

Minutes: Russell Township Zoning Commission
Russell Fire-Rescue Station
March 25, 2015

Present: Bruce Murphy, Vice-Chairman
Ben Kotowski
Donna Weiss Carson
Diana Steffen, Secretary

Richard Snyder and Tom Warren were absent with apologies.
Also in attendance: Jennifer Dorka, Assistant to the Fiscal Officer.

The Vice-Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 25, 2015 – Ms. Weiss Carson made the motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Kotowski seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

There was not a quorum to approve the January meeting minutes.

REVIEW OF C-S ZONES AND NORTHSTAR REPORTS – Mr. Murphy said that the Commission has been working to accomplish the recommendations of the Northstar reports. When the Commercial Districts study was done fourteen years ago it noted that fifteen foot buffers were not adequate, and recommended additional buffers of walls, fences or mounds. Mr. Murphy noted that the buffers required for the Limited Business zone were created as a result of this study. The Commission discussed the buffer required in the proposed Food Service amendment when a use is adjacent to residentially-zoned property. Mr. Murphy said that fences are inadequate as a buffer because they do not protect from noise, and it is in the best interest of the business to do the most cost effective and mitigation effective buffer so that it does not have problems with neighbors. Residents move into Russell partly because of the quiet, and the Township should enact regulations to protect the residents. Ms. Weiss Carson suggested requiring a greater distance between the use and the property line, since in the case of one lot abutting a residential zone the mound buffer would be only 45 feet in length which may not be very effective.

Mr. Kotowski looked at the cost of installing fencing, which appeared to be approximately \$50 per 8 foot section plus \$8 to \$10 per post. He said that the cost is \$21 to \$28 per foot, and is \$25 per linear foot installed. This would be \$2,500 per 100 feet. In reviewing minutes from November 2014, Mrs. Steffen said that a representative from the Pattie Group had advised Mr. Snyder that a 200 foot earthen mound costs about \$7,000, with landscaping of trees and shrubbery being an extra cost. Mr. Kotowski said that a mound is comparable to a fence in cost but the landscaping would be an additional cost. However, once a mound and plantings are installed there is less maintenance than a fence. Mr. Murphy agreed and said that a mound is more cost effective. He noted also that the amendment requires a mound around the use or structure, and not along the entire property line. He said that buffers have been a concern for at least 14 years, and if there are to be expanded uses in the C-S zone it is important to protect the residential zones.

Action Item: The Commission to review the Northstar Commercial Districts report and the fence versus mound question for the next meeting.

NEW USES FOR C-S1 AND C-S2 DISTRICTS – Mr. Murphy reminded the Commission that in January 2012 they had individually reviewed lists from other townships of permitted uses in their commercial zones, but the Commission had not discussed them at a meeting. The question they need to address first is whether to create a long list of permitted uses or whether to have a short list and add a phrase such as "and similar uses." Mrs. Steffen mentioned that the Northstar report does suggest adding a "similar use" provision within the conditional use process, to establish authority to evaluate a proposed unlisted use. This would allow appropriate uses, not considered at the time the regulations were written, to be considered. Mr. Murphy suggested asking David Dietrich at the Geauga County Planning Commission which is the recommended way to do this. Mr. Kotowski said they need a rationale for what

