

Minutes: Russell Township Zoning Commission
Russell Fire-Rescue Station
October 23, 2013

Present: Richard E. Snyder, Chairman
Bruce Murphy
Donna Weiss Carson (arrived at 7:50 p.m.)
Ben Kotowski
Diana Steffen, Secretary

Tom Warren was absent with apologies.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:46 p.m.

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 25, 2013 – *Mr. Murphy moved to approve the minutes as submitted, Mr. Kotowski seconded and the motion passed unanimously by 3-0.*

LAND USE GUIDE PLAN UPDATE: Demographics – Mr. Snyder said that the previous guide plans used population estimates, but he suggested using the information on the number of potentially buildable lots that Mr. Kotowski and Mrs. Steffen compiled, which estimated the number of additional homes that can be built before reaching build out. He felt this will be a more accurate method to estimate future township growth than simply considering population projections, the estimates of which have been inaccurate to wildly off the mark in the previous and current guide plans. After discussion the Commission agreed to use this data, since a range of population growth can also be estimated using the number of potential new households.

Mr. Kotowski handed out a suggested layout for bar graphs, which he preferred to use in most instances rather than pie graphs or line graphs. The Commission suggested a few improvements and noted that the CSU Land Use Survey completed last June primarily used bar graphs. Mr. Snyder asked Mr. Kotowski if he can update the tables in the Demographics chapter with assistance from Mrs. Steffen, and Mr. Kotowski said he can if he has enough time. Mr. Snyder mentioned that it is important to document the population change with respect to adjacent communities and the region. The Commission agreed that the "tree" graph showing age and sex data should be updated to include the data from 1970, 1990, 2000 and 2010, which will show how dramatic the change has been over those years. The Commission also agreed that the graphs should be in color, since the updated guide plan will be in digital format, thus requiring a minimal number of copies to be printed. The black and white shades in many graphs in the current guide plan are difficult to distinguish.

Land Use Patterns – Mr. Snyder suggested a solution to the problem of defining current land use in the Township. He suggested not documenting the actual land use, which in the current guide plan uses five different categories that were not defined and were not the same as used in the previous guide plan. Instead he would like to show how well the large lot zoning implemented in 1974 has preserved open and green space within the residential districts. The recent residents' survey indicated that residents are satisfied with Russell for reasons such as quality of life, air quality, availability of open green space, and the rural character and overall look of the Township. The verbatim comments confirmed this when many said they do not wish the Township to change. Due to the 3 and 5 acre zoning districts, and the regulations regarding impervious surface, riparian setbacks, and planned residential developments, a large amount of land will be preserved in its natural state. People can see how the zoning has preserved many natural areas. Mr. Snyder suggested showing these areas on a map and comparing it to a map showing how the Township would have looked with one-and-a-half acre zoning and without the new restrictions. Any challenges in court could be defended by showing that the current land use reflects the wishes of the residents. It would be measurable.

Mr. Snyder said he talked to the Chagrin River Watershed Partners about this approach, and was told they have software that can document the "undeveloped" land which they would then tweak manually as needed. He said C.R.W.P. is eager to do this work. It will demonstrate in a measurable way the result of

