

Minutes: Russell Township Zoning Commission
Russell Fire-Rescue Station
May 25, 2011

Present: Richard E. Snyder, Chairman
Bruce Murphy
Donna Weiss Carson
Ben Kotowski
Justin Madden
Diana Steffen, Secretary

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

MINUTES OF APRIL 27, 2011 – *Mr. Murphy made the motion to approve the minutes as submitted, Mr. Madden seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Kotowski abstained due to his absence from that meeting.*

DR. PAM CHIPPS AND DR. MEGAN HURA, SILVERCREEK VETERINARY CLINIC – Dr. Chipps explained that due to the layout and flow pattern of the building they lease they would like to construct a new building that works better for their practice. The two properties they are interested in are both in the residential zone, and the one they are the most interested in is north of the Post Office. The owner is willing to sell them 2.5 acres, so he can keep the other 6 acres to split into two 3-acre residential lots. Dr. Chipps said they are seeking approval to locate their veterinary clinic on this parcel. She believes their business is considered agricultural. She had approached owners of vacant properties in the C-S and O-B zones but either they did not respond or the price was too high.

A lengthy discussion followed during which the Commission advised that 3 acres is the minimum lot size for the parcel Dr. Chipps is interested in purchasing. If the business was determined to be agricultural they could build in the residential zone, but to split the 8 acres into 3 lots would require a variance. The Township would need to obtain an opinion from the County Prosecutor as to whether a veterinary clinic could be classified as an agricultural use for zoning purposes. Dr. Hura said they have signed another year's lease for their existing space, and would like to build a new building within the next year. She said there are no special requirements for the veterinary clinic with regard to the septic system, although there are regulations restricting medical waste and chemicals from going into the system.

The Chairman said the first step is to ask the Zoning Inspector to determine if the business is agricultural, and if it is not, then they could petition the Zoning Commission to rezone the parcel to O-B. Dr. Chipps indicated they would probably not wish to start that process.

Dr. Chipps said they could purchase the building they are currently leasing, but even if they took over the whole building the flow pattern is not good, and there is very limited parking. They were looking at the Bank One building, but the EPA will not permit a veterinary clinic to use a septic system there since there can be a small holding tank only. They have had an architect lay out a design for the building that would work for them. They would still be interested in the Bank One building if they knew the sewer project was definitely going to happen shortly. Mr. Snyder said that would be a preferred location as far as the Township is concerned since it is zoned C-S, for businesses that serve the needs of the residents.

Dr. Chipps and Dr. Hura thanked the Commission for its time and left the meeting.

IN-LAW SUITES, DEFINITION OF FAMILY AND DWELLINGS – Ms. Weiss Carson reported on her review of the 1975 Land Use Guide Plan and Dr. Yoram Eckstein's water study. She had also spoken with former trustee Chris Livers. The studies showed that Russell's large lot zoning is based on water quality and septic functionality. The only aspect addressed regarding density was that the average household at the time was 3.8 persons per household with a total 250 gallons of water usage per day. A comprehensive geology and hydrology study was the basis for a land capacity analysis for septic systems and water quality. When properties are evaluated for septic systems five factors are determined by the

