky wheels.

A little course correction now will yield significant rewards in the future, and it *can* be a win-win situation. Well-planned lighting that directs the illumination downward where it is needed is more economical, provides more safety, prevents light trespass, and lessens the impact on the night sky.

I believe the night sky is an important feature of this community. It is a common area—one giant public easement overhead, of which we are the stewards.

Growth is inevitable. So, I appeal to you—you in attendance, to the *developers*, to future *tenants*, and to our government *planners and representatives*—I appeal to you to strive *proactively* to lessen the impact of development on our night sky. Please, make low-impact lighting *policy*. Make maintaining the heritage of our night sky a community *priority*.

Thank you.

- For more material related to developments along Gumwood Rd. in St. Joseph County, IN, see

## Lighting Ordinance Issues:

Preceding the enactment of the new lighting ordinance (see [above](#)) in St. Joseph County, Indiana, Chuck Bueter wrote these remarks:

- A "[privilege of the floor](#)" statement at the March 8, 2005, meeting of the St. Joseph County Council commends the County for initiating a lighting ordinance yet cites the need for amendments soon after the ordinance is adopted.
- A [written critique](#) of the proposed lighting ordinance specifies point-by-point some of the [concerns about the proposed draft](#). For example, the Intent of the proposed ordinance cites glare and light spillover as concerns, but it omits the third key element of light pollution--*sky glow* caused from errant uplighting. The Intent also fails to recognize the significant energy savings that lighting regulations yield. Some technical definitions do not correlate to cut-off illustrations in the proposed ordinance. Another objection is that Section C2 of the ordinance exempts public lights.
- [A public appeal](#) read at the [Gumwood Road Forum](#) public meeting on November 16, 2004, advocates lessening the impact of light pollution from development.
- Please send your comments, improvements, and insight directly to the [St. Joseph County Council and to the Area Plan Commission](#). You may also write or "cc" a copy to [Chuck Bueter](#). Thank you for weighing in on this important legislation.



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