

**PRAIRIE TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 16, 2003 MEETING  
TUESDAY AT 3:00 P.M.**

Members Present: Howard Balzer, Joyce Benedetto, Neil Distelhorst, Glen Hymer, and Hulda Moffitt.

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Tracy Hatmaker, Township Administrator  
Connie Swisher, Township Zoning Inspector

Call to Order: Chairman Howard Balzer called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes: Moved by Neil Distelhorst, seconded by Joyce Benedetto, and unanimously approved that the Minutes of the October 28, 2003 Meeting and the Minutes of the November 25, 2003 Meeting be accepted as submitted.

New Business: See items A through C.

A. Annexation in Prairie Township

Mr. Hymer, a member of the Westland Area Commission, told the Prairie Township Zoning Commission about remarks made by Reza Reyazi concerning Columbus' intention to annex areas in Prairie Township at a recent WAC meeting. Mr. Reyazi is the planner assigned to the Westland area from the City of Columbus Planning Division.

Mr. Hatmaker said that he would contact Mr. Reyazi to corroborate what the planner had said about future annexation in the Township.

B. EPA Approval of Columbus Sewer Plan

Mr. Hymer asked Mr. Hatmaker what effect the regional sewer plan approved in December by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which keeps Columbus in control over sewer services in central Ohio, has upon Prairie Township.

Mr. Hatmaker responded that the Township continues to pursue "opt out" procedures for water and sewer services.

C. Change of Meeting Dates

Moved by Howard Balzer, seconded by Hulda Moffitt, and unanimously approved to change the following two meeting dates: January 27 to

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January 20, 2004 and February 24 to February 17, 2004. Meetings are being moved ahead one week because of Commission members' schedule conflicts.

Old Business: Residential Conservation Zoning Districts

In order to align existing zoning code with the Prairie Township Comprehensive Plan, the addition of three residential conservation zoning districts to the Township Zoning Resolution is being proposed. Each conservation district will be in the form of a PUD overlay floated over existing zoning.

Residential Conservation Districts PUD Overlays	Map Code (CP-p.26)*	Open Space	Base Density
Rural	White	60%	0.2 du/acre
Low-Density Suburban	Blue	50%	1.0 du/acre
Medium-Density Suburban	Yellow	40%	4.0 du/acre

\*Prairie Township Comprehensive Plan, June 11, 2003.

**DISCUSSION MATERIALS**

Ms. Swisher said that the focus of the meeting was to clarify concepts and answer questions related to the discussion materials provided to Commission members at the November 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. This information is intended to be the basis for discussion as well as an interactive work paper that will lead up to the writing of new Zoning Resolution text. The materials include:

- *General Outline:* applicable to all three residential conservation districts (see table above); and
- *Development Standards Outline:* one scenario applicable to each of the three districts.

Members of the Zoning Commission are encouraged to discuss and to add, delete, or make other changes to items in both outlines--giving particular attention to the development standards, specifications which will likely generate greater debate.

**SIMPLIFIED ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PROCESS**

Referencing a document that she distributed at the October 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, Ms. Swisher reiterated that implementation of the conservation districts incorporated simplified development review procedures, which should

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serve as an incentive to developers to request zoning for a conservation district PUD rather than an established zoning district.

**EXISTING ZONING DISTRICTS**

Mr. Distelhorst stated that he believed that there was already consensus among Commission members in favor of conservation design concepts being applied to future development in the Township. However, in addition to writing development standards for the new conservation districts, he thought that it was important to determine the future status of existing residential zoning districts, especially since the PUDs will be floated over them.

For example: Will R-6 be grandfathered and remain in the Zoning Resolution solely for the purpose of administering property already zoned medium density residential? Or, must it continue to be a zoning option because it underlies a PUD conservation district? Or, must old R-6 remain as a zoning option available to be requested by developers?

Mr. Hatmaker concurred that such a determination was necessary and that he would seek counsel from Donald Brosius, Township Law Director, as to how existing zoning districts could be legally handled in the update of the Resolution.

**SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES**

Mr. Distelhorst voiced an ongoing concern of his that provisions relating to schools and churches were not adequately covered in the Zoning Resolution, and not mentioned at all in the proposed development standards for residential conservation districts.

Ms. Moffitt said that she thought the Commission should look to the new development standards as an opportunity to add desired specifications for schools and churches to the Code.

**NEXT MEETING OBJECTIVE**

Ms. Swisher asked members of the Commission to thoroughly study and contribute their thoughts to both outlines, especially the development standards for each district, and be prepared to work at an accelerated pace in order to complete a collaborative and comprehensive draft at the January meeting.

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Announcement(s): None

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Zoning Commission will be Tuesday, January 20, 2004, 3:00 p.m., at the Township Hall, 23 Maple Drive.

Adjournment: Howard Balzer adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Submitted by: Hulda Moffitt, Clerk

E-mail Address: [hmoffitt@columbus.rr.com](mailto:hmoffitt@columbus.rr.com)