

MINUTES
WARREN COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Warren County Courthouse
Commissioners' Conference Room
April 2, 2024
5:30 P.M.

The regular meeting of the Warren County Planning Commission was called to order by 1st Vice Chair Jeff Zariczny.

ROLL CALL:

Members Present: Leslie Bailey, Andy Brooks (via phone), Thomas Brown, Brian Jennings, Paul Pascuzzi, Sheryl Vanco, Gary Wareham

Members Absent: Jacob Pangborn, Jeffrey Zariczny

Staff Present: Michael Lyon, Laurie Burdick, Ben Mahaffey

Guests Present: Josh Cotton (WTO), Cindy Paulmier, Emily Sweitzer, Justin Sweitzer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Minutes of March 5, 2024 were approved unanimously with a motion by Gary Wareham and second by Brian Jennings. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Annual Report

The Annual Report was handed out and Michael Lyon reviewed with the Planning Commission the introduction, Planning & Zoning Department and Warren County Planning Commission information, Zoning, Grant Administration, and Planning Activities sections. Laurie Burdick reviewed the Subdivision section with the Commission.

2. Review Farmington Township Zoning map

Michael Lyon presented a zoning map of Farmington Township to the Commission for review. Farmington Township was previously zoned through the County, but left zoning in 2012. Following a discussion, Brian Jennings made a motion, with a second by Tom Brown, to recommend that the County Commissioners welcome Farmington Township back into County zoning. A vote was taken and all were in favor; motion carried. This will be presented to the County Commissioners for approval in the near future.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Discussion on possibility of modifying the agricultural setbacks for goats (Section 401.34) – Emily Sweitzer – Tidioute Borough

Michael Lyon reported that he had a few conversations with the County Solicitor. They were able to find only one municipality in the State of Pennsylvania that had adopted an Emotional Support Animal Ordinance, so he will ask the Commission to give him some direction as to how to proceed with a draft ordinance. One option would be creating a back-yard animal ordinance (non-commercial keeping of livestock, such as goats, cows, ducks, etc.) with a modification of current setbacks, or a second option of addressing emotional support animals that are not addressed in the Zoning Ordinance currently but they do get some protection through the Fair Housing Act. The current ordinance requires a 150-foot setback. He found several ordinances throughout the State of PA that addressed keeping of livestock. He explained that they had a variety of requirements of setbacks, acreage, etc. The Emotional Support Animal Ordinance is what he is suggesting so they are in-line with the Fair Housing Act. The Fair Housing Act states that the applicant must make a request for a reasonable accommodation, they have to provide a letter from their healthcare professional indicating that the animal will help them with their healthcare needs, and the housing provider has to make a reasonable accommodation. Mr. Lyon will put a draft ordinance together for May's meeting that will be based on information from both the Solicitor and the Fair Housing Act. This item will be tabled until next month.

2. Setback Review

Michael Lyon stated that he talked to Scott Taylor at the City of Warren. They issue approximately 100 permits per year, and they do not, as a practice, do site visits. Mr. Lyon stated that we issue approximately 250 – 300 permits per year, and we don't have the staff to do site visits. This item will remain on the agenda for next month.

SUBDIVISIONS RECENTLY APPROVED:

No questions on the recent subdivisions.

Bradley, Scott M. & Michelle A.	Deerfield	3/5/2024	TD-285-3171
Korb, Leroy & Laurie	Conewango	3/5/2024	WN-5-535
Osborne, John & Terry	Farmington	3/25/2024	WN-142-4111/176

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Lyon reported that: 1) two rezonings are in the initial stages that will be coming before the Planning Commission in the future for review and recommendation, 2) there is commercial development occurring in the County that they will see in the future, 3) Ben Mahaffey has been hired as the zoning officer and is doing a great job.

ZONING OFFICER'S REPORT:

Ben Mahaffey gave an update on his position that included the number of permits issued to date versus the number that was issued last year at this time. He further stated that he is reviewing and training on the violation process and issued his first 2 violations in March. Additionally, he stated that the Zoning Hearing Board just heard and approved a Special Exception for a sawmill in Columbus Township, LERTA has been a topic of discussion, and that he is reviewing the Zoning Ordinance every day. Also, he reported that Pleasant Township presented a new resolution whereby they will be charging a fee for the UCC recreational cabins. There are a few other municipalities that either have, or will be, charging for the cabin affidavits.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Nothing to report.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting unanimously adjourned at 6:58 p.m. by motion of Sheryl Vanco and second by Brian Jennings. Motion carried.

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, May 7, 2024 @ 5:30 p.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room, 1st Floor, Warren County Courthouse.

Respectfully submitted,



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