Austinburg Township

Zoning Commission Minutes **November 6, 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

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

Clare - Present Shara - Not Present David - Present Laurie - Present Phil - Present Teresa - Present

Laurie motioned to approve minutes of the October 2, 2024, public hearing; Clare seconded.

Voice vote taken: Minutes approved.

Chair read aloud Zoning Administrator's brief report that he approved 2 accessory buildings and 1 new home on Clay Street.

Chair reported on solar farms, including its potential in Windsor and its mandates in ORC 519.213. Laurie presented her notes titled "Solar Panel Possible Definitions" and "Solar Panels within Residential Areas". Commission reviewed general setback requirements and height limitations. David referred to City of Dublin Building Division regulations. Laurie doesn't want to limit a resident from installing them the way they want to. Phil questioned making limitations due to aesthetic concerns. Commission will continue to review Laurie's notes.

Laurie presented her notes titled "Zoning for a multipurpose building" to address the letter from Township Trustees dated 8/19/24 requesting Commission "to research and propose regulations" regarding strip plaza in the AC District. Commission agreed to schedule a work session to review the notes more closely; Secretary will coordinate it with Zoning Administrator and will send out the document for multiple editors to comment.

Laurie presented her notes titled "Austinburg Township Comprehensive Plan Project". She explained she did not reference *All In! Ashtabula County Comprehensive Plan* (2022) because of its size and scope, but rather referred to Saybrook as a more similar sample. Teresa asked Trustee Liaison if Township Trustees' concerns were addressed in the drafted document. Laurie stated her concern that Commission may not be ready for this comprehensive plan process because it is still in reactionary mode and trying to get the code in order, while this process may be so time-consuming.

David talked about his concerns with decreasing land size or square footage, inviting housing developments. Trustee Liaison felt the township is losing its elderly due to the lack of small housing; he also addressed state health department regulations on frontage, the prioritization of sewers to rapid development, and the similarities between downtown and riverfront lot sizes.

Chair cited the need to give residents more opportunity to give their input. Laurie commented on the difficulty for Commission to complete its goals in a timely manner, especially when hearing attendance is often low. Trustee Liaison suggested using the newsletter to communicate the Commission's current work because people who have strong concerns will reach out. David thanked him for the suggestion and stated Commission will plan that in the spring.

Laurie motioned to table the comprehensive planning process until other zoning regulation needs are met; Clare seconded. Voice vote taken: motion passed.

Regarding new business, David questioned if, since the township already approved the medical marijuana dispensaries, does the township have to allow the recently state-passed recreational marijuana dispensaries? Commission discussed Harpersfield's rejection thereof, AC, IOP, marijuana licensure and associated costs, and that a new county prosecutor was just elected yesterday. Laurie and David said they will ask for more information first from local business owners and the state licensing body.

David asked about the definition of arcade and the provision of food and beverage; Commission discussed.

Laurie motioned to adjourn; Clare seconded. Voice vote taken: motion passed. *Meeting adjourned at 6:45pm*.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarah Frank

Sarah Frank, Secretary