



PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING SEPTEMBER 22, 2011

Committee Members Present: Ken Braman
Todd Bergstrom
Scott Pelot-Excused

Also Present: Rick Ryland
John Moss
Don Nicolard
Mark Spisak-Planning Commission Chair
Russ Arters
Karla Richards

The Planning Committee convened on Thursday, September 22, 2011 at 10:05 AM in the Council Chambers of the Safety Administration Building. The meeting was called to order by Ken Braman, Chair of the Committee. Following a salute to the flag and the Pledge of Allegiance, there was a moment of silent reflection.

General Topics of Discussion:

General duties-responsibilities of the Planning Commission & Planning Committee:

Mr. Braman stated that he was on the Planning Commission for 8 years and on Council for 6 years and felt that all had been a good relationship. Mr. Arters added that the biggest thing is our rezoning. Mr. Arters noted there is a new business that wants to come into the former animal clinic on Medina Line Road, but because it is zoned RU1 they need to file for a zoning change for their intended use as an insurance business/quick print office. Mr. Arters stated we would have to approve this change if we want to bring in new businesses. Mr. Ryland discussed granting a temporary rezoning of that entire corner pending the outcome of our comprehensive zoning plan and implementation especially to allow this new business to come in. Mr. Bergstrom discussed finding a way to educate the Planning Commission and Planning Committee on lessons learned by other communities with zoning changes and growth. Mr. Bergstrom discussed meeting with both committees on a regular basis to keep on track. Mr. Arters stated that with the former Planning Director-Jeff Pritchard, it was his goal to rezone the entire city, however he left for bigger money before this was accomplished. Mr. Nicolard cautioned rezoning the entire city all at once, remember, that failed in the past, we need to do it a little bit at a time. Mr. Arters stated that the whole point is to do it a strip at a time. Mr. Spisak stated that the right way to do it is to look at the uses, and redefine them properly first, then you can address the rezoning. Mr. Ryland discussed the non-conforming uses and how they are to stay with the property even if the business use changes or is gone.

Mr. Ryland discussed the highest access areas of St. Rt. 21, St. Rt. 585, I-76 and Cleveland-Massillon Road and that we need to draw a box around these areas and focus rezoning here because that's your hot spot perimeter. Once you accomplish that you can expand from there. Mr. Arters advised everyone that there is a new child day care coming with over 100 kids into the old Perkin-Elmer facility at St. Rt. 585 & St. Rt. 21, with future intentions of a charter school. Mr. Moss indicated that the old Adjust-a-Post building has been sold to a new business. There was also discussion on the amount of local donations received for the fireworks for this year's Cider Festival and that the Internet Café's have donated over \$4,000.00. Mr. Braman mentioned that Mr. Pelot wanted to discuss future utility expansions after we finish all of the Nash Heights phases. Mr. Ryland noted that we have already contracted with Floyd Browne Group to conduct a study for our underground sewer system for the entire city. We are currently planning to go west from 31st street to the west of St. Rt. 21, the Mungo property on Clark Mill to Barber Road, and for all of the necessary pump stations. Mr. Moss stated there are more properties along the way that are designed for business uses. Mr. Bergstrom discussed other ideas to keep us on track such as understanding the tax incentive plans, enterprise zones, TIFFS, and how all of this can be tied to zoning. Mr. Bergstrom suggested these two committees need to give the new Planning Director our goals and plans for the future. Mr. Nicolard suggested that maybe that is crossing the line here, we should be letting the Planning Director come to us with his suggestions. Mr. Bergstrom agreed, however it is our obligation to review his recommendation and reports. Mr. Nicolard felt new Economic Developer should be reporting to the Economic Development Committee, and they in turn will report to all of Council. Mr. Braman stated that he would like to see some type of a monthly report like we receive from the Summit County Health District. Mr. Spisak indicated that the Planning Commission does not have the authority to actively pursue businesses and report back to Council. Mr. Nicolard stated that until our new Planning Director is in place there really is not much for us to do. Mr. Spisak stated that we could continue to move forward with the zoning plans and make it a reality. Mr. Spisak stated that we must have Cleveland-Massillon Road properly rezoned before the widening begins or else our city will be a real mess. Mr. Bergstrom asked how could the Planning Committee and the Planning Commission relate better with one another? Mr. Ryland suggested that they should be attending each other's meetings in order to be better informed and provide feedback/statements. Mr. Moss stated it is the Planning Commissions duty to identify the problems within the city, however it is Councils duty to come up with the solutions to those problems. Mr. Ryland suggested both committees take a good hard look at home occupations, and how many you should limit, maybe even place a moratorium on these. Mr. Moss discussed the fact that some start out this way, they do make money and they succeed, move out and never mention that they originally got their start here in Norton. Mr. Moss suggested we encourage these home occupations to become legitimate businesses with starting a tax abatement program of some sort. There was a brief discussion on the history of how the home occupation businesses were originally set up and how they are functioning now, and the huge differences. There was discussion on how the Building & Zoning Appeals Boards over the years has become lax on the regulations and have allowed for way too many kinds of exemptions.

Mr. Spisak suggested that we maybe take a look at the sign regulations and possibly consider restricting this in some manner. Mr. Ryland indicated one of the major problems with conditional uses is that they do exist, but they are not enforced. Mr. Arters stated that really we only have about 3-4 uses defined by conditional use.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

None

Topics for the next Work Session:

None

Adjourn

There being no other business to come before the Committee Work Session, the meeting was adjourned at 11:05 AM.

Ken Braman, Chairman

****NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE NOT VERBATIM****

All Committee Meetings will be held at the Norton Safety Administration Building, unless otherwise noted.