

Austinburg Township

Zoning Commission Minutes
October 2, 2024

Members:

David Gottwig, Chair
Laurie Robishaw, Vice-Chair
Clare Polak
Phil Miller
Shara Parkomaki (absent)
Teresa Gottwig, Alternate

Also Present:

*Byron Dutton, Trustee Liaison
Sarah Frank, Zoning Secretary
Rob LaPuh, Zoning Administrator*

Chair opened the meeting at 5:05pm. Chair requested roll call attendance:

<i>Clare - Present</i>	<i>Shara - Not Present</i>	<i>David - Present</i>
<i>Laurie - Present</i>	<i>Phil - Present</i>	<i>Teresa - Present</i>

Laurie motioned to approve minutes of the September 4, 2024, public hearing; Phil seconded. All present voted aye. **Minutes approved.**

Zoning Administrator gave his report that there has been a proposed structure submitted for the former Mr. C's property for a building of 10,000 square feet to include a coffee shop, restaurant, and gas station.

Secretary stated she had sent the Fiscal Officer a drafted resolution of the recent zoning amendment for Township Trustees to sign; however, Secretary sent the wrong document and Trustee Liaison Dutton confirmed no document had been signed. Secretary will prepare the needed documents for Township Trustees to sign and for Zoning Administrator to submit to the Recorder's office.

Laurie distributed her notes titled "Random Thoughts on Solar Panels" and Commission discussed. Zoning Administrator recommended Commission review setback regulations for solar panels. Chair recommended focus on regulations of solar panels in residential areas, rather than of solar farms, and he also agreed to review agricultural definitions in the ORC. Vice-Chair agreed to draft regulations for minimum acreage and setbacks.

Commission discussed letter from Township Trustees dated 8/19/24 requesting Commission "to research and propose regulations" regarding strip plaza in the AC District. Those present discussed other multi-business examples (like Flying J / Denny's and Pilot / Subway), other zoning regulations (including Saybrook Township's Official Schedule of District Regulations), and Trustee Liaison Dutton's example of how a building was lawfully used as an auction house. Laurie felt that addressing this topic would require a large multi-faceted scope and Commission will have to continue to discuss this.

Commission discussed comprehensive planning, including the role of surveys, AC district, downtown housing, riverfront housing, smaller square footage housing, sewers, and "head in the sand" vs "reasonable development" in what Trustee Liaison described as a "bedroom community" (live here, commute to work).

Chair reported that he informally asked trustees for their approval on Commission doing its own comprehensive planning process and received a positive consensus and topical feedback. Trustee Kusar suggested utilizing the next township-wide newsletter distribution in May. Vice-Chair requested a written approval with specified parameters from Township Trustees before spending so much time on something

that may be rejected; she cited that elected officials must worry about the long-term consequences of a comprehensive plan. She further explained that, if it supports the code, it can be used to support the code in court; however, it has no legal standing as a stand-alone document. Furthermore, any changes to the text should be changed *before* the comprehensive plan. Chair and Vice-Chair agreed to edit a letter for submission to Township Trustees.

Vice-Chair motioned to change regularly-scheduled meeting time from 5pm to 6pm; Clare seconded. All present voted aye. Motion passed.

Vice-Chair motioned to adjourn; Clare seconded. All present voted aye. ***Meeting adjourned at 6:49pm.***

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarah Frank

Sarah Frank, Secretary