

Minutes: Russell Township Zoning Commission
Russell Fire-Rescue Station
January 13, 2016

Present: Richard Snyder, Chairman
Bruce Murphy
Ben Kotowski
Tom Warren
Diana Steffen, Secretary

Donna Weiss Carson was absent with apologies.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS – *Mr. Warren moved to open the floor for nominations, Mr. Kotowski seconded and the motion passed unanimously.*

Mr. Warren moved to nominate Richard Snyder as Chairman for 2016, Mr. Kotowski seconded.

Mr. Warren moved to nominated Bruce Murphy as Vice Chairman for 2016, Mr. Kotowski seconded.

Mr. Warren moved to close nominations, Mr. Kotowski seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Upon verbal vote Mr. Snyder was unanimously re-elected Chairman.

Upon verbal vote Mr. Murphy was unanimously re-elected Vice Chairman.

MINUTES OF OCTOBER 28, 2015 – *Mr. Warren made the motion to accept the minutes as presented, Mr. Kotowski seconded and the motion passed unanimously.*

MINUTES OF DECEMBER 9, 2015 – *Mr. Murphy made the motion to accept the minutes as presented, Mr. Warren seconded and the motion passed unanimously.*

LAND USE GUIDE PLAN UPDATE – ENVIRONMENTAL CHAPTER – Mr. Warren reviewed the draft that he had revised since the comments discussed at the last meeting. He said there are three outstanding issues: underground storage tanks, the 208 Plan, and the selection of maps to use in the chapter. Mrs. Steffen said that, as requested, she spoke to Fire Chief John Frazier about possible regulation of underground storage tanks. Chief Frazier thought that might be a good idea and should be based on state rules, with BUSTR being the department with authority over commercial tanks. The EPA investigates leaks. He is willing to attend a Zoning Commission meeting to discuss this idea. The Commission confirmed that the 208 Plan is for sewers only and is an agreement between the Board of Trustees and the County Commissioners.

In discussing the maps compiled by the Chagrin River Watershed Partners (CRWP), Mr. Warren explained that the Commission needs to decide which maps to use, and that in some cases there are two or more alternative maps on one topic using different sources. It was agreed the maps are to be informational for the reader without a legal significance. Mrs. Steffen will ask CRWP how they compiled data for their wetlands map, and if it is more accurate than wetlands maps they also submitted using data from the Auditor's Office and from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, so the Commission can make a more informed decision. She will also ask CRWP to check the accuracy of the groundwater aquifer yields map, since the legend has a discrepancy. The most up-to-date official 208 Plan map will be used and not the CRWP map.

Mr. Snyder suggested that we include a section on the Russell Park Commission and its mission to acquire properties for preservation and conservation, since it is a major contributor to the amount of land preserved in Russell. He would also like to include a map of the properties it owns. The Commission

agreed and Mrs. Steffen will obtain the Park Commission's charter and information on it to assist Mr. Warren in writing a section. She will invite the Chairman to a meeting to discuss the Park Commission's mission for a better understanding by the Zoning Commission. Mr. Snyder said the wants and desires of the residents are clear in the 1994 and 2012 surveys regarding land preservation, and he suggested that it be included in the Environmental chapter with a reference to it in the Land Use chapter. Mrs. Steffen said she will ask CRWP or the GCPC to make a map showing Park Commission owned properties. All except the most recent acquisition are zoned Passive Park District and have conservation easements to protect them.

Action Item: Mr. Warren and Mrs. Steffen to discuss the maps; Mrs. Steffen to contact CRWP regarding the alternative maps, discrepancy in one map, and to request a map of Park Commission owned properties. Mrs. Steffen to ask the Park Commission for its charter and mission statement, and to invite Mr. Podojil to a meeting. Mrs. Steffen to give Mr. Warren proof reading comments.

DEMOGRAPHICS – Mr. Kotowski handed out a revised draft of the Demographics chapter, and commented on charts 2 and chart 3. He said that because residents were neutral on the issue of having nursing homes and assisted living facilities in Russell, his assumption is that it is because they are available in the surrounding area, and he will make a chart to show the regional availability of these services. This may show the rationale for the community's view that they are not needed in Russell Township. He will put it in the Aging Population section. Mr. Murphy recommended that, if the data is available, he include what changes have been occurring regionally and as the population ages to show this has been addressed. Mr. Kotowski agreed to indicate that the market has been responding to the need, with the chart to illustrate this.

Under the section B Housing and Individual Demographics, Mr. Kotowski said there is no reliable source for income and he asked Mr. Snyder for the calculation he had made regarding where the Township stands relative to inflation 20 years ago. He would put this as a footer and show the source and calculation. He will also show the source for the income figures he used in that section. He asked for input on the paragraph he had written on Occupations.

Mr. Kotowski asked the Commission to consider if there should be an executive summary at the end of each chapter or one executive summary for the entire Guide Plan. It was agreed to complete each chapter and then consider this. Mr. Kotowski will add a line in the first paragraph of the chapter to say that the aging population creates a challenge and that the demographics indicate a white collar, middle to upper middle class community.

Action Item: Mr. Kotowski to finalize charts 2 and 3; to make a chart and explanation regarding care facilities; to add Mr. Snyder's income calculation as a footer; to add a sentence in the first paragraph as described in the previous paragraph above; to add page numbers and proofread the chapter. Mr. Snyder to provide his calculation. Mrs. Steffen to proofread the chapter. ZC to review 'Occupations' section.

LAND USE – Although this topic was not on the agenda, Mr. Murphy advised that the Geauga County Planning Commission is working on a land use map using the categories determined by the Commission and the spreadsheet created by Mrs. Steffen. Mr. Murphy said the next step will be to write a summary of each of the categories, then take the acreage numbers and compare them with past land use. There will need to be a disclaimer since the past land use maps were created using undocumented subjective definitions of land use categories that were useful at the time. Mr. Murphy explained that the map will be a reflection of how the land is being used now, which coincides with the wishes of the residents. Over the last 40 years the Township has been moving in the direction expressed by residents in community surveys and focus groups. The zoning changes implemented 40 years ago and updated from time to time have resulted in the current land uses which satisfy an overwhelming proportion of residents as indicated in the 2012 Township household survey. Mr. Murphy emphasized that the map will show the existing conditions and will not provide any indication for the future of where development may occur.

