

The Rootstown Township Zoning Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, February 3, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. at Rootstown Town Hall.

Present: George Tishma
Rob Swauger
Steve Brown
Theresa Summers

Also present:
Trustee Joe Paulus
Zoning Assistant Jordan Michael

Audience: Roger Carpenter

Chair, Rob Swauger, called the meeting to order at 7:18 p.m. and asked everyone to stand to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Rob asked for a motion to approve the previous month's meeting minutes. He asked for one correction: on the second page, third paragraph, the properties on Tallmadge Road are actually properties on State Route 44. Vice Chair George Tishma made a motion to approve the revised minutes. Steve Brown seconded the motion. The vote was as follows: Rob- yes, George- yes, Theresa- yes, Steve- yes. The motion was passed 4-0.

Rob asked for any old business to discuss. He said Todd Peetz had sent him the zoning map and asked if the Internet was fixed in the zoning office so he could email it. Zoning Assistant Jordan Michael said yes. Rob said that Todd will also include him on any future correspondence regarding the Zoning Commission.

Rob said that last year's amendment regarding the Wickes Lumber property needs to be sent to the trustees, as well as the definitions amendment. He asked which members were present for the Wickes Lumber amendment. George said he was not. Steve said he was not. Rob said he will table that issue. George asked for more information. Jordan said it was to approve contractor's yard and storage as a permitted use in that district. Rob said he will get more information and they can discuss it later.

Next was to review the amended definitions. Theresa Summers asked if the reason for the amendment was to fix grammatical errors. Rob said yes. George asked if Todd Peetz made the changes. Steve said yes, it came from his office. Theresa agreed and said it's a reflection on us if they put out something that's not right. George asked if this has been going on for a whole year. Trustee Joe Paulus said it's been longer than that. Theresa asked if they are voting for this to go to the trustees for their review. The other members said yes. George asked Rob what kind of motion he was looking for. Rob asked for a motion to send this to the trustees. Theresa made a motion to send the amended and approved definitions to the trustees. George seconded the motion. The vote was as follows: Rob- yes, George- yes, Theresa- yes, Steve- yes. The motion was passed 4-0.

Rob asked for any new business to discuss. Theresa said she researched JEDDs to get

a better understanding. She also looked for information on village centers. Joe said a village center is different from a village. Theresa said it seems like more of a city thing anyway. She asked if it's possible for the township to hire someone to be in charge of economic development. Joe said the trustees discussed this just last week. Rob said the JEDD board could hire one since they receive a portion of the overall income tax money. The trustees could also negotiate a lower fee or a lower income to Tallmadge to help offset that cost.

Theresa said the community needs to figure out what they want Rootstown to look like. She used the town center as an example. Embracing NEOMed and finding ways to draw them in could spur economic development there. Similar to Kent having the Esplanade from Kent State, but smaller. Joe said that's the kind of thing NEOMed wants to have. He said the college is being embraced and will be a partner for the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Once their property is rezoned from R-2 to C-2, the township has a better chance of getting tax revenue from there. George said he knows the university isn't going away but would like to see them a little bit more controlled. Theresa added that the town center could have activities planned, even if it's something small. Joe said right now the school is the central point where everything happens, but it's not very open. Theresa suggested any sort of community events that bring people together. Rob said the Zoning Commission will be involved in decisions about the growth of the township and the land use plan, as well as community members. Joe said there will be a community advisory committee from various backgrounds to get a well-rounded sample. George said the future of the school is a big part of what's going to happen in Rootstown. It is a large area that could be all commercialized. Joe said he's heard the same thing from NEOMed, that the school is wasted real estate. But building new schools would cost at least \$50 million, and if NEOMed were to jump across the street and take the land, it's still wasted real estate. Theresa said building nothing but doctor's offices wouldn't bring people to the center of town. Joe said NEOMed has economies of scale that they're hoping to draw in. George said we don't want to grow too fast; there have been many mistakes in many towns that have tried to do that. Joe said part of the reason to discuss expanding SR 44 to five lanes was to think ahead in case the school was to become commercial property. George said the school might even have to combine with another district.

Rob asked if the commission should take a look at creating a university district, or at least research it. He asked if there is such a thing. Joe said there are university districts and he thinks that's a good suggestion. George asked if the university can be defined to that area. Rob said they probably can't be confined but we would have to see. Joe said from his understanding, a university district would give them more leeway on signage and things they want to do internally. Rob asked if anyone could research that and get the basics down. Theresa volunteered.

Rob asked for any other new business. George asked why the township has conditional use and what the purpose is to have conditional use on anything. Joe said it was initially generated to not just give carte blanche. If something pushes the boundaries, then the Board of Appeals looks at it to say how it's going to affect neighboring zones. He gave the example of multi-family dwellings that were proposed across the street from the cemetery. The permit comes with conditions that have to be met. George said he has a feeling the ZBA is going to get more business, with more people needing to go to them. He asked who has the right to okay a conditional use. Joe said the Board of Appeals. Rob and Jordan also said the Board of Appeals. George asked if there is a ratio as to what gets passed. Joe said the Zoning Inspector says no and tells the applicant to appeal the decision with the

Board of Appeals.

Rob said he went to the trustee meeting about rezoning. Joe asked if that has been passed to the commission. Rob said no, it has to be brought to them. Steve said they are supposed to get a letter. Joe asked Jordan if he had that ready for them. Jordan said he wasn't aware of that. Joe said they made a motion at the trustee meeting to ask the commission, so they should be getting a letter from the trustees. He wasn't sure who was going to do that. Jordan said he thinks it's Julie (the trustees' secretary). Joe said they can move forward with it if they want to and not wait for the letter. George asked if they were waiting for zoning maps. Joe said not to wait for those. Rob said he has the map, but the Internet was down so he couldn't send it to Jordan. Jordan said it's running now. George said it was his understanding that the university wasn't cooperating with them because their land is R-2. Joe said that should have been changed back in 1973 when it became a university. The township can't get any money from there because it's zoned R-2. The attorneys were looking at case law and that's why there was a delay in asking the commission to change that. Now they might get tax money from Sequoia and from the apartments. Rob said they're going to wait for the letter, and he doesn't think that will affect the JEDD if they wait until next month. Joe said the commission will have a public hearing, but before that it goes to Regional Planning and the prosecutor, so they're probably looking at July. George asked if there was a way to shorten this. Rob said they could meet more than once a month. Joe said they could hold a special meeting. George said that would be fine. Rob said he will contact Julie, and when he gets the request, they will discuss having a special meeting. George asked Theresa and Steve if they were okay with the idea. They both agreed.

Next topic was the Sandy Lake and Muzzy Lake associations. Rob said he emailed Karen to get contacts from each group. Joe said he got them from her. She only had contacts from Sappwood Shores and Sandy Lake, but Joe said he has one for East Muzzy Lake too. Rob said we need to be in touch with them, now with the hotel going up. Joe told Rob he would email that to him.

With no other business, Rob asked for a motion to adjourn. George made the motion to adjourn. Theresa seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Rob Swauger, Chair
Rootstown Township Zoning Commission