

Minutes: Russell Township Zoning Commission
Russell Fire-Rescue Station
March 16, 2016

Present: Richard Snyder, Chairman
Bruce Murphy
Donna Weiss Carson
Ben Kotowski
Tom Warren
Diana Steffen, Secretary

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:46 p.m. Mrs. Steffen announced that the meeting date was changed to today due to the anticipated absence of one of the members of the Zoning Commission on the regular March 23 meeting date. A sunshine notice was sent to three newspapers on 03/04/16 and posted at the Administration Building.

LAND USE GUIDE PLAN UPDATE: ENVIRONMENTAL – Christina Znidarsic of the Chagrin River Watershed Partners was in attendance to discuss the Environmental chapter and the map revisions she made at the request of the Commission.

Ms. Znidarsic said that in her opinion the chapter was well written and very good. She mentioned a few sentences where she recommended clarification, and will give her changes to Mr. Warren. Mr. Snyder asked the Commission if they wished to ask Dr. Yoram Eckstein to confirm that the findings from his study in the 1980's were still valid, but it was not clear whether this is in the budget. Ms. Znidarsic said she has a geology degree, but may not be qualified to review Dr. Eckstein's Groundwater Study.

Regarding wetlands, Ms. Znidarsic commented that CRWP has a model wetlands setback regulation, which Auburn Township has adopted. The Ohio EPA delineates wetlands in the field. She said the reason to pass such a regulation is the same as for the riparian setbacks - due to public health and safety. She will give the Commission a copy of the language.

The Commission reviewed the revised maps:

Balanced Growth – Ms. Znidarsic will write a descriptive paragraph and the map and text will be included in the Regional Relationships chapter. She will add to the map the date of adoption (May 6, 2009) of the balanced growth program by the Russell Board of Trustees, as well as the current date.

Dams – These are a barrier to water quality and CRWP supports their removal. Those in Russell are mostly Class 4, an ODNR classification due to a particular size, height under 10 feet, and drainage area. They are also mostly private and so are the responsibility of the landowner; ODNR will inspect them. It was thought that some of the dams shown on the map have been removed, but to determine if this is correct Ms. Znidarsic suggested that she and the Zoning Inspector contact property owners and make field visits. Mr. Warren suggested that owners should be educated about maintenance or whether a dam should be removed. It was agreed to include this map to encourage dam owners to become informed. Ms. Znidarsic will write a paragraph for Mr. Warren's chapter about dams and their maintenance as education for residents.

Impervious Cover – Asked about driveways not being included on this map Ms. Znidarsic explained that they were not on the layer she used from the County. She could add them but it would take several months and some expense to do so. However, she could calculate an average length of a driveway and multiply it by the number of properties to reach an estimate to add to the total impervious cover in the Township. Mr. Snyder noted that when this was last calculated it was found that the impervious cover was under ten percent, demonstrating that Russell was being proactive in limiting growth due to large lot zoning in order to protect the groundwater. The Commission questioned two larger areas of impervious cover marked on the map which were both on Artform Nursery property where there are greenhouses

and driveways and parking areas. Ms. Znidarsic will check the accuracy of this and send a revised map to Mrs. Steffen if a change is made.

Parks – Ms. Znidarsic had created a map of Russell Park Commission properties and of Passive Park District properties using data Mrs. Steffen had provided. Mr. Murphy said he would like to know the acreage of parklands added since 1995, which Mrs. Steffen said she could calculate from data on the spreadsheet she had created for the Parks map. She will send this to Mr. Murphy.

Mr. Snyder asked if the Commission still wanted to review the charter of the Russell Park Commission, which Mr. Murphy said would have been filed with the Probate Court, per the ORC section titled "Ohio Township Parks." With a new member to the Park Commission in attendance, Mr. Warren asked Charlie Butters if he could find the charter and bring it to the next meeting.

Stream Characteristics – Mr. Warren will add to his chapter some of the narrative provided by Ms. Znidarsic to explain the aquatic use designations and primary headwater habitat stream characteristics. She noted that in 2019 the Ohio EPA will reassess the classifications of the streams as part of the NPDES Phase II Program, which she recommended noting in the chapter.

Wetlands – Ms. Znidarsic combined three sources of data into one map, but added a disclaimer that wetlands must be verified in the field by a wetland expert.

Mrs. Steffen said CRWP had provided 15 maps originally, including five that were not revised recently by CRWP. She handed out copies of these five maps for the Commission to review with Ms. Znidarsic:

Riparian Setbacks – Mrs. Steffen asked which map was preferred, the version created by CRWP or the Township signed and approved version. The Commission decided to use CRWP's map which is clearer because it does not include lot lines. Ms. Znidarsic will align it with the official map by adding some wetlands not shown on the CRWP map.

Forest Cover – This was created in 2006 by the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration's Coastal Change Analysis Program (CCAP). Ms. Znidarsic thought there was a more recent map and will check.

208 Plan – Mrs. Steffen asked which map was preferred, the version created by CRWP or the official plan map approved by the Board of Trustees and the County Commissioners. The Commission decided to use the official plan map dated 2015.

Ms. Weiss Carson asked if the maps should be included within the text of the Guide Plan or added as an appendix at the end. The Commission agreed to include the maps within the text since it would be easier for the reader to reference.

Ms. Weiss Carson will send the text of the Regional Relationships chapter to Ms. Znidarsic for her review.

Mrs. Steffen will send the list of action items above to Ms. Znidarsic.

Mr. Snyder and the members of the Zoning Commission thanked Ms. Znidarsic for all her efforts with the maps and for her review of the text of the Environmental chapter. Mr. Snyder said that her work was excellent and very much appreciated by the Township.

Action Item: Mrs. Steffen to send the list of action items to Ms. Znidarsic. Mrs. Steffen to provide acreage data on the parks to Mr. Murphy. Mr. Warren to add Ms. Znidarsic's changes to his chapter, and to add some of her narrative regarding Stream Characteristics, with mention of the 2019 Ohio EPA reassessment of streams. Ms. Weiss Carson to send the Regional Relationships chapter to Ms. Znidarsic.

MINUTES OF JANUARY 13, 2016 – *Mr. Murphy made the motion to approve the minutes of January 13, 2016, Mr. Kotowski seconded and the motion passed by 4-0. Ms. Weiss Carson abstained due to her absence from that meeting.*

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 24, 2016 – *Mr. Murphy made the motion to approve the minutes of February 24, 2016, Ms. Weiss Carson seconded and the motion passed by 3-0. Mr. Warren and Mr. Kotowski abstained due to their absence from that meeting.*

EXECUTIVE SESSION – *Mr. Kotowski made the motion to adjourn to executive session per O.R.C. 121.22 (G) (1) to discuss personnel matters, specifically appointment and/or employment of a public employee and investigation of charges and/or complaints against a public official. Mr. Murphy seconded and upon roll call the vote was Mr. Murphy – yes, Ms. Weiss Carson – yes, Mr. Kotowski – yes, Mr. Warren – yes, Mr. Snyder – yes, and the motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting moved into executive session at 9:13 p.m.

The meeting returned to regular session at 10:41 p.m.

LAND USE GUIDE PLAN UPDATE: LAND USE PATTERNS – Mr. Murphy said he has started writing text and will continue to do so for the next meeting.

Action Item: Mr. Murphy to continue to write the Land Use Patterns chapter.

DEMOGRAPHICS – Mr. Kotowski said he had put a new folder on Dropbox titled 'Demographics New', but in fact the folder was empty. Mr. Kotowski will put the file into the new folder for the Commission to review by the next meeting.

Action Item: Mr. Kotowski to put his draft on Dropbox and advise the Commission when it is there.

There being no other business, Mr. Murphy moved to adjourn, Ms. Weiss Carson seconded and the meeting adjourned at 10:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Steffen
Secretary

Date

Richard Snyder
Chairman

Date