

# ***RAVENNA TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION***

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

The Ravenna Township Board of Zoning Commission met on February 17, 2016 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 7:00 p.m.

In attendance were, Beverley Kibler, Linda Faltisco, Jennifer Collier, Carolyn Chambers, Zoning Secretary, and Jim DiPaola, Zoning inspector. Absent was Ruth Schell and Bob Vair.

On the agenda was to approve the minutes from the July 15, 2015 meeting and to review zoning Code changes for signs and storage containers.

Jennifer Collier made a motion to approve the minutes of July 15, 2015 meeting and Linda Faltisco second the motion. R/C: Beverley Kibler – yes, Linda Faltisco-yes, Jennifer Collier-yes. Motion passed minutes approved.

Under Old Business: There was none.

## New Business:

Jim: Signs, we are back to that again. Re doing Cotton Corners we ran into an issue with signs out there and our code says height of signs is six feet. When you do six feet high and you have a 32 sq. ft. sign that sign will come down only to feet from the ground. So if you walk or in a car you can't see around it. So we started looking around and there are some sign stuff in there and for commercial sign for out there 32 sq. ft. is small. Most of those signs are going to bigger than that and I would like to see it where we have from the bottom of the sign to the ground we have at least six feet. Sounds like a nice number that way if you are in a car or whatever you can see down the street and I was some place the other day and the signs were six feet and you couldn't see down the road. I thought well, with the complaints out there, the guy at Ravenna Marine is going to have to move his sign and if he moves it and takes it out and puts a new sign in, it can only be six feet high and by time the road gets done and everything out there it won't look good out there. So we are going to, I told him, if you move it technically, if you move it back to where it needs to be it is not a new sign, we'll let you put that sign back and now a days with the digital signs coming they are going to want digital signs in all. But we need to work on the height. If you look through there, we don't want you to make a decision tonight, but that is why we are looking at the signs again, because 32 sq. ft. is just like a 4x8 sheet of plywood. IN the commercial residential that may be ok, but when you get to the corporate stuff they need to be a little bigger. Carolyn pulled some of the other neighboring Townships. In talking to Regional Planning on the, they thought six feet was a little low too.

Beverley: Didn't I hear that the Circle K sign had to be moved?

Jim: That was a nightmare. They had to go to the Board of Zoning Appeals to be able to....they couldn't move it back any further, because one leg already sets in their parking lot and our Zoning Code says you can't leave it in the right of way. Well, there was no way they could move the sign and have it not still be in the right of way. So, they came to the BZA and the BZA turned them down. They said, no, we are not going to give you

permission to leave the sign in the right of way, we want it out of the right of way. Circle K took us to court. The judge said why don't you take this back to the BZA and settle it because I don't want to do this. We had ask the State of Ohio, whenever the BZA has a case you have to invite all the stake holders to the meeting, so we had invited ODOT and they never showed up. They turned in their comments last July well after the Board of Zoning Appeals and their people said we don't mind it being left in the right of way. With that new evidence we went to the Prosecutors office and said look if we take this to court we're going to lose it with the State saying that. Chris Meduri said why don't you just reopen the case, submit the letter back in and the Board of Zoning Appeals said, well if the State doesn't matter why should we rule any different? So they approved it. But, somehow or other when m predecessors let that place go in they let part of the sign be in the parking lot and it shouldn't be. Somebody comes along they can clip it there is no guards to protect it or anything like that where there should be. With everything being redone out there we need to get some kind of uniformity, something where people don't have to come to the Board of Zoning Appeals all the time.

Beverly: We needed some uniform rules for the..

Jim: Needed to have some latitude in them. We issue permits for signs bigger than 32 sq. ft. So why can't we have in our code that we have some signs allowable over 32 sq. ft. The out front signs, the building signs a lot of them are over 32 sq. ft.

Beverly: As long as they don't block driver's vision

Jim: Yes, and a six foot would. When you are coming down 14 you only have two feet

Beverly: Yes, and if you sit in a higher truck you're not going to see.

Jim: Even walking you're not going to see. So you should have at least clear vision for about six feet. Any other questions, comments? There are a few other Townships that are looking into their Zoning Codes and changing. I told the Trustees that the Zoning Code should be a dynamic thing that it should be constantly involving in it and it's been since 2009 since we did the Zoning Code and it's about time for a little bit of updates.

Beverly: It's got to change like everything else.

Jim: Yes, it does. So if you want to read through the sign stuff and when we meet next month we'll keep that date open and the other thing I have is containers. People in residential areas have been getting old used containers for accessory buildings and this stuff that is pulled from Rootstown Township, they have just updated their Zoning Code. While I was up in Freedom Township, they don't have much zoning enforcement and I noticed there was a couple of properties that didn't have last year, but all of a sudden now they've just come in and dropped the containers down. There is no base on them, they just drop them on the round and there they are.

Beverly: And they are going to rust away and look awful.

Jim: There is nothing the Building Department can do about them either.

Jennifer: Top open or side open?

Jim: Side open, the rear doors pop open just like the semi does. So Rootstown this is from their stuff when they redid it. We have a new Building Inspector for the County and at Reginal Planning we have a quarterly Zoning Inspector meeting where we pick a topic and we bring somebody in to talk about it. Now that we have the new Building Inspector we are meeting with him this month and the topic is containers and things like that.

Anything over 192 sq. ft. has to be on a permanent foundation, but it doesn't address containers. It addresses thing like the wooden barns and those type of things.

Beverly: Building type thing.

Jim: Yes, it just doesn't address the containers. They were saying there are some areas of the country where it is like an epidemic. We have this nice neighborhood and that. Somebody goes out and buys a container for a couple hundred dollars and brings it in and drops it on their property. This is all that everything Rootstown did and far as looking

into things and then there is stuff in the back for Milton of what their code calls for and people have been using the POD, they will go and rent a POD and drop it on their property and just store stuff in it. So you have this unsightly POD container. Some people on Cleveland Rd. and it in their front yard and there is nothing we can do about it. Not a thing.

Linda: Yes, but they are supposed to have a storage thing. That's what those PODs are for, storage to stack them in an area.

Jim: Yes, but they're supposed to be a temporary thing and it is kind of like trailers. Somebody puts a camper on their property and eventually it becomes a permanent thing. There is some stuff to work on there and we will work on some language next time around. One of the more interesting discussions that I've had with lawyers in the last four months, mobile homes. In our Zoning Code, mobile homes are a non-conforming use. Our Zoning Code does not permit them.

Linda: What about Modular?

Jim: Modular is different because they are on a foundation. But, Mobile homes aren't.

Linda: In that one community out there on 14, Birchwood, they have been having a lot of problems with that place.

Jim: Under the Zoning Code a non-conforming use can continue until it's removed. My interpretation was once you remove the trailer it can't go back, so I've been telling people that in the last few years. Within the last year, Orchard Estates, the one out here, Village Estates the one on Newton Falls Rd. and the one on Cleveland Road, Pine Gate, they have all been put up for sale and because of all the past problems with banking and that, making loans there is title searches and everything done I have companies calling us all the time saying is this a permitted use and asking in-depth questions. I had a title company from Oklahoma call and they sent some really in-depth thing. I told them they are a non-conforming use and once removed they are not permitted back. Well, that started a fire. I had lawyers calling me telling me that's not right and I told them that's too bad that's what we are doing so finally between the Prosecutors office and a lawyer here in town he said you know you really can't do that. They're a non-conforming use so you have to allow them to put them back. So right now we are trying to figure out how we can make them convert them from trailer, mobile homes to modular?

Linda: Well, I don't think....

Jim: They don't have enough space to put one in, because our Zoning Code requires 1100 sq. ft. and 1100 sq. ft. is a double wide.

Beverly: Plus the lot they're on doesn't belong to the person with the modular.

Jim: We are having some very interesting discussions about mobile home.

Linda: When they brought them in, it was two and they put it together and I watched that and it was like wow.

Jim: The modular homes are constructed very well. They exceed the fire code. They're not like trailers of old where it was all aluminum wiring and stuff like that. Most of the walls are 2x6 and not 2x4 and they are built really well. They are on a foundation rather than there is a crawl space or a full basement.

Linda: Mine is a full basement and it is real deep. It's like 17 steps going down from up on top and it's like 17. It's steep.

Beverly: Can they put them on a slab like on a home it's on a slab?

Jim: No, they can't put them on a slab, it would have to be some kind of foundation.

Linda: That is what my neighbor has catty corner from us, they have one it's a trailer, but they wanted to put a basement in, but the guy said you can't do it, because it would cost too much.

Jim: In Portage County, the Building Inspector does not do modular homes. There is a separate office in the State of Ohio for and the counties have they can choose to inspect them or not.

Linda: Remember I had you there and other people there? The building guy and you.

Jim: When was that?

Linda: When we first got it in, in 1998.

Jim: Nope, wasn't me. I didn't come to the Township until 2007. I was gainfully employed at the City of Ravenna.

Linda: Oh, ok anyhow I wanted to make sure everything was done proper and to the tee. Everybody goes why are you doing that and I said why should I hide anything? I'm on the corner and everybody can see what I'm doing. I'm not getting away with anything.

Jim: I want to talk to the Building Inspector and see if he will agree to inspect modular homes. I like local control verse Sate control.

Beverley: Anytime you can keep it smaller it's better.

Jim: Plus we get the permit fees and that from the county.

Linda: Yea, you'll get a lot more money.

Jim: So that is one of the other things we are working on. Then the renumbering all the pages to reflect the section that I have started on that and I have a rough draft on that. I don't think there is anything else that you (Carolyn) and I talked about unless you ladies have any questions or comment.

Beverley: Not that I can think of and I don't see anybody here for an open public forum.

Carolyn: The next meeting would be March 16<sup>th</sup>. I will send Ruth and Bob all this information.

Jim: We are going to have some serious postage this month. We have two BZA meeting this month and they both involve a lot of 2 foot by 3 foot pieces of paper.

(Discussion followed about the City with Jim and Jennifer)

Linda: What are they doing with that guy on Cooley Road with all the cars?

Jim: It's in the Prosecutor's office. I reminded them that other day that we need to get those people in court.

Linda: Ha has some of his cars stashed at Mrs. Hocks place.

Jim: Are they friends?

Linda: I don't know. I found out through Linda that he has them in her garage, the cars that he wants.

Jim: The wife called me. ....

Beverley: Can we first adjourn the meeting?

Jennifer Collier made a motion to adjourn at 7:25

Respectfully submitted by

Carolyn Chambers  
Zoning Secretary

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