

Minutes: Russell Township Zoning Commission
Russell Fire-Rescue Station
March 23, 2011

Present: Richard E. Snyder, Chairman (arrived at 8:00 p.m.)
Donna Weiss Carson
Bruce Murphy, Vice Chairman
Ben Kotowski
Justin Madden
Diana Steffen, Secretary

Since the Chairman was expected to arrive late, the Vice Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:46 p.m.

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 28, 2011 – Mr. Madden made the motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Kotowski seconded and the motion passed unanimously by 3-0. Ms. Weiss Carson abstained due to her absence from that meeting.

ZONING WORKSHOP ISSUES – Mrs. Steffen had been asked by the Chairman to prepare a list of topics the Zoning Commission is currently working on, other 2011 goals and topics from the Zoning Workshop two days earlier that the Commission was asked to consider. Mr. Murphy said he would like to review the list and see who would be willing to take the lead on some of the topics. Some can be resolved quickly and some can be tabled for a while. The Commission reviewed the list.

Food Service: Ms. Salem has not yet responded to Mr. Murphy's request for case law regarding drive-throughs and hours of operation. He suggested scheduling a meeting with Ms. Salem, David Dietrich, Rebecca Schlag to discuss this subject and other topics.

Wind & Solar Energy: Ms. Weiss Carson said she spoke with Dr. Lee, Superintendent of Kenston Schools, about his experience attempting to have a wind tower erected at the school. There are two towers they wish to erect, but questions keep coming up which have to be answered by the State, and it appears the State is forming the rules as they go along. A major problem is environmental, mostly due to protection of the brown bat. Until the issues are resolved the towers will not be built. Mr. Kotowski said he will try to find an installer, or talk to Stephanie Spear of Expedite Renewable Energy, to organize a visit to a residential wind tower. Mrs. Steffen said she had just received an email from the Geauga County Planning Commission that included new model amendments for wind turbines, solar panels and outdoor wood-fired boilers. She handed out the information to the Commission.

Action item: Mr. Kotowski will attempt to find a residential wind tower that the Commission can visit.

Mr. Snyder arrived at this time.

Definition of Structure and list of permitted uses in front yard: Mr. Snyder has worked on this item and will include a clarification of the intent of the corner lot/front yard regulation, as discussed at the Zoning Workshop.

Definitions within the Zoning Resolution: Mrs. Steffen has worked on highlighting words throughout the Zoning Resolution that are defined in Section 2. She reported that she is waiting to resolve many issues with the Commission before the highlighting can be added to the Resolution.

Consideration of making Planned Residential Developments a permitted use and large lot zoning a conditional use: Mr. Snyder had discussed this at the Zoning Workshop, when a suggestion was made to consider making both a permitted use. The Commission will work on this.

Renewal of Conditional Use Permits: There is a regulation for this in the County Model Zoning Resolution, and although Russell does not have this regulation it deserves some consideration.

Issue of POD's in front yards: These may be considered temporary structures.

Landscaping Regulations: Due to the change in the statute to permit landscaping regulations in residential districts only, the Commission will consider whether this affects the buffers in the OB and C-S zones.

Action item: Mr. Murphy will do research at the Chardon Law Library.

Definition of Dwelling: This will be considered when working on in-law suites.

Comprehensive Review of the Zoning Resolution: The Commission agreed to postpone this work until the update of the Land Use Guide Plan has been completed. Then the Commission can ensure the Resolution fits with the Guide Plan recommendations.

Sign Regulations: The Commission will ask the Zoning Inspector about this.

In-law suites, definition of family and definition of dwelling: Mr. Madden volunteered to take the lead on this topic. He asked that the entire Commission consider the definition of family.

Land Use Guide Plan update: The Commission agreed it should meet with David Dietrich, GCPC, first, to find out how he might be able to provide assistance. It should also meet with CRWP and GSWCD for their input on how Russell should plan for the future. Mr. Murphy said he would like to work on this update, and will review the Township files from the last update. Once the Commission has a plan for the process it will submit the plan to the Board of Trustees to make the decision on how to proceed.

Regulation of gabion baskets: Mrs. Steffen said she has asked CRWP and the GCPC whether these can be regulated. Streambank stabilization projects require a zoning certificate, but the type of stabilization is not defined. Mr. Dietrich suggested that the Commission could list the types acceptable in a definition of streambank stabilization. It was agreed to ask CRWP for input.

Noise as a public nuisance factor re. variances: To be discussed with Mr. Dietrich.

Corner lot/front yard interpretation: To be included in the work on permitted uses in the front yard.

Action Item: Mr. Snyder will set up a meeting with Mr. Dietrich and the Prosecutor's Office to discuss the food service questions, the Guide Plan update, general welfare language in the Zoning Resolution, and noise as a public nuisance with regard to variances.

Having discussed Food Service and Wind & Solar Energy earlier in the meeting, the Chairman moved on to the last item on the agenda.

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS' ISSUES – Definitions and the corner lot clarification will be reviewed.

There being no other business, Mr. Kotowski moved to adjourn, Mr. Madden seconded and the meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Steffen
Secretary

Date

Richard E. Snyder
Chairman

Date

zc minutes 03-23-11