

Minutes: Russell Township Zoning Commission
Russell Fire-Rescue Station
May 28, 2014

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

Ben Kotowski was absent with apologies.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:50 p.m.

MINUTES OF APRIL 23, 2014 – *Mr. Murphy moved to accept the minutes as submitted, Ms. Weiss Carson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.*

GUIDE PLAN ROUNDUP – Great Recession – Mr. Snyder said that Russell's population was growing but now it has stopped, there are vacant houses and rental houses, and prices have gone down. He suggested the Commission look at how the recession affected the Township, and mention it in the Guide Plan. Mr. Murphy said that a brief paragraph referencing the recession may be useful, as long as it just mentioned that it happened and the effect it had on the country in general. Any judgments the Commission makes should be based on the residents' survey. Ms. Weiss Carson said that the Commission should only note facts and not try to make assumptions regarding the effects of the recession on the Township.

School District – Mr. Snyder asked the Commission whether it wanted to discuss the effect of a lower student population and what it means for housing in the Township. Mr. Warren felt that such issues relate to the health of the Township but are not related to zoning and are not appropriate to include in the Guide Plan. Mr. Snyder asked whether the Commission should discuss senior housing and apartments, so that the Guide Plan could show it was discussed even if it is agreed that nothing should be done at this time. Mr. Murphy said they would have to research whether something in the zoning is driving the decline in the student population, so that the zoning needs to be changed to bring in more children. He said that the residents have not said this in the survey.

Oil and Gas/Fracking – Mr. Snyder said that the residents were very concerned about fracking, and he asked if something should be mentioned in the Guide Plan on this topic. Mr. Warren said that the survey indicated people are opposed but due to state law the Township has no authority to do anything about it.

FOOD SERVICE AMENDMENT – Mr. Warren reviewed the proposed amendment and suggested several changes in the wording. He questioned whether noise should be mentioned in the amendment. Mr. Murphy said that the Trustees have a noise resolution now, which is a separate mechanism from zoning. He felt noise should not be included in the amendment, since businesses must adhere to the noise resolution anyway. A lengthy discussion took place regarding exterior dining with some changes being made to the wording. It was agreed to add wording to Section 4.7.L regarding the prohibition on commercial food preparation.

Action Item: Mr. Warren to look at the noise issue for the next meeting. Mrs. Steffen to draft a redline version of the amendment with the agreed changes. She will also put the Trustees' noise resolution on Dropbox. The Commission members will review Section 4.7 Prohibited Uses for discussion at the next meeting.

There being no other business, Mr. Murphy moved to adjourn, Mr. Warren seconded and the meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Steffen
Secretary

Date

Richard E. Snyder
Chairman

Date