Minutes: Russell Township Zoning Commission Russell Fire-Rescue Station October 28, 2015 Present: Richard E. Snyder, Chairman Bruce Murphy Tom Warren Ben Kotowski

Also in attendance: Diana Steffen, Zoning Inspector.

Donna Weiss Carson

The meeting was called to order at 7:36p.m.

**MINUTES OF August 26, 2015** – *Mr. Murphy made the motion to approve the minutes as amended; Ms. Weiss Carson seconded the motion. Mr. Warren abstained and the motion passed.* 

## LAND USE GUIDE PLAN UPDATE:

**DEMOGRAPHICS:** Mr. Kotowski discussed the demographics chapter with the board. He said that he used the previous land use guide plan as the format for this chapter.

Mr. Kotowski discussed the population trends, properties the township owns, and township growth. The number of housing units in the township has increased, but the population has decreased. This is shown in chart #4. Mr. Snyder suggested that the two old sections labeled "Methodology 1" and "Methodology 2" be removed and a new methodology section be written.

Mr. Kotowski explained that the paragraph on the 2015 assumptions was based on the aging population of Russell Township. The Zoning Inspector and Mr. Kotowski made a list of all likely buildable lots for population projection. The estimate derived from this information is based on land available for development without consolidation of parcels, and does not rely on a timeline for build out. Rather, it estimates the ultimate potential impact of current zoning on land use and population. The projection suggests a narrow population range for the build-out of the township. A reasonable estimate of the population could range from a high of 6,500 and the minimum population could be to as low as 6,100, depending on assumptions. The land use survey indicates that senior citizens do not want to change the land use in the township.

Mr. Kotowski has not yet updated the section on occupation and income, and he will be working on this section. Since Russell Township does not have income tax, the income of the township residents is estimated, not an actual number, and there are no solid statistics to show income characteristics of township residents. The 1995 guide plan said that residents were at their peak earning years and now the same residents are 75 years of age or greater.

Mr. Snyder asked Mr. Kotowski if he had found any recent information about the number of homes that are rentals in the area. Mr. Kotowski said he did have a chart showing the rental data for the area, but the chart was outdated. Mr. Murphy suggested that if there was a trend in rentals to include them in the land use guide plan, but was not sure if there was enough of a trend to support it. Mr. Kotowski said the L.A. Times reported that there is an increasing trend of the millennial generation not getting married and not having children. Also, millennials are renting and do not feel that they are under the pressure of inflating prices to buy homes, while many are constrained by student debt. Chart 6 shows a decrease in total occupied homes and in owner occupied homes. However, the upward trend in rental units appears insignificant, given the low base number of rentals.

Mr. Kotowski discussed the section dealing with race and ethnicity. The Commission discussed the matter and agreed that while the section was drafted well, it is a complicated issue unrelated to land use. This section is not in the current land use guide plan; the only mention of race and ethnicity is a pie chart on page 29. Mr. Snyder said the trustees will decide if the land use guide plan is to be reviewed by an outside attorney, and if ZC 10-28-15 Page 1 of 2

they say there needs to be a section on race and ethnicity then it will be included, but if not then the section should not be included in the new land use guide plan.

Mr. Kotowski excused himself from the meeting at 8:27 pm.

**LAND USE MAP CATEGORIES:** The last two guide plans look at these land use categories. The added category is undeveloped land. Mr. Murphy and Mrs. Steffen made lists of what they thought the categories for the different parcels in the township should be. They discussed the difference in open space versus passive park, and that passive park should be included in open space. Mrs. Steffen said she looked up all the parcels in the township on the auditor's website (Geauga Realink) and used different filters to determine her list of categories. The board discussed the way to determine if a parcel should be agricultural by the C.A.U.V. designation, because not all agricultural parcels have C.A.U.V. designation. They asked if conservation easements should be a category on the land use map. The board decided to not make easements a category. The board decided to make 7 categories and asked Mrs. Steffen to put them on a spreadsheet with parcel numbers. The spreadsheet will be sent to David Dietrich at the Geauga County Planning Commission to ask if his office is able to create a map using these seven land use categories.

**ENVIRONMENTAL:** Mr. Warren asked to save the discussion on his chapter since Mr. Kotowski had left. He would like everyone present while discussing the environmental chapter, and he will keep working on it until the next meeting.

Mrs. Steffen suggested that the Commission consider addressing in the Environmental chapter some of the items that have been implemented since the 1995 Guide Plan. She mentioned conservation easements, lot coverage of impervious surfaces, water management and sediment control, exterior lighting, riparian setbacks, rezoning of land to Passive Park, and the many educational programs that were first hosted by the Commission and are now organized by Geauga Soil and Water Conservation District on the Township's behalf.

With reference to exterior lighting, some of the members commented on the glare caused to drivers on S.R. 87 by the lights on the outside of the Administration Building. Mr. Snyder noted that other businesses within the Commercial district have made significant efforts to comply with the exterior lighting regulation since it went into effect. The Commission decided to ask the Trustees if the lights can be changed, either by direction or to full cut-off. Mrs. Steffen will pass along their request.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** There was no other business.

<u>Action Item</u>: Mr. Kotowski will add the graphs to his chapter and continue to work on it. Mrs. Steffen will work on the spreadsheet of parcels and their numbers, with the 7 agreed upon categories. Mr. Warren will continue to work on the environmental chapter. Mrs. Steffen will talk to the trustees about the lights on the administration building.

There being no other business, Mr. Warren made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Murphy seconded and the meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Richard E. Snyder Chairman

Date