

Franklin Township, Portage County
Zoning Commission Hearing
January 17, 2019

Members Present: Chair Mary Organ, Judy Spencer, Mike McClure, Theresa Mullett, and Mokal Banyasz.

Others: Joseph Ciccozzi, Assistant Zoning Inspector; Jenny August, Administrative Assistant.

Call to Order: Mrs. Organ called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

Minutes:

Mrs. Mullett moved to accept the minutes as presented from the November 15, 2018 meeting. Mrs. Spencer seconded. All Commission members voted yes. The minutes were approved as presented.

Discussion Topics:

Portage County Regional Planning recommendations to zoning changes

Regarding the definition of a structure, PCRP asked the Commission if driveways and sidewalks are addressed in our Zoning Resolution, or should be added in this definition. Asst. Zoning Inspector Joe Ciccozzi said he discussed this with Zoning Inspector Sam Abell. Since permits are not required for driveways or sidewalks, they are not addressed in the code. The Commission decided to leave the amendments of the definition of a structure as it is, as has been approved by PCRP.

Mrs. Organ moved to forward the recommended amendments to the definition of a structure to the Franklin Township Board of Trustees, with a second from Mrs. Spencer. All Commissioners voted yes.

Mrs. Organ moved to forward the recommended amendments to 405.06.A.8 to the Franklin Township Board of Trustees, changing the setbacks for rear and side yard lot lines from 10 feet to 5 feet, and to reduce the distance between accessory buildings and the principle building from 15 to 10 feet. Ms. Banyasz seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted yes.

Location of Solar Energy Systems-

The Commission discussed solar energy systems and decided to make an amendment. Mr. McClure moved to amend Section 405.06.E to read as follows:

“A free standing solar energy system shall only be located in the rear yard portion on any lot. Solar energy systems attached to buildings shall have no such location regulations.”

Ms. Banyasz seconded the motion. All Commissioners voted yes.”

Medical Marijuana Zoning-

The Commission reviewed some information that Chair Organ distributed to them relating to medical marijuana. The Franklin Township Board of Trustees currently has a moratorium on the growing, production, and distribution of medical marijuana.

Mrs. Mullett said it is going to happen, so why not establish guidelines before someone comes to Zoning for a permit?

Ms. Banyasz said the growing facilities use lots of water. Should we consider our resources? Also, should we regulate the number of facilities, and impose higher fee's or a higher percentage of JEDD funds? She thinks we need to find out how the community feels about it.

Mrs. Spencer said we really don't have a lot of areas available for growing marijuana, and it doesn't produce that much tax revenue because of HB 523 saying it cannot be taxed. Why not let the medical field deal with it, instead of the township? Why have dispensaries at all? Have the doctor prescribe it, and fill it at the pharmacy like any other prescription. Mrs. Organ said that because the federal government does not allow it, it cannot be approved by the FDA. Also, law enforcement says because it is not legal, it must be a cash transaction. Additionally, cannabis stays in the system for a long time, making driving under the influence citations difficult to determine.

Mrs. Organ said the growing and producing could fall under light industrial. Mr. Ciccozzi said Mr. Abell said it should be designated in Industrial. Mrs. Organ thinks we should be proactive and talk about it before we get a request.

The Commission agreed to continue with the moratorium, and revisit this issue when the Trustees tell them they must. Meanwhile, they will try to learn more about the financials involved and try to determine what direction the community would like to go in.

Homeless Shelters

Mrs. Spencer said homeless shelters need to be located near public transportation, public services, grocery stores etc. We need to think carefully about where they should be permitted. The Commission decided to wait and see how things work out for Ravenna Township with the Haven of Portage County in Ravenna Township.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will take place February 21, 2019.

Adjournment: Mrs. Spencer moved to adjourn at 8:27 with a second from Mrs. Mullett. All Commission members voted yes.

Respectfully submitted by Jenny August, Administrative Assistant

Approved:

Mary Organ, Zoning Commission Chair