

Regular Meeting
Lafayette Township Zoning Commission
Safety Services Building 6:30pm
Tuesday, October 22, 2024

Rich Javorek called the meeting to order. Roll call of members; Chase Burmeister, Jim Aylsworth, Dianne Wenslow, Brian Morse, and Joe Praisler. Absent: Nick Kittle.

Rich passed out the sign in sheet for board members. He asked members to look at the meeting minutes, for 9/10/24 . Chase Burmeister made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as printed, seconded by Jim Aylsworth. All voting in favor, none opposed.

Zoning Inspector Report was passed out to ZC board members. Sherri Meinke was absent. Discussion about the fees being the same as last year, but the value is less. Brief comment that the “tent people” across from Dollar General has been cleared out and cleaned up. The question about whether Social Services assisted those people. No one had knowledge of that.

Public Participation: NONE

New Business: NONE

Questions from Joe Praisler about when can we make a resolution? I strongly believe that we are working in a direction that does not support our current Comprehensive Plan. Comment, are you suggesting we should revise the comprehensive plan? Discussion about increasing the minimum acreage for Rural Residential. I am in favor of increasing it to five acres. Is our community going to follow and become another Montville? Or are we going to maintain a rural atmosphere?

Rich commented that the ZC does have the power to submit a change to that effect. It would have to go through the process, go to the CPC, have the Trustees vote on it, etc. If we do that, it will send a message out to the developers.

Discussion that we have already decided to change the acreage for a PUD (Planned Unit Development) to be increase from the current required forty acres and increase it to seventy acres. This is in our language BUT has not been sent to the CPC yet. Rich stated we do not have to keep it at seventy if the board thinks that is too small.

Dianne, we are still classified as “rural”?

Joe: Can we designate large areas as strictly agricultural? Discussion about whether we can do this or not. The consensus was that would be infringing on people’s individual property rights.

Jim: This is a major change. Ten years have more than elapsed since we adopted the Comprehensive Plan, we should consider doing a reevaluation of at least that part of it. Do the people still want to maintain the rural character? That would give more credence to what we recommend and send to the Trustees.

DW: I agree.

Discussion about outside developers purchasing large acreage of land and financing water availability. We need to have these discussions right now to make decisions for the future, instead of shooting at the hip when something comes up.

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Jim: It is up to the Zoning Commission to focus on these long-range plans. Those are good questions.

Chase: I have stated at meetings that some of the items we've decided on are not real cohesive with our Comprehensive Plan.

Brief discussion about whether any board members were here when the Comprehensive Plan was originally adopted; Dianne Wenslow, Jim Aylesworth and Karen Schoonover were. Discussion about how long the process of Comp. Plan revision is, it can take a year or longer. It is not a fast process, but we would have the most recent feedback available. We would not have to do the entire plan, just focusing on areas such as the Local Commercial, Agriculture, it would hopefully take less time.

Discussion about whether the county is considering putting water and sewer lines down Route 42. If so, that would be major changes in our area.

Chase did attend the Commissioner's Meeting about the county updating of the water treatment plant in Chippewa Lake. They discussed their future plans which do not go anywhere west of the basin. But that can change. Discussion about the use of "pump stations" to increase water & sewer availability. Justin attended that meeting also. Just remember, everything can change.

Karen: As a board member you can make the decision to approach the Trustees with a request to review the Comprehensive Plan.

Discussion about the board approaching the Trustees with a request to do a review of our current Comprehensive Plan. Discussion about what the board would like the review to focus on, specific issues, especially our Local Commercial Areas, increasing lot size, etc. We have a huge task, to have a zoning code that makes sense and is enforceable. Per Justin, the courts tend to give deference to property owners/developers. Incongruencies with a comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan is a tool & should be lock step with what our zoning code outlines.

Discussion about farmland and the ZC/zoning resolutions/comp. plans role is encouraging or preserving that. How do we mitigate wholesale changes that you or I have no control over? Especially since so many residents mention the rural character of the township as the reason they came to the area. We can change the acreage requirement; we can do that.

Discussion about the size of our township and what makes up our community? Not sure, those statistics in the comprehensive plan may have changed, we may have lost farmland.

Rich: Does the board feel that we should approach the Trustees with a request for a Comprehensive Plan review? We would need a motion, and a second. Does anyone want to make a motion? Joe Praisler made a motion to approach the trustees with a proposal to review our Comprehensive Plan, Brian Morse seconded this. All in favor of the motion; state Aye, all opposed same sign. Motion passed. The secretary will draft a letter to the Trustees. Any other new business?

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Unfinished Business:

Discussion about the Local Commercial language that had been discussed. Starting with the access drive signing an easement, like language that Chatham Township uses. Where should this go in our current revision? We need to firm up the back lot language before we insert this. We do have language, but it is not cohesive.

What we are talking about is just the Local Commercial language. Decided to add the text like Chatham's under 303.4 I.

Discussion about Fences & Walls. Leave the statement in there that says "Fences and walls may be erected in the LC District provided they comply with the requirements set forth by the county.

Discussion about 303.4 G which is currently titled: Existing Residential Use within a Local Commercial District. This would address a side yard buffer zone. In that circumstance you would need to have a fence or a side yard buffer zone. *The side yard buffer zone is intended to provide a visual and physical buffer between residential and commercial uses. Enhancing the esthetic appeal and mitigating potential impacts such as noise, light and pollution.*

Comment, not sure you need the esthetic reference. Okay, that can be removed.

This zone shall be a minimum of fifteen feet and shall be maintained. This zone shall include a combination of trees, shrubs and ground cover to ensure year-round screening. This zone must include at least one (1) tree per twenty linear feet, with a mix of evergreen and deciduous species. Shrubs shall be planted at a density of one (1) per five linear feet.

Who would be responsible for maintaining? The landowner. This would help provide greenspace to the LC District. This would be the commercial owner that would be responsible. We would have the required landscape buffer at the front, this would give you a guaranteed fifteen foot of buffer. There is already a mandated twenty-five feet setback, this would create a buffer zone within that mandated setback area. We would not be adding to it. Not sure if a fence would be cheaper.

Discussion about earth mounds. Should that be in there also? That should be included in your wording. Add " An earthen mound with shrubs and ground cover would also be adequate."

Comment: Does this "buffer" have to continue the length of the property? That has not been addressed. The area where the side yard strip needs to be located is not specific. We want it visually to protect the adjoining residential use. How do we word that? It would depend on where the commercial building was going.

Discussion about how this would allow the Zoning Inspector to make decisions at the time of the site plan review. The ZI will need to interpret our language and decide whether the buffer is needed to be more or less. What we are looking for is a buffer for the existing residential use.

If the house is zoned commercial, can it be sold for another residential use? Houses in the Local Commercial area are pre-existing, non-conforming use and can be sold as a residence.

Regular Meeting
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Tuesday, October 22, 2024

Discussion about pre-existing, non-conforming uses and when they end, like the church on Coon Club Rd. It was a pre-existing, non-conforming church, and now is a residence, it cannot return to being a church. Discussion about businesses in RR area which are grandfathered in for specific businesses, such as a bar; they cannot sell, and new owner put in an auto shop. They are only grandfathered for the specific business use they are.

Jim, I have a question under frontage requirements on standard lots in the LC District, why does it state only 100 continuous feet with central water and sewer? If it has that, it can have less frontage.

It has to do with the LC District in the Chippewa Lake area, because on Rte. 42 there is no central water & sewer. Rich did state that some of the Chippewa Lake area does have central water & sewer. That's why that is in there. Currently your LC District regulates both the area on Rte. 42 & an area in Chippewa Lake. If the ZC board split the two into two separate districts, you could adjust that wording to only pertain to Chippewa Lake. Why wouldn't we have the frontage consistent whether there is water or sewer? It seems we should make it more consistent. And the ZC board can. If both the Rte. 42 area & Chippewa Lake are going to be LC District, they should have the same regulations. If in the future, the ZC splits them into two separate entities, then you could decide on separate regulations. Discussion on which areas are in the Village of Chippewa & which are in the Township. Bring the map to the next meeting.

Discussion about centerline versus the new language which we are using, the edge of the road right away,

Question about Section 305 which is the Flood Plain District. The reference in Section 303.4 Supplementary Regulations D is correct.

Correspondence: NONE

Next Meeting is 11/12/24.

The secretary asked ZC members to email me their attendance at the CPC educational training so I can include it in the attendance information I provide the Fiscal Officer.

Next CPC training is at the University Center. Last time the elevator was not working. Not sure if it is fixed.

It is now 7:44pm. Do we have a motion to adjourn the meeting? Jim Aylsworth made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Rich Javorek. All in favor state Aye, meeting adjourned.

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Rich Javorek, Chairperson

Jim Aylsworth, Vice Chair

Joe Praisler

Chase Burmeister

Dianne Wenslow

Brian Morse-alternate

Nick Kittle-alternate

DATE: _____