

RAVENNA TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION

BEVERLEY KIBLER CHAIRMAN, RUTH SCHELL,
JENNEFIR COLLIER, LINDA FALTISCO, BOB VAIR

The Ravenna Township Board of Zoning Commission met on June 17, 2015 at 7:00 p.m., at the Ravenna Township Trustees Meeting Room at 6115 S. Spring St., Ravenna, Ohio.

Chairman, Beverley Kibler brought the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

In attendance were, R/C: Beverley Kibler, Linda Faltisco, Ruth Schell, Jennifer Collier, and Bob Vair, Carolyn Chambers, Zoning Secretary and Jim DiPaola, Zoning inspector.

On the agenda was to approve the minutes from the May 20, 2015 meeting and to review Zoning Code changes.

Ruth Schell made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2015 meeting and Bob Vair second the motion. R/C Bob Vair-yes, Jennifer Collier-yes, Ruth Schell-yes, Linda Faltisco-yes, and Bev Kibler-yes Motion passed, minutes approved.

Old Business.

Jim: This is just language to get more specific about accessory buildings. There will be more language coming because we have run into issues in Portage County that people using containers, the metal containers, shipping containers like the ones you see on the trains. People buying the old containers and just plopping them down on the ground as an accessory building.

Bev: Like the ones you see at Wal Mart at Christmas time.

Jim: Yes, like that, but Wal Mart actually gets a special permit form us to do that. But, now people can go out and buy these containers and take them home and throw them down on their property. So, Rootstown has already addressed the problem and they changed their Zoning Code last week. That is something we are going to have to look at in the future. For Brimfield on their accessory buildings they also require permits for anything 192 sq. ft. or less. Where ours is 192 sq. ft. and over. What they have is Brimfield ran into the problem where people would go out and buy these 192 sq. ft. or less and take them and throw them just anyplace in their yard. They could do 1, 2, 3 and therefore you have all these little teeny tiny buildings on your property and they also regulate them and that is what's in this. But they get more specific about accessory buildings and now with the container stuff coming it's another headache and the other thing we run into problems with is as far the accessory buildings go people go out and buy these metal buildings that they don't have a foundation to them and they bring them in and throw them in the yard. I probably have a half dozen that have been put up in the last five years that nobody ever got a permit for. I tell them that because they are over a 192 sq. ft. they need to be on a permanent foundation and they need a permit. Well, I ran into the building department is they don't look at those as permanent buildings because the construction of them they don't need a permanent foundation, because all you have to do is have an anchor on the ground kind of like a tent. There's people going out and throwing these things up on Summit Road. There is a guy right around the corner on

Lakewood that put up one of those canvass buildings and it's over 192 sq. ft., but he never got a permit for it.

Bob: Where is that at?

Jim: It's about the third house back toward me from Lakewood on the north side of the road. Right next to between is bushes.....

Bob: Roger Pittman lives in the fourth house.

Jim: It's the house before Roger, just west of him. The guy came in and put up this lean two without a permit. So there you have this building, that if something goes wrong with it we have no way of telling the guy it's not supposed to be there in the beginning and he claims it's not a permanent building. If he can just pick it up and move it anytime he wants just pull the stakes out. With the regulations that came from Brimfield, read through those and see what you think about putting them into our code and on the last page of that 134 Brimfield regulates fences a little bit more and I don't want to get into that. The code we have now is fine for fences so you can ignore that part, because we really don't want to tell people about fences and I really don't want to permit them, because those are a pain and we have enough problems with people putting fences up anyway. In places like Forest Ridge, Timber Run their fences are regulated by the home owners assoc. That's why we kind of keep our things simple so you can ignore that.

Bob: Somewhere in here in Brimfield in accessory buildings, it says they all have to be put on a certain type of foundation and I have an accessory building it's sitting on gravel it has the runners underneath it and what I read in here that isn't considered a permanent foundation because I can move that building move it anywhere.

Jim: That's why we have the regulation of 192 sq. ft. so anything smaller than that as long as it is mounted on the skids you can just drag it wherever you want to.

Bob: If I remember right it said post or something. If it is post it's permanent then and it would require a permit then, right?

Jim: Right, I would like to require a permit for the smaller buildings, but only as far as being regulate how close they sit to the property line. We have a guy in Hidden Brook, Forest Ridge, he put his building over the property line and it's under 192 sq. ft. and because he doesn't like the neighbor he won't drag it five feet. He said all that person has to do is come ask me nicely and I will move it. I said well, that is your problem not mine. I told your neighbor that it is her problem not mine. I did tell him that, I kind of stretched the truth that it has to be 10 feet off the property line. I didn't tell him that since it is under 192 sq. ft. he didn't have to listen to me. I would just like to have it that any building you put down it has to follow the zoning regulations 10 feet or whatever the requirements is for side yard setbacks and the buildings that are under 192 sq. ft. I'm not worried about the foundation, I don't think anything under 192 sq. ft. if the building department says it doesn't have to be on a foundation then it doesn't have to be on a foundation.

Bob: Well, my 8x12 and that's 96

Jim: Yeah and it shouldn't have to be on a foundation and that's what's going through here when we meet the next time, we can just strike out the ones we like and don't like, whatever, but take some time and look at it. I want to try and find some regulations that make it easy to read, and understand, but fair enough so that what applies for this big of a building also applies for this big of a building. Just keep it off the property line, plain and simple that makes it easy. If your neighbor comes over to you and says go ahead and put it up to my property line that is between you and the neighbor, but if there is a push comes to shove thing then all I have to do is say well it says in the code 10 feet.

Jennifer: When we started this discussion we were talking about the fact that the code no longer requires garages. Are we treating this as part of this whole issue or are we going to treat this as a separate.....

Jim: The garage and stuff kind of goes hand in hand with this, that we require it. I got a complaint for grass two days ago right down here on Spruce off of Spring St. So I had to walk down and investigate and guess what, the people that owned the property removed the garage that should have been there, that was required and built there when the building was built, the garage is gone it's a great basketball court there now, but the garage is gone and the block foundation still sets there, but I have no way of telling them that they have to put it back.

Bob: They have to put it back?

Jim: I would like them to put it back, they should put it back, because it would have been a nice double car garage, but because they wanted a basketball court or whatever they tore the garage down and it is a rental property and that is another thing that we have problems with is rentals.

Bob: We talked at one time about the two car garage sizes and I measure mine, inside it is 196 wide and 23 feet deep and I have plenty of room to put two vehicles plus you have room on the sides plus you have about 6 to 7 feet if you stay close to the door 6 to 8 feet behind.

Jennifer: Would you use that as a maximum or a minimum?

Bob: That is what we are getting with, trying to figure out what these builders plans, you know you go out here to Wal Mart and you buy a kit for a house the garage is going to be X amount of sq. ft. could be bigger, but it can't be smaller. You wouldn't want to make half the house a garage.

Jim: That is why some places they have it as a percentage that the attached garage can't be more than such percentage of the main house is, but then you have some people that go build 3,000 sq. ft. houses.

Ruth: Ours is so long that you could build a bathroom in there right off the kitchen.

Jim: It is probably trying to figure out what a minimum size would be. The plans that we looked at it seems like some of the builders that have generic houses that they built they only allow for a certain size garage.

Bob: Well, roughly mine is 164 sq. ft. 500 foot would be a roundabout figure maximum. That's a pretty good size garage.

Jennifer: Are we going to let them use medium height requiring a two car garage?

Bob: That was what I was thinking too, but you can probably have a three car garage in a 500 feet if you don't go quite as deep, your width you're going to be close.

Jim: The answer to your question is, because most families have two cars now a days is why it went to that. Before when the neighborhood I grew up in, the Fairgrounds, most of the houses that had attached garage was only a single car garage, because back then everybody had just one car. This information all comes from the professional planners that do design work and everything whatever the trend is at that time that's what the buildings are designed for and most people that have a single car garage, nowadays, there is not a car in it. It is usually everything but.

Jennifer: I only ask the question because this pamphlet on Carter shows a one car garage and I thought how many people actually put up a one car garage anymore are there many lots in our area that are small that would dictate a one car garage?

Jim: There may be some of the smaller lots like out in McElrath where the residential high density is with the 900 sq. ft. lots and stuff like that they may dictate a one car

garage, but we have not issue a permit for a single car garage since I have been here in 2007 it is all double car or bigger.

Jennifer: So if you want to put it in then it's the lot size that a minimum that a single car would be allowed?

Jim: Yes, I think that would be a good idea that on a 900 sq. ft. lot that you could only get so much flour into that bag and most time now some of those lots that are out there in McElrath and Skeels they are only like 30 feet wide, so they don't even meet the minimum of being able to put a house on it and the Board of Zoning Appeals won't grant variances to put something on that wide and the trend has been in both of those areas in the last two years we have issued a lot of Mylar's, we have probably a half dozen Mylar's for people buying the 30 footers and buying them they are actually trying to get up to the minimum sq. ft., but still.....

Bob: What is the minimum, 100? For lots like up there now.

Jim: Up there now the frontage wide is 60 feet then residential medium density is 80 residential high is 100 so there is actually a guy up there that bought five lots and combined them and he almost has like an acre lot now. Which up there is pretty good size, but yeah, what you said Jennifer if somebody has a bare minimum lot then they should be required a double car garage. We can write an exception to that especially in the RH's residential high density.

Bob: Should there be a maximum width for a three car garage? I don't think there is one for a two car garage is there?

Jim: No, there really isn't.

Bob: Somebody could build a house and of course there again the sq. footage can't be over so many feet from what the house is right? So you couldn't have a garage 100 percent of what the house is?

Jim: No, and the thing about that is that somebody is going to build a big house and they want a three or four car garage then they would just have to do like anything else, they can apply to the Board of Zoning Appeal for a variance to it.

Bob: A lot of these place anymore in some of these developments, not necessary developments, but some of these nice areas have three car garages, but they also have like one to three acres of land too. Is Rootstown sort of similar to ours as far as accessory buildings and Brimfield or haven't you really had a chance to look at that?

Jim: I have seen Rootstown's when they ran their Zoning changes through the Regional Planning Commission that I sit on too and got to see what they were looking at as far as definitions and containers and they didn't change any of their accessory building requirements as far as sizes, but Brimfield, Rootstown, and Franklin township were pretty much all standard as far as sizes and that go and those are the three that I look at when I sit down and try to figure out what to do and a lot of the stuff that is in Rootstown and Franklin Township came from us, because they looked from us and saw what we have they like that too. We're trying to standardize some of the things in all the townships so that it's not that confusing. We're pretty close with that and we also keep in touch with the Building Department too, Randy Roberts runs a real easy to work with Building Department, we stay in touch with him and find out what he looks at and his requirement are usually he looks at ours and sees what we've got too. When we do Zoning Code changes we pass stuff on to him and ask him his opinion. We try to stay somewhat close to each other.

Bob: These changes that we are talking about, have they been made up and put on paper then be approved by us or do we still have.....

Jim: We still have some things to go over and probably after the next meeting we can start filling in the blanks on sections by the next meeting what I will do is print our pages up and we can go back through and after you, all of you have looked at what you think should be put in there we can go back and go section by section and see exact wording what can go in there. Then have you guys back for another meeting and look at it and make sure that's what you want and then we can go on to the Trustees for their first look at it and if they have any questions then they send it back to you guys then we have to send it to Regional Planning and then we send it back to the Trustees.

Bev: So. It will take a while.

Jim: It takes a while. When I first started in 2007, they had been working on the Zoning Code change for five years and they hadn't gotten any more than writing stuff down on paper. We had some really long meetings, because nobody had ever gotten to the point where they put something down on paper, a lot of discussion and nothing had ever gotten done, so it took us a good year, 2007, it took us two years to get it finalized and get it put down. So after our next meeting then we can decide some specifics on this then we can firm up the section on accessory buildings and primary buildings and move on.

Bob: Exactly where in our book is the accessory building now?

Jim: It is in Chapter 6, it says the chapter where it applies to all sections has the overall requirement for accessory buildings and then when you look in RH, RM, RL, CR, CG it also references accessory buildings specific to that section this is more residential when you get into the commercial end of it like in general commercial, commercial residential their basically allowed to put up a building of any size from accessory building as long as it doesn't encroach on the building setbacks. When you are a manufacturing company you need an accessory building, you need an accessory building and it's going to be bigger than what the requirements are usually for residential this is more strictly for residential, but chapter six is the section that has the requirement for accessory buildings.

Bev: Is there any new business?

Jim: If I could just get people to mow their grass, I have gotten all kinds of complaint of high grass. We have three right here on this road

Ruth: I seen one that has been mowed.

Jim: But, they didn't pick up the grass.

Ruth: No, it's all laying there

Jim: That lot is owned by a lady that is a real estate agent her son lives there. Her other son has a landscaping company. Do you thing brother A would help brother B? This lady is from Aurora and we finally got ahold of her, that's the story we got. What do you mean your son owns a landscape company and he won't mow your other son's lawn? So I don't know if it was the son or she hired someone else to mow it, but came in and mowed it and just left the grass there. They had to scalp it.

Bob: I see they got the school bus up out of the hole.

Jim: We are getting closer. There is no title to that bus, so in order to get a title you have to prove you are the owner of it and then you can go to Auto Title at the administration building and get duplicate title, but you have to prove you are the owner.

Ruth: How you going to do that?

Jim: I don't know. If he can't prove to get a duplicate title then he has to go to court to have the court sign off on it. In this county, that will take you forever to get it done, because the Prosecutor's office doesn't like civil cases they prefer high profile cases. But, also the Prosecutor's office represents all nineteen townships in Portage County. The thing that they do not represent are those townships for is labor negotiations. We have a union with our fulltime fire fighter as well a union with the part time.

Bob: So, they won't help anything with the township?

Jim: Yep, that's what they told us today. Oh, you have negotiations coming up, Prosecutor said that we don't help townships on that, so now we have to go out and find, if we want, we have to find an attorney that does labor negotiations. So this November when our general fund comes up, please vote for it, because we have all these cost and we are not getting any more money this is just a renewal.

Ruth: They will usually vote for a renewal.

Jim: Yes, and the fire is up for renewal and the general is up for renewal. So now we are starting labor negotiations at the end of July.

Bev: Our next meeting will be July 15. Do we have a motion to adjourn?

Bob: So Move

Linda: I second it

Meeting adjourned at 7:35

Respectfully submitted by

Carolyn Chambers
Zoning Secretary

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