

RAVENNA TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION

BEVERLEY KIBLER, CHAIRMAN, BOB VAIR,
RUTH SCHELL, LINDA FALTISCO, AND JENNIFER COLLIER

The Ravenna Township Board of Zoning Commission met on April 15, 2015 at 7:00 p.m., at the Ravenna Township Trustees Meeting Room at 6115 S. Spring St., Ravenna, Ohio.

Chairman Ruth Schell, brought the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Attendance R/C: Beverly Kibler, Ruth Schell, Linda Faltisco, Jennifer Collier, and Bob Vair, Carolyn Chambers, Zoning Secretary, and Jim DiPaola, Zoning Inspector.

On the agenda was to approve the minutes from the September 17, 2014 meeting and to discuss and review Zoning Code and possible changes.

Beverley Kibler made a motion to approve the minutes as written of the September 17, 2014 meeting and Bob Vair second the motion. R/C: Bob Vair-yes, Beverley Kibler-yes, Ruth Schell - yes

OPEN PUBLIC FORUM – Ruth declined being Chairperson and nominated Bev Kibler who accepted the position. R/C: Bev Kibler – yes, Bob Vair – yes, Jennifer Collier – yes, Ruth Schell – yes, and Linda Faltisco – yes.

Bev: Doesn't look like we have a public forum since we have no public out here.

OLD BUSINESS:

Jim: The stuff you guys worked on last time worked out fine and it is in the Zoning Code on the replacement of residential structure of damage and we'll see if that helps people being able to sell their homes. For the two of you that weren't here, we have a provision in the Zoning Code that basically said that if you had a residential structure in a commercial, general commercial or industrial area and it was destroyed or had to be replaced it could only be replaced for what you originally had there and it was kind of restrictive and there were some banks that were looking at that when people were trying to sell their property they were saying we are not going to back that because it doesn't allow you to rebuild anything if it is destroyed. Now you can rebuild anything you want if your insurance company gives you a house that is much larger, that's ok now, just have to follow the Zoning Code for that area as far as setbacks.

NEW BUSINESS:

Jim: I guess that's me. It's since 2009 since we put the new Zoning Code in and it's time to revisit some things and stuff that we found as we've gone through Board of Zoning Appeals through the years that have come up. (Passing our handouts)

Jennifer: I have a question to begin with. What is a flag lot?

Jim: A flag lot is a lot that is pretty much shaped like a flag. It has a long narrow strip that goes out to the main road and then when it goes back it's got the main part.

Jennifer: Ok, that makes sense.

Jim: What that does is prevent land locked lots. We have some lots that are land locked and people have sold portion so they can get out and they have actual frontage. The frontage won't conform to the Zoning Code, but the lot itself will conform. One of the things we found when we added things to the Zoning Code, the chapters are numbered consecutively and we found out if we add something to a section it pushes everything else out and we would have to reprint the whole code. So, what we wanted to do, and this is one of the suggestions from Regional Planning, who oversees part of what we do is that we number each chapter and then the page numbers after so like chapter 2 would be 2-1, 2-2, so whenever you added a page to that section it wouldn't change the rest of the section. So right now we are getting to the point where we need to add some stuff and it's going to change the whole numbering system and whole configuration which will throw the table of contents out of whack and we will have to change every time we change something, which is going to get expensive to do. So, that's one of the items of consideration is to renumber each chapter 2- 3- whatever, any questions?

Jennifer: Makes sense to me

Jim: I also sit on Regional Planning and that's one of the recommendations that Regional Planning is making now to all the Townships and Cities that they do all the numbering like that to make it real easy, add pages, subtract pages and we had talked about doing it in 2009 when we originally did this and the guys that was the planner at that time, said no, you will never need to do that, well, he's no longer there and we do need to do it.

Bev: He was that sure that everything was going to be perfect and never have to be fixed.

Jim: In the past we've never really gone back and changed the sections of the Zoning Code now it's a living document where there are going to be things added or subtracted on a yearly bases on that. Right now with the housing and everything at a low we have time to play catch up with this. They are currently changing all the county standards that we adhere to in our Zoning Code so that will have to updated when their different.

Jennifer: So do you need somebody to work on that?

Jim: Yes, we'll change it in the office, Carolyn gets the dubious honor and her and I will redo the pages on that, but at some point the Zoning commission has to pass to say to do it and changes to the Zoning Code are kind of, the three of you found out when we did the last changes are kind of drawn out process, because it has to be approved here and a public hearing. So we are going to try and get as much done this year so we can so we only have to go through this once. Then work on stuff next year when it comes up.

Bev: Do we have a motion to change the page number?

Ruth, I make a motion and Jennifer second it. R/C: Bev Kibler – yes, Linda Faltisco – yes, Ruth Schell – yes, Jennifer Collier – yes, and Bob Vair – yes

Jim: Second thing to address, Chapter 10 is our sign section and the one section in there is an off premises signs which is basically billboards and the definition of an off premises sign means the signs that has advertising for a business that is not there and with the advent of digital signs places like 59 where the digital sign did go in and they do have residential has the potential to turn into a ugly mess. The billboards that have been around here for years people put up and now the digital sign like out here with the storage, he can put up a digital sign, he can charge for advertising and we've had some calls from people that said it really looks terrible driving down.

Ruth: The people that live across the street even, they're the ones that have to look at it all the time.

Bob: He's the one that wanted to put the flashes on too wasn't it?

Jim: He has a lot of strange ideas. Currently those kind of signs are allowed in that strip which is General Commercial and they're allowed in this strip down here which is

Commercial Residential and they are allowed in Industrial areas and they are also allowed on farms that are declared agriculture. I think we need to change the Zoning Code so that we take out General Commercial and Commercial Residential and we allow those signs in the purple areas which are General Industrial. (Looking at the map) it's 4 or 5 areas that are allowed.

Bob: Now that he's got that up that's going to stay up until something happens to it, like the wind blows it over or something?

Jim: That is one of the things that we are going to have to run it by the Prosecutor first to see whatever changes we make they all have to go to the Prosecutor to make sure we haven't violated anything in Ohio Revised Code and it may be one of those Grandfathered things that as long as it's there, even if it does get blown down they can put that size up they just can't put something else up. Right now in the Zoning Code it's something if it were to be blown down and be down for two years then it couldn't be put back up. But, they have a two year period where it has to be gone

Ruth: Believe me he would put it back up.

Jim: Oh yea. He's finding out there is a way to make money on it and that sign has already... First he only put the one side up and once that side paid for itself then he put the other side up and in the meantime he's neglected his property. But, that is one of the things that you may want to take a couple of meeting to talk about and is it a fit is it not a fit, do you want to do away with them all together. The place up on top of the General Industrial area is a farm, it is in the middle of nowhere and years ago the people up there had petitioned the Township to declare it Industrial because across the road is Shalersville Township and all of that is Zoned Industrial over there and that is done because of the possibility of a jet port in that with all that opening up and the turnpike there that all that was going to open up and it hasn't. We tried to change that back to Residential Low Density which is what it should be. The people that lived on Lake Rockwell road threw a fit. Because, they would rather have a factory next to their property than a house development is what they said. Which makes absolutely no sense, so that's why that's going to be stuck in General industrial there is no sewer down that road there is no water, so it is not something someone is going to buy to put a factory up. But, the other ones are pretty much on the main drag so the billboards could go there and I've run this by one of the Trustees and so far they don't have a problem with it, but when it gets to their part in the change process that's when they can ask us to modify it or ask you guys to modify it or whatever, it's just something to consider, but I have had two architects look down 59 and they say why in the heck did you guys allow that? It looks terrible. Well, that's what the Code was changed to. So that is something to talk about. Then in Chapter six, years ago we originally had, and I've attached it to the design criteria before we did the changes in 2009, we had a real detailed design criteria that required all residents to have a garage, either attached or detached. The problem we ran into last year, and the Board of Zoning Appeals ruled against the Zoning Department that the people over on Brady Lake Road bought a house and they did away with the garage, it was an attached garage. They did away with the garage and turned it into part of the living space for the house, they never got a Zoning Certificate, and they never got a building permit. I was just driving down the road and found it one day and went huh oh and so I sited them for it, well, because of the way it is worded in the Zoning Code now that it's not required. The Board of Zoning Code said we have no choice but to rule against you. We agree that it shouldn't be done, but we can't change it and we can't call it in. There is no president for it and when I talked to Chris Meduri, he goes even if they would have ruled in my favor, those people could have taken it to court and won. So that

is why the change there is to require garages and require them to maintain the garages and leave them there and not take them away.

Bev: Why is that area still flooding so bad?

Jim: That area is flooding so bad, because there is a drain that runs from Brady Lake Road under Sun Beau and that drain is plugged. The drain is on private property and neither the county nor the township has any authority. What we did was we got ahold of the city of Ravenna has a camera that they can go down and look at stuff. So the county, the city and us got together one day and we put the thing down there and we found that about 30 feet on the other side of Brady Lake Road is where it is collapsed.

Bev: Under one of those barns?

Jim: Under a barn under the driveway, someplace under there. It is pretty close to the corner of the one barn we did see where it is collapsed and the robotic camera couldn't go any farther than that, so we told the people, we took a picture of it, and we told the people that live up there if you decided to go to court, which you can do, we will provide the picture for you, but we can't initiate the process.

Bob: How far underground is it?

Jim: Oh, it's only about 4 feet underground until it gets to the south side of the property then it goes down a little bit because it empties into the ditch along the railroad tracks there, so probably drops to about 20 feet.

Bob: It's not going to hurt, it's only going to do anything but make a hole in the ground right there, and it's not under a building on nothing?

Bev: Well, it might be a little bit under the barn or under the driveway.

Bob: I know who you are talking about.

Jim: We have had some dealings with Mr. Viall and he is not a fun person to deal with.

Bev: All that rain we had last week, I notice that whole area was flooded

Jim: That is one of the reasons the people that bought that house. They did something that was really stupid, they put a drain in the middle of the driveway outside and instead of running it to the ditch, and they ran it back inside the garage to a sump. And the sump pump was trying to keep up with all that water that was coming in and if they would have gone the same amount of distance they could have gone right to the ditch and elevated part of the problem. These people that bought the house did that. That was the first thing they did was connect the drain in the driveway to the ditch.

Linda: I know what they did to the ditch, we did it because we was getting water coming in. We put one of those stoppers that you plug it, it's a stopper, but you have to go all the way to Akron. They have the big pipe and they have the big stopper and that thing just eliminated everything from coming in.

Jim: So that is one of the other things to talk about, garages required. We had it down where it was a certain size at least the two car garage because now a days a one car garage doesn't cut it.

Linda: What I can't figure out. Why would you put your Mother or your Grandmother in a garage?

Ruth: And leave your car sitting out.

Linda: I mean there are bus rodents

Jim: You would be surprised at in the 30 years I have been going in houses what you find. Right Bob?

Linda: Well, I know in Kent one of the guys that lived across from us in the alley way when I lived there, he made it so that he's have apartment in his house and he made it's garage into a regular apartment where nobody would know and he would get money off of that.

Jim: Nowadays with what we find and with what the Building Department finds, we are both working together so in the Building Department if they find a problem they will call me and if I find something. We had a guy that was renovating a house across from one of our Trustees and never pulled a single permit. Put his addition on the house, never pulled a permit and he does not have a mailing address, because he doesn't live there. So the only way we tracked it is we had the Trustee look for him and then go across the street to talk to him and he doesn't done any work on the house since, but we don't have no address for the guy. There is no electricity for the house so there is no address to send the bill.

Bob: Where is this at?

Bob: Is that Edwards old place?

Jim: On Peck Road. The corner of Peck and McCormick. He's doing a really nice job or was until we caught him.

Bob: The one that had the bar and carry out?

Jim: I don't know

Bob: It's just over the hill.

Jim: He sits right on McCormick and Peck. He's right across the road from Pat. Right directly across McCormick Rd. That is just the stuff that we find that causes changes to come up and that. Right now the other things to talk about if you have had anything else that you have seen in the Code, it is pretty dry reading at time.

Bob: The changes you want to make are the ones marked in yellow on the second page.

Jim: That's the ones that I would like to put back in, in some way shape or form. When we decide what size is reasonable for a garage 24x24, 24x22 those kind of things. Is one of the things that we could run into, we haven't run into when a new house is built the Zoning Code right now does not require, it says it is permitted, but it is not required, but luckily everybody that builds these developments there is a garage included, so we kind of skated for the time being.

Bob: What about a duplex? Generally you have a duplex with a garage in between the two only one car garage though.

Jim: Two family dwelling like that would require some kind of garage. When it gets into apartments and stuff like that, that is something that really.....

Bob: Well they put a garage in generally, but here it's going to be required as a double garage technically.

Jim: Like the ones where Pete used to live out on Summit. Those garages were for one car only and they were just way too small. So you might want to consider a square footage to put on it. We did at one time, I think on here it says 600 sq. ft.

Ruth: Maximum

Bob: 600 sq. ft. for two cars

Jim: That's 20 x 30 for 600

Jennifer: What's a normal car?

Jim: Well, it takes up a space of about 8 feet wide..... So you would need probably 600 sq. ft. for a two car garage. Which would be 20 x 30 maby close to 24x25 or something like that.

Linda: I am revamping my garage what do I need? I called the building department and told them I am putting my roof up on my garage, just giving them a heads up. We had to replace it.

Jim: The Building department doesn't require you to get a permit just for replacing shingles nor do we. We are just concerned where you put it and how big it is. We don't get involved with septic systems or anything like that. We are just concerned where you

put it and the Building Department concerned are you following the codes for it to be put in. Now in the township and most townships in Portage County you cannot put a mobile home on it. It has to be a manufactured home and it has to be on a frost free foundation. So that is why now when a mobile home is removed from a pad we don't allow them to put one back even if there was one there for it.

Linda: It was on my Father's property and we took it and we put on a basement.

Jim: So that is one of the things about garages and that, just one and two family dwellings

Linda: Now, Grandma can live in the garage then?

Jim: Yes, so that is just a couple of things to look at now and in the future. If there are any questions that you have you can get me at the office Monday thru Thursday from 9:00 to 1:00.

Linda: What about if we see something, can we take a picture of it and then maybe show you?

Jim: Sure, (talking about house on St. Rt. 88, not about the subject) We are trying to beef up the Zoning Code to eliminate some of this stuff that is out there so at the next meeting or if there are more discussion on it, give me your ideas or thoughts on sizes of garages and what your think about what's here and we will meet in another month from today.

Jennifer: What Bob had ask about duplexes, does a two car garage meet the old way it was? Even though it's two different homes they are sharing a two car garage.

Jim: Some of the newer ones that have been put up have actually put the garages out on the end. There is a definite separation the residential part is here and the garages are out here, there is about three of them on Skeels that were built that way.

Linda: So the ones that are on the end are they single or double car garages?

Jim: They are single care garages. There are at least a half dozen cars sitting in the driveway. What it does too is gives, we have be trying to figure a way to make the Township look better and we have the Property Maintenance Code which we're trying to clean up some of the stuff that's out there. But with the newer houses coming in, we want to make them attractive to low class people. We have enough subsidized house in the Township, we're not going to get the half million houses that Hudson and some places like that gets, but we want to attract a nice middle class group of people to own, not to rent, but to own. We have the same problem in the Township and the City has everything is a lot more rental than there should be, so there's when doing all this it changes how people look and buy and that. So, we are trying to make Ravenna and Ravenna Township more attractive, so people that drive through Kent will see.

Lina: And we need restaurants too.

Jim: That is stuff that will come eventually and if you don't have the people that will go to the restaurants, they won't look at it. So once we get the housing stock built up and that. It's a long process, but we are kind of setting the tone for the future, is what we are doing. I'll look around and by the next meeting I'll pull some stuff out of Zoning Codes like Brimfield if they have things like this to see what sizes they have and get back to you and bring it to the next meeting if you would like.

Bev: Yes, I would think it should be at least a 24x24

Jim: Once we get our language set it will go up to Regional Planning and they will take a look at that and one of our Regional Planning we meet once a month anyway. It comes before the body just to see, it's not an official okey dokey, but it's lie a group that is from all around the county that says yea and Todds' staff takes a look at it and they say if they recommend this or that. By the next meeting I'll have some stuff form other people and

if I get it soon enough I'll probably sent it out in the mail with the notice. Not probably, I will.

Bob: I got a question on number 4 that you have marked. All single and two family homes are required to have an attached two car garage. Being a two car garage is permitted. It says required and now you have permitted.

Bev: That's for single family residence.

Bob: No, the attached garage capable of storing two cars is permitted.

Bev: For each single family residence.

Bob: Ok, I'm a single family residence I got to have a two car garage.

Jim: That is what I mean some of the wording there we can take and combine and just one sentence where it covers everything without having something like this which kind of contradicts and that is one of the things about going through this code with six, seven different sets of eyes is going to see something, hear something and ask questions about it and between the group come up with something that's. I just highlighted this is because it is what we had before and it's just consideration.

Bob: So this is what's in there right now?

Bev: No, that was the old one

Jim: That is what used to be in there, there is nothing in there now which says required.

Bob: So this was taken out then of previous?

Jim: Yes, it was. What I would like to say is when the code was done in 2009 that's some of the language that came out. Right now it says permitted, that's all it says on page 113 in your current Zoning book. All it says is that it's permitted it doesn't say required and that is what we want to consider changing it back to is required rather than permitted. All it says now is one attached or detached garage structure is permitted for principle residential dwellings. A detached garage shall not exceed 50% of the gross floor area of the principle dwelling on the lot. That is just too wordy if they had a certain size to it and a certain sq. footage we wouldn't have to worry about it.

Bob: They could put up a barn beside you house right next to it.

Jim: Yea, you could and right now if there is another section about accessory structures if you have two acres or one acre or less you could have a 1200 sq. ft. accessory building and the is a big building. For less than an acre of land for anything over you could have 2000 sq. ft. that's a big building for a small chunk of land. Out by me on Hodgson, that is residential low they have a small lot over there, but they put a 1200 sq. ft. building.

Bob: The one they are building right now?

Jim: Yes, and it is perfectly legal.

Bob: That looks like a big barn building

Jim: It looks like a barn. The guys parking a semi-truck inside of it, but he put a second floor on.

Bev: That's like our neighbor, he got away with it because he put a garage roof between his garage and the new building so it's attached.

Jim: So there is some more work that we have to do, but you are going to find going through the code that some parts of the code will contradict the other part so we will try to eliminate that.

Bev: It makes it simpler to understand so everybody can understand them.

Jennifer: Jim is your thought to change things as they come up or are you looking at trying to start at the beginning of the book.

Jim: Right now just trying to fix things that have come up. Pretty much most of the book and the rest of the County's and Townships have started to mirror things that we're all doing thing the same way with the same language and that, which is all we are all finding

little things like this that have kind of slipped through the cracks the first time or we have run into problems with and we need to make it more defined and that. I don't want to go back and start with.

Jennifer: Are you asking us to start at square one.

Jim: Just the numbering system on how we can do that. The last Zoning Code that came about in 2009 was started and complete book was started before I got here in 2007 so it was like 2005 and it took them four years to get through this and that was way to long.

They had a lot of meetings and we budget for you folks and then there is the Board of Zoning Appeals, we budget for one meeting a month is how we budget. The money is there, but that is all we budget for is just one meeting a month. We are covered on that.

Bev: You shouldn't need more than that.

Jim: No, you really shouldn't, most of this work is decided that once it gets to the final stage the public hearing is held at a Trustee's meeting so that doesn't cost any more money. The Prosecutor he's our legal person on retainer and we pay a fee to the Prosecutor's office. So that we are covered for the whole year. The bad thing about all this is the problem that the Zoning violation takes so long to get corrected is that their civil and in Portage County civil cases take a back seat to criminal cases because those are the high profile cases and the other problem is for the 19 townships in this county there is only one assistant Prosecutor assigned to those counties. There should be at least two and he is overworked, he could keep busy working seven day a week without any problem.

Bev: That is one of the reasons for all the Townships to have pretty much the same.

Jim: Yes, it would make it real easy for the assistant prosecutor that we have.

Bev: For people moving from one township to another they would know basically that it is going to be.....

Jim: We are trying to make all our, like the accessory building we're trying to keep all those the same, we are trying to keep signing the same. When digital signs took off, we were under the gun to try and keep track of those.

Bev: I hate those things

Jim: They are good and bad. At the right area they are ok, but there're standards out there where they have to meet a certain length of time before they can change, they can't flash they have to remain and when they change, it has to be a change that it would have to be a gradual change.

Bev: That one if Kent changes fairly rapidly.

Jim: Yes, it does, I have an interesting conversation every time I see the Zoning people over there. The digital signs that are out there now, there are programmable. I had a long conversation with the digital sign guys and they can program that so that during the day they're at a higher intensity then if the sign goes down they can change it to where they atomically change. Dairy Queen in Ravenna did that. There is a different intensity day and night. So are there any questions, commits, concerns? Like I said I will look up the stuff up in the next week sent out when we get the notice sent out to all of you for the next meeting.

Jennifer: Have you heard anything about Cotton Corners?

Jim: Nope, I know they took the buildings down because we were going to site the owners for the old drive in which was in violation of the property maintenance code and they pulled the underground storage tanks, that I told them that they were probably going to be there and they said oh, there's no tanks there. They found them.

Jennifer: Do they have to get EPA?

Jim: They have taken care of all that. They have some real strict laws that they have to follow and because we are not like the city where we can have an inspector and stuff like that we defer everything to the State Fire Marshall's office. But, there has been no application made for anything.

Ruth: Is that drive thru building going to come down too? I mean where you drive thru to get your liquor like the save four store.

Jim: I understand the State of Ohio had made an offer to the gentleman to buy the property and he said no. He is one of those things that under the Zoning Code anyway he is grandfathered. Because he has been there a long time. But, with the closing of Newton Falls Road at that intersection that may encourage him to move elsewhere.

Ruth: He's not getting any business

Jim: But, there are things that whatever goes in out there has to go through my office. A permitted building, if it's a car dealership, a gas station, a drive thru, those all what we call conditional permitted uses and they have to have a hearing before the Board of Zoning Appeals. One of the other things that is in the code that we want to talk about next month is that we used to have at that if there was a variance or permission permitted use on a property that was being requested, if only people that had to be notified the adjoining property owners the ones they touch. When they redid the Zoning Code in 2009 they put in 500 feet now in some areas that takes in people that don't even have, it's really not an adjoining property, so one of the things that we are looking at and talking to other Townships about is changing that back to adjoining property, because in some incidences you get 30 to 40 people that we have to send notice out to and if that keeps happening, then we are going to have to jack up our fees requirement of \$200.00 and that covers everything we do now and if we get 30 to 40 people that we have to notify that is a lot of cost. So one of the things we are starting to look at is just go back to adjoining property owners. If your immediate neighbor doesn't have a problem with it then that is the only person that should be concerned. It make it real simple, we need to make it real simple, that is another thing developer's look at they come an look at your Zoning Code and if it looks like it is just so restrictive they are not going to locate, so we wanted to make it to protect the rights of the people that are already there, but kind of attract more people to come in. So we will talk about that next month.

Bev: Next is the Open Public Forum and we don't have anyone so our next meeting would be the 20th of May. Can I have a motion to adjourn?

Linda made the motion to and Ruth second it. Meeting adjourned at 7:55

Respectfully submitted by

Carolyn Chambers
Zoning Secretary

cc: Trustees (Coia, Artz, Gibson)
Zoning Inspector (DiPaola)
Zoning Commission (5)
File