

Minutes: Russell Township Zoning Commission  
Russell Town Hall  
December 14, 2021

Present: Mr. Ben Kotowski, Chairman  
Mr. Jim Dickinson, Vice Chairman  
Mr. Barry Rogers  
Mr. Nathan Wynveen  
Dr. Chris Stormann

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

Also in attendance: Mr. Shane Wrench, Zoning Inspector; Mrs. Cathleen Birli, Zoning Secretary; Mr. Matt Rambo, Zoning Commissioner

The rescheduling Sunshine Notice was announced in the Chagrin Valley Times and the Geauga Maple Leaf, Thursday, November 25, 2021.

*Mr. Wynveen made the motion to accept the meeting agenda, Mr. Rogers seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

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**Discussion: Board of Zoning Appeal's Concerns – Mr. Matt Rambo Board of Zoning Appeals**

Mr. Matt Rambo, a member of the Board of Zoning Appeals, attended the meeting to discuss some of the Board of Zoning Appeals concerns.

He showed a map of Cloveridge Road and Hemlock Heights area. The area is in a R5 district but the lots are 2 acres. This causes problems for additions/accessory buildings and sheds.

The Resolution Book does not have lot consolidation, creating a new parcel, setback rules. When the lot is consolidated is the parcel considered a pre-existing lot or does the new consolidated parcel become a new lot, which would meet different setbacks.

Mr. Rogers asked how a zoning resolution could help. **Mr. Rambo said that prior non-conforming structures/lots should have a new resolution on setbacks that address lot consolidation, something in the middle - "The lot was conforming, but now is considered non-conforming." Also, this is something the owner should know before they consider a lot consolidation.**

Mr. Kotowski stated buyers should be informed of the new setbacks and the possibility of variances needed for additions, accessory buildings, etc..

Mr. Dickinson thought new lots should be grandfathered in.

Mr. Kotowski suggested the zoning inspector could record the former use if consolidation happens.

Mr. Rogers asked what level of involvement should the zoning inspector have and suggested that the zoning office should sign off on lot consolidation. **Mr. Rambo agreed, then we would know what was there before the lot consolidation.**

Mr. Kotowski asked if there were any other items besides setbacks that would cause an issue? **Mr. Rambo said lot coverage percentage could be a factor too.**

Mr. Rogers said these are issues that could come before the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Mr. Dickinson said we should encourage large lots and should not discourage new structures.

Mr. Kotowski stated there should be a zoning inspection in the resolution book when the lot consolidation notice comes to the township, from the Geauga County Planning Commission. **Mr. Rambo said, yes, then the zoning inspector can inspect the lot/buildings.**

The board agreed that this should be addressed in the updating of the Resolution Book.

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#### **Discussion: Resolution Book Update Questions**

Mr. Dickinson stated that Mr. Dietrich will walk us through improving the resolution book.

The zoning inspector said Mr. Dietrich will give us direction and update any language.

Mr. Rogers stated that we will discuss the timeline at the January 26, 2022 meeting.

Mr. Dickinson asked the zoning inspector if other communities have updated their resolution book? **The zoning inspector said he only heard of Bainbridge updating.**

Mr. Dickinson asked about funding for this project? **The zoning inspector said that the money will be coming out of the general fund.**

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#### **Discussion: Air BNB's:**

The board asked Mr. Rambo if the BZA had any variances for Air BNB's? **Mr. Rambo said No.**

Mr. Dickinson said the difference between Air BNB's and Bed & Breakfasts, are BNB's, the owner stays in the home and cooks; Air BNB's, the owners move out of the home.

Mr. Dickinson stated we need to also define long versus short term rentals.

The zoning inspector said that the prosecutor is following up on the home on Fairmount Road. He stated that the home went to an "Agricultural Use" when they found out they could not have separate living quarters from the existing home.

Mr. Kotowski asked the zoning inspector to follow-up with the prosecutor on the progress of the suit.

The Auburn Township Air BNB case is still in the court system.

Mr. Kotowski stated we need to ask Mr. Dietrich on specific rules for both B&B's and Air BNB's. The board agreed.

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**Discussion: Music Street and Chillicothe Road Corner:**

Mr. Rogers asked the zoning inspector about the new ditch he saw on the corner. The zoning inspector saw that too and will reach out to the Roads Department.

Mr. Wynveen thinks the whole corner is not contiguous for commercial businesses and/or not attractive for homes, at this point.

Mr. Rogers suggested using township funds to improve the look of the corner.

Mr. Kotowski asked if the corner could be re-zoned residential?

Mr. Kotowski will follow-up with the Trustees.

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**No Public Comments were Received**

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**Minutes:**

The board reviewed the minutes from the November 16, 2021 meeting.

*Mr. Dickinson made the motion to accept the minutes from the November 16, 2021 meeting. Mr. Rogers seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

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