

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of **Greenfield Township Trustees** *Special Meeting*

May 1, 2024 - Held 4:00 PM

The Greenfield Township Trustees met in special session at the Firehouse. Trustee Searle called the meeting to order and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Dave Cotner, Lonnie Kosch and Kent Searle were present.

Trustee Searle opened the meeting by introducing the other two Trustees, Lonnie Kosch and Dave Cotner, as well as Tom Erlenwein, Zoning Inspector, the Fire Chief and Captain, Jessica Kull, Fiscal Officer (elected official), and Tom Shafer, Road Superintendent.

He stated this was the fourth meeting held by the Board of Trustees in order to discuss what they would like to see for future growth in the Township. He explained a Comprehensive Land Use Plan was approved by Fairfield County in late February, which affected county-wide growth; therefore, affecting the Township. He has been studying the document and has pulled out the portions that directly affect Greenfield Township. A participant asked about the housing designated on the map; the only housing was shown in the southeast corner, which they called "suburban residential". Trustee Searle explained the county is changing all the existing terms regarding zoning and land use. They are also creating a countywide zoning code and asking all thirteen townships in the county to adopt it; however, that is up to each township to decide. The term "suburban residential" means up to multi-family, high density housing - at least four units per acre or more. The county is using different terms for the zoning, e.g. for industrial, they use the term "employment center". He explained the Greenfield Township Zoning Resolution talks about zoning types and setbacks, and the county wants to use a "use" term for the property, and not so much the building on the property. He noted the county land use plan is on-line for people to access, and it lists 16 different land use types, which will be the basis for the basic zoning code that the county is building right now. The code is in draft form, and the document should be available as of July 1, 2024, estimated.

Trustee Cotner went on to explain that during the two meetings he attended with the mayor of Lancaster and the Jeff Fix, County Commissioner, they discussed creating an NCA - New Community Authority - so that instead of annexing, the properties would stay in the Township. Then, the tax money would be distributed between the Township and the city of Lancaster and determined how much goes to schools, fire departments, roads, etc. He noted Lancaster has a 2.5 percent tax base, so that would be beneficial to the Township in terms of the revenue they would receive. He explained an NCA is run by a seven-person board once it is created, and this could include people like the Bloom Carroll school superintendent, the mayor of Carroll, or various others from the Township.

Trustee Searle explained that one of the Trustees, along with either the Fiscal Officer or the Zoning Inspector, have been attending the meetings with the mayor of Lancaster, and the county commissioners, and each of their teams, and the idea was to look at the comprehensive land use plan and see how they could come together in terms of the use of land and any type of agreement that could be reached. At the meeting last Thursday, the mayor presented that they plan to annex along the city line, all the way up to Coonpath, with Route 33 as one border, and Election House on the other side. He noted the post ten-year plan was to annex even further, all the way to Plum Road. He noted he had never heard any of this, and was not happy about it. This chunk of land they are looking at is nearly 50 percent of the Township they want to annex in the long term, which changes everything. He noted the county and the city of Lancaster will

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need to determine who will be providing the water and sewer services to the area. Trustee Kosch stated the county wants to put a lift station at Coonpath to carry the sewage from the edge of Lancaster up to their plant, instead of pumping it to Lancaster and paying Lancaster. The water is already there, so Tony Vogel needs to know what the Township is planning to develop so he can plan the lift stations that he needs. It was noted there had been a water plant in the Township which the county had taken over, and this will allow them to put bigger lines in as needed, depending on what the Township plans. It was also reiterated that none of this can happen unless the landowner sells their property.

Discussion continued as to the potential annexation issues that could occur. Chief Smith noted it has already happened with three to four properties this year, which is losing a lot of tax base. Trustee Kosch also pointed out the potential extended stay hotel (multi-family) near Waffle House that the Township wanted to stop; however, Ohio law was changed in regard to hotels, so as long as it was zoned B1, it could move forward. In the meantime, the developer went to Lancaster to have them annex it. He noted this would be in Lancaster City School district, and not Bloom Carroll, but the tax base will go to Lancaster and the Township will lose it; and the Township will still need to maintain the roads around it.

The Board continued to review the map, and the R2 designations that were in place, especially along Lithopolis Road. It was pointed out that Lancaster would probably continue to annex the properties if the Township doesn't work with the developers on R2 properties. Chief Smith pointed out that the property would need to be industrial or R2 in order for the county to put water into the areas, and in order for the Township to protect itself.

Trustee Searle discussed the question of why the Board is adding the amount of industrial space to the map that they have thus far, and expressed his concern that it will change the community. Is it being done to block Lancaster; is it being done for the tax base? Other members pointed out that there is a history of Lancaster annexing from Greenfield Township, and they want to protect it. The two reasons for developers wanting to annex into Lancaster: availability of water & sewer; and zoning. Trustee Cotner pointed out that in talking to the major landowners in the Township, they all agreed and wanted more industrial space designated.

The Board reiterated that they want community involvement and support, and stated the next meeting will be scheduled at the end of the meeting so everyone will have the information. They noted this was the fifth Comprehensive Plan/Land Use meeting, and attendance has been low. Those in attendance said they would help get the word out about the next meeting, and also expressed that they felt holding the meetings at 6 p.m. was a better schedule.

Discussion continued as to the current zoning map being discussed, and it was noted there is a map on the Greenfield Township website Zoning Section which is color coded and shows the current zoning structure. Trustee Searle explained the map that is being proposed for the Comprehensive Plan with the follow color coding: purple indicates industrial; green indicates the airport and the Meijer area; special use is normally for schools and churches; blue indicates business. He noted the 33 Corridor will have huge interest for progress, running from Carroll to Lancaster, as it runs through the heart of the Township; it is the driving force. Of the 13 Townships in Fairfield County, when looking at their Comprehensive Plan, Greenfield Township is the primary concern because of State Route 33 running through the Township.

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A participant asked about the purpose of the trees being removed along a portion of Route 33? It was stated that Lloyd Helber owns that property, and he had the trees removed. He wants the property for farmland, but is also looking toward the future and the possible uses of the land. He wants it zoned industrial in the Township Comprehensive Plan. He has not applied for any other uses with the Township.

Chief Smith reiterated that the purpose of the map is to show the controlled growth in specific areas and to state what the Township is allowing, so anything outside of that stays green, and keeps Greenfield township the way it needs to be. With the growth along Route 33, the Township needs to protect its land, or it will be lost.

A participant asked about the status of solar and wind power. Trustee Searle explained an amendment to the Greenfield Township Zoning Resolution had been approved by the Board regarding solar and wind, to cap it at 50 megawatts. This is the maximum amount of authority a township has over solar and wind power. The Board sent the resolution to the county commissioners and asked them to prohibit greater than 50 megawatts anywhere in the township. There are five other townships that have followed suit. The county is in the process of prohibiting it county-wide, except for part of Walnut Township where the Cottontail development is in process. There is a hearing scheduled for May 21 which is being held by the county commissioners to consider prohibiting solar farms in Fairfield County. A participant thanked the Board for being proactive on this issue, and they noted that Jeff Williamsen had spearheaded the movement to prohibit the solar farms/solar power and deserved recognition for his efforts.

Discussion continued as to how to get more participation in the land use meetings, and how to get the word out to the residents about the meetings. Some participants suggested that the Board agree upon a draft of the Comprehensive Plan map, and publish/circulate it for the public to see using social media and the Savvy Citizen app. They also stated they felt the residents are beginning to see the annexation being done by Lancaster, as well as the other communities beginning to encroach upon Greenfield Township, and felt that people will become more involved due these actions.

The group continued to look at the map. It was noted once again that just because an area is designated as a specific use, it doesn't have to stay that way. A parcel will be zoned as one thing until a property owner sells it and then the owner has an opportunity to apply to have it rezoned. It was also noted that the county will not be running water and sewer to the areas designated as R1.

Fiscal Officer Kull reiterated that just because the draft of the Land Use map shows a specific type of land use, it can change based on the landowner's wishes. And if a property sells, the new landowner can apply to have a property rezoned, which will require zoning hearings. Also, it was noted that Lancaster cannot annex anything on its own. The property owner has to apply to the city, and the property must be contiguous to the city.

A participant suggested that the community should be reminded of the past issue in the Village of Carroll with the housing development that has repeatedly tried to move in and trying to stop it, so they become aware and involved in this current land plan use. She noted that if the land use plan had been in place at that time, they would have been able to stop the development. She

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noted that it's not only about Lancaster; it's also about Canal Winchester and Pickerington coming down/coming in.

Discussion continued as to the scheduling of the next meeting, as well as where and the current zoning map and the proposed zoning map would be posted. This includes the township website, Savvy Citizen and the township Facebook page. These will be posted within the next few days. The next meeting was scheduled for May 15, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the firehouse.

A participant asked a question regarding a statement that was made about a partnership with Lancaster that would extend up to around Plum Rd. and Carroll Eastern Rd. west of Havensport. Trustee Cotner explained this was an agreement that would be made with Carroll, not Lancaster. The Board reiterated that the areas would need to be defined with each municipality, and also that the property owner would have to make their own decision to sell. It was noted there haven't been any conversations with Carroll thus far. The Board also explained if an agreement was made with a municipality, the tax would only be placed on the new development, not on the existing property owners.

With no further business to come before the Board, Trustee Cotner made a motion to adjourn; Trustee Kosch seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: Searle: Yes Kosch: Yes Cotner: Yes Motion Passed 3-0

Meeting adjourned at 5:17 p.m.