

Minutes: Russell Township Zoning Commission
Russell Fire-Rescue Station
July 24, 2013

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

Chairman Richard Snyder called the meeting to order at 7:42 p.m.

MINUTES OF MAY 22, 2013 – *Mr. Murphy moved to approve the minutes as submitted, Mr. Warren seconded and the motion passed unanimously.*

C.R.W.P. (Chagrin River Watershed Partners) ENVIRONMENTAL MAPS – Mr. Snyder reviewed maps that were compiled by C.R.W.P. He explained that at a later date the Commission should determine which of the maps should be included in the Guide Plan, but for now he wanted to clarify some points regarding individual maps:

Three wetlands maps – These are all slightly different, one being compiled by CRWP that has been field checked, one compiled by the County Auditor that has not been field checked by CRWP, and one compiled by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that shows more wetland areas than the first two. CRWP will remove any lakes that no longer exist. It was agreed to ask CRWP to combine the three maps with footnotes to say the wetlands must be verified in the field by a wetland expert, and to say that the Russell Zoning Commission is the source.

Two flood plain maps – Both maps are FEMA maps, but the one with special flood hazard areas specifies areas that are considered floodway and indicates two flood zones, depending on the base flood elevations. It was agreed to use the general flood plain map, but to reference on it where to find more specific information.

Stream characteristics map, State scenic stream corridor map and Stream quality map – Definitions of the classes in the legend of the stream characteristics are necessary, as are definitions of the legend of the stream quality map. Ms. Weiss Carson noted that the creeks are not named on the Stream characteristics map.

Balanced Growth map – Definitions are needed for the legend, and there will be an explanation in the text. Mrs. Steffen recommended using the map that was adopted by the Township since it shows lot lines.

Impervious cover map – Mr. Snyder mentioned that the dots that represent houses were hand drawn on the map by a member of CRWP's staff. This map can be used to determine the amount of impervious cover in the Township. According to CRWP the impervious cover is currently at 5.8%, and 8% is considered a healthy watershed. It is possible that the percentage is a low figure, especially as gravel and paved driveways are not shown but are considered impervious.

Open space map – This map shows parks and conservation easement properties.

Forest cover map – This map will be useful as a reference in future years.

Dams, by class map – This map is dated 2001, and needs to be updated.

208 Plan map – CRWP's map is dated 2006 whereas the official 208 Plan map is current since it is updated whenever there is a change. Mrs. Steffen noted that the official 208 Plan map is the appropriate map to include in the Guide Plan.

Aquifer yield in gallons per minute map – Mrs. Steffen mentioned that there is a large map of the yield in the Zoning Office that was obtained some years ago from the Geauga County Planning Commission, in which the blue area is shown in the legend to yield 5 to 15 gallons per minute, whereas CRWP's map shows it only as less than 25 gallons. Mr. Snyder said this will need to be checked.

Groundwater pollution potential – This measures the potential for pollution from pollutants such as oil and gas. The methodology was developed by the E.P.A. or another agency, and an explanation of DRASTIC mapping will be required. Mr. Warren noted that the purple in the legend should be shown as less than 79 and not more than 79.

Subwatersheds map – Mrs. Steffen said including this map in the Guide Plan would be useful for residents since they often do not know in which watershed they live. Mr. Snyder said the legend needs to be corrected since the blue-colored area is the Upper Main branch and not a tributary to the Upper main branch.

Mr. Snyder said this is a first review of the items requested from CRWP, and includes items used in the current Guide Plan and some additional items that could be used. Mr. Snyder said he felt strongly that the new updated Guide Plan should be useful to residents as a reference. There will need to be statements that the maps are a guide, with a note where to reference further information. The Commission agreed with this approach.

Mr. Snyder said he met with David Dietrich who will act as the planning expert. The Commission will assemble all the data and write much of the text, and Mr. Dietrich will edit it. It will be a joint effort to decide which maps and tables to include in the Guide Plan. The Guide Plan must be strong enough to be defensible in court. Mr. Dietrich liked Mr. Snyder's idea to make it more useful to residents rather than just be filed away and never be used. He also asked that the Commission assemble as much data as possible and he will then assist in paring it back. Although he has data on demographics he would like the Commission to put all the data together that is important for understanding the direction Russell is heading and the reason for making certain decisions.

NOACA has provided one copy of 'Connections 2035', its new Transportation Plan that Mr. Snyder said contains demographic data and projections to 2040, which may be very useful. He is attempting to obtain more copies since reading it online is difficult due to the layout. He will also try to obtain an 'unlocked' electronic version in order to use some of the information in the Guide Plan, for which NOACA would be given the credit.

Action Item: Mr. Snyder to try to obtain more copies of the Transportation Plan; Mr. Murphy to see if the PDF version can be used by the Commission; Mr. Kotowski to gather all the demographics data that is available.

As far as existing land use, Mr. Snyder said Colleen Sharp, who works for G.S.W.C.D. but also assists the G.C.P.C., will be working on this project. She will work with Mr. Dietrich to come up with a workable land use map without making it too complex. Then it will be given to Mr. Murphy for his input. Mr. Murphy asked that it be kept as simple as possible. He said the classifications will have to be added separately to each parcel.

Mr. Snyder suggested the Commission review Hambden Township's Guide Plan which is the most recent plan updated by Mr. Dietrich. He explained that the Commission will work closely with Mr. Dietrich to compile the updated plan, which Mr. Dietrich estimates will take eighteen months to complete.

