Minutes:	Russell Township Zoning Commission Russell Administration Building November 20, 2013
Present:	Richard E. Snyder, Chairman Bruce Murphy Donna Weiss Carson Ben Kotowski Tom Warren Diana Steffen, Secretary

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. The Secretary stated that she had sent a Sunshine Notice for tonight's meeting to three newspapers and posted it at the Administration Building.

MINUTES OF OCTOBER 23, 2013 – *Mr. Warren moved to approve the minutes of October 23, 2013, Mr. Kotowski seconded and the motion passed unanimously.*

MEETING PROCEDURES AND DECEMBER MEETING – The Chairman discussed procedures he would like to see implemented to conduct Zoning Commission meetings. There was also a discussion regarding the possible purchase of tablets for the Commission that has been recommended by the Fiscal Officer Chuck Walder. The necessity, cost and cost savings to the Township and the brand that would be of the most use were all considered, as was upgrading the Zoning Office computer. The Commission also discussed potential expenses involved with the Guide Plan update in the next two years.

There will be a light supper prior to the start of the December meeting.

The Commission approved the 2014 meeting schedule drafted by Mrs. Steffen. Meetings will continue to be scheduled for the fourth Wednesday of the month, with the exception of November and December, both of which are close to holidays. November's meeting will be scheduled for the third Wednesday and December's meeting for the second Wednesday.

LAND USE GUIDE PLAN UPDATE: Demographics – Mr. Kotowski said he has started to enter information into charts, and he handed out copies of three charts that he is developing. He noted that some of the statistics he has found regarding housing units are not accurate. He also noted that the 2010 Census did not ask about household income, so he will review other sources to try to obtain accurate figures. The Commission felt it is important to document the range of household income, but if Mr. Kotowski cannot find actual figures then they suggested he use estimated figures but include the source with the table. Mr. Kotowski said he found that population density is lower in Russell than in other western tier townships of Geauga County. The Commission agreed that he should research the percentage of children in Russell who receive food stamps or free school lunches.

<u>Action Item</u>: Mr. Kotowski will continue working on tables and charts, and will research statistics from the American Community Survey, the U.S. Census, City-Data and the Russell Township residents' survey. He will specifically research household income figures, children receiving free school lunches and population density.

Land Use Patterns – Mr. Snyder explained that he, Mr. Murphy and Mrs. Steffen met with the Chagrin River Watershed Partners to ask for their assistance in demonstrating the effects of the large lot zoning on land use in the Township. Christina Zndarsic proposed utilizing the Coastal Change Analysis Program to identify types of land cover using aerial photographs. The program will categorize the types of land cover which they will then tweak manually as necessary. The Commission reviewed a sample map produced by this program that shows Russell Township Land Cover 2005. Mr. Murphy said this characterizes the condition of the land in development. He explained that C.R.W.P. is actively looking for students at Cleveland State University who might be interested in doing a project to determine the natural open space and compile maps to show this. Mr. Murphy emphasized that this involves land cover, but as far as determining land use C.R.W.P. is looking for a student to take that on. C.R.W.P. has access to

G.I.S. maps from 1995 and to earlier aerial photos, and the program can produce maps to show the progression of land use changes over time.

Mr. Murphy said he feels it is important to document land use as far as total acreage that is developed, undeveloped and developable for the uses defined in the Zoning Resolution, including residential, commercial etc. A map may not be appropriate since it could be misinterpreted. He said it is important to determine developed acreage for the particular uses that are defined by the Zoning Resolution. The Guide Plan needs to show a portrait of the community as it stands today. Being a policy document, how land uses should be distributed in the future must be based on what they are today. Without a starting point there is no legitimacy as to where land use is now and where it may be in 20 years. As a legal justification for the Guide Plan, it must say this is where we are now before we can say this is where we want to go. Mr. Murphy said he is trying to find a way to interpret the data he downloaded from Access Geauga to create something that is valid and repeatable. He said he has come up with an idea of how to do this. Mr. Snyder asked him to work out a guideline to give to C.R.W.P. for a student to work on during the next semester.

<u>Action Item</u>: Mr. Murphy to work on the problem of determining accurate acreage figures for existing land use, and to develop guidelines for a student to work on the project.

PROPOSED HOUSEHOLD SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEM RULES – REVISED – Mr. Warren said he has read the latest draft and did not see anything that conflicts with the State statute. However, if Bob Weisdack's office can identify for the Commission any conflicts or problems, Mr. Warren said he would write a letter with those comments for the Commission to send to the State. Mr. Murphy volunteered to review this latest draft again. He noted that in this new draft there is a preference for leach field systems and maintaining or upgrading existing systems rather than replacing them. Mr. Warren asked for Mr. Weisdack to give the Commission his comments by Thanksgiving so if necessary a letter can be drafted and submitted before the December 12 deadline.

<u>Action Item</u>: Mr. Snyder to contact Mr. Weisdack regarding his comments on the latest draft of the proposed regulations. Mr. Murphy to review the draft. Mr. Warren to compose a letter to the State if needed.

OTHER BUSINESS – Mr. Kotowski reported on the recent West Geauga school board election results.

There being no other business Mr. Warren moved to adjourn, Mr. Kotowski seconded and the meeting adjourned at 9:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Steffen Secretary Date

Richard E. Snyder Chairman Date

zc minutes 11-20-13