

Franklin Township, Portage County
Zoning Commission Hearing
March 22, 2018

Members Present: Chair Mary Organ, Judy Spencer, Frankie Tadsen, Doug Hiestand.

Others: Sam Abell, Zoning Inspector; Keith Benjamin, Township Trustee; (to present Brady Lake Village property ideas from Trustees), Wendy Benjamin in the audience.

Call to Order: Mrs. Organ called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. She noted that Mr. McClure is excused from tonight's meeting.

Minutes:

Mrs. Tadsen moved to accept the minutes as presented from the February 15, 2018 meeting. Mrs. Spencer seconded. The minutes were approved as presented.

Discussion Topics:

Brady Lake Village Commercially Zoned Properties

Township Trustee Keith Benjamin, 6206 Sixth Ave. Mr. Benjamin asked to present some ideas about the Brady Lake Village Commercial Zoned properties that the township now owns. Township Trustees are looking at 3 particular areas of former Brady Lake Village property: 1) the former Brady Lake Village Hall and surrounding parking lot; 2) a strip of land along Brady Lake Rd. north of the ball field outfield; 3) a parcel of land that the former Brady Lake Village fire station, police station, service garage and old Village Hall sit on.

Mr. Benjamin noted that the incorporation of the former Brady Lake Village into Franklin Township had been expensive. The township has spent \$100,000 in road repairs and there is a \$270,000 mortgage on the Village Hall and ball field property. There are now 450 more residents for which Franklin Township must provide, and over 4 more miles of roads to maintain. The Township has had no new levies in 20 years. There are renewal levies for fire protection and roads currently. Trustees are also looking for ways to reduce costs, especially investigating ways to decrease costs for non-emergency EMS 9-1-1 calls. Trustees are looking for ways to raise money, such as getting new businesses into the JEDD. Franklin Township receives funds from the JEDD with Kent. The township received \$110,000 for the last quarter of 2017.

The Trustees are going to have the three areas of Franklin Township owned property surveyed. Regarding the property that has the park, the Commission might consider re-platting them to be more usable plots of land, lots that could support a home or small business. Pearl Street runs right through the middle of that. The Trustees want the buyer to be able to buy the property without asking for a variance or having to vacate a road. The Trustees want to do this when it is surveyed. The lots will be the correct size and definition of a lot. Pearl Street will be vacated. The lots around it will be combined to make correctly sized lots of around ½ acre each.

There is oil storage near the outfield that currently provides free heat to the former village hall. The Trustees will investigate adding a line to the township garage for free heat. All of the land around the park and village hall is currently zoned C-1, but the trustees are asking the Zoning Commission to consider rezoning this land to mixed use C-1/R-1. This would be a new district, as Franklin Township currently has mixed use of C-1/R-3.

On Brady Lake Road there is a little park across from the ball field that was a county park that is now owned by Franklin Township. It is called Crescent Park.

The Trustees would like to keep the ball field. Currently Kent Parks and Recreation maintains this field and Little League plays on it. Mr. Benjamin suggested that the playing size of the field is large and could be striped better to be brought more into Little League Regulations. (It has a very deep outfield right now.) Mrs. Spencer suggested that the ball field could be zoned O-R, so that it would remain a park.

The last area is where the former Brady Lake Village fire station, police station, service garage and old Village Hall are located. This is in the middle of a residential area. Someone may want to purchase this area for a small business. There was discussion about a private ambulance service going in there that could handle some non-emergency calls. This area will be surveyed and divided into three separate areas. The way it is now, anyone who would buy one of these lots would need variances. Mr. Benjamin said the old Village Hall could be converted into a house, which is where C-1/R-1 zoning might come in. In order to avoid spot zoning, the Trustees would prefer that the whole area be zoned C-1/R-1.

Shipping Containers

Township Administrator Ken Penix sent the amendments from the last meeting to Portage County Regional Planning for their April 11 meeting.

Brady Lake Village Zoning District Amendments

Portage County Regional Planning has sent those to us for our consideration, and these will be discussed at the April meeting of the Zoning Commission. Mr. Penix has asked Portage County Regional Planning to update the map to include the new Brady Lake Village districts. New updates are R-1B, R-2B, R-3B, and C-1B. We have not yet received this new map and there are some issues of cross referencing page numbers, and Mrs. Organ will see if the commission can get a copy to review before discussing Brady Lake Village district updates.

Trustee Public Hearing for Zoning Updates

Township Trustees will hold a public hearing on the I-1 purpose statement, Handicapped Ramps, and Digital Signs prior to the April 10 Township Trustee meeting.

Chickens

Mrs. Spencer shared some research with the Commission. Most of the surrounding communities do not allow chickens or have strict regulations regarding noise, odor and their containment. Currently, Franklin Township does not allow chickens in platted subdivisions; however residents in other areas may own chickens. Zoning Inspector Sam Abell has not received complaints about chickens in the Township, except maybe one "free range" owner on Ravenna Rd. where the birds look like they might run out onto the road.

Occasionally, Sam receives a request to have chickens in the township, and he refers to the current code. The code says we cannot regulate agriculture in a non-platted area. There was some discussion about making chickens a conditional use in platted subdivisions, but that could be expensive for a resident who wants to apply to the BZA (\$175 fee, plus \$36 permit). There was also some thought that it could open up the

township to all kinds of other animal issues in subdivisions.

At this point, the Commissioners decided to just leave the Zoning Code as it is. If there are further requests or complaints about chickens, the Commission would revisit this issue.

Medical Marijuana

Chair Organ had emailed some research to the Commission members to prepare for discussion. Timing is not imminent for the Commission to make any zoning changes. The state deadline for applications for facilities has passed. Trustee Keith Benjamin did not think there was a Trustee imposed moratorium on Medical Marijuana in the Township. There is a chance that in a few years, Ohio could open up the process for additional licenses if there is enough demand. The Commission should discuss whether or not to allow Medical Marijuana in Franklin Township, and if so, where would it be allowed. Perhaps the Commission should consider making it a “conditional use”.

Mrs. Organ emailed some research regarding the state laws and rollout of the medical marijuana program thus far, and some opinions about medical marijuana in general. There are a few more items from Portage County Regional Planning regarding other townships’ zoning codes that we can look at. Mrs. Organ provided two documents as handouts. This will be on the agenda for discussion next month at the Zoning Commission’s meeting.

New Zoning Commissioners

Mrs. Tadsen has two people she knows who are interested in being on the Zoning Commission. She will encourage these people to contact Mr. Penix at the Township Trustee office about how to be considered by the Trustees for this position.

Adjournment: Mrs. Spencer moved to adjourn at 9:08 with a second from Mrs. Tadsen. All Commission members voted yes.

Respectfully submitted by Jenny August, Administrative Assistant

Approved:

Mary Organ, Zoning Commission Chair