

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Greenfield Township Trustees

Special Meeting

June 17, 2024 - Held 6:00 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 noting that many of those in attendance had attended past Land Use/Comprehensive Plan meetings, so he would not go into an extensive review of the reason for the meeting. He stated he would open up the floor for comments. He also asked that anyone who spoke should provide their name and address for the record, as the meeting was recorded for transcription purposes. A participant did ask that he provide a quick review for the attendees of what changes had been made to the map thus far.

He shared the map and stated an R2 section of the map had been changed, noting that a big part of what the Board is trying to do is to keep Lancaster from annexing Greenfield Township. A couple of ways to do that is to get a county water supply into areas of growth. He noted the supply currently comes from north of Carroll, down along 33, and serves Meijer and nearby businesses, but doesn't go into the Township in either direction. He noted the two main reasons people annex into Lancaster is they need infrastructure, i.e. water and sewer services, that the Township currently cannot supply. The other reason is to get the zoning they want. If they can't get the zoning for apartment buildings in Greenfield Township, they may go to Lancaster and ask for it there. He noted the Comprehensive Plan is not to address zoning; it makes recommendations of where they would like to see growth. However, by indicating where the Township wishes to see growth, the county may begin the work to bring the infrastructure to the Township. He noted Tony Vogel is the Director of the Fairfield County Utilities. Trustee Cotner indicated the area where the county would build a lift station in order to bring the water and sewer services to the intended areas which include R2, Local Business and Industrial. He noted Lancaster already has water and sewer at Wilson Road. Additional review of the map was noted, as well as stating the fact that if a developer wants to put in multi-family housing, they could still ask to be annexed to Lancaster.

A participant asked if the lot size for houses had been determined. Trustee Cotner stated it was going to stay at one and a half acres. Trustee Kosch went on to explain that the Zoning Commission was the entity responsible for the zoning recommendations on the lot sizes; then hearings are held and a decision is made. Discussion ensued as to the process, as well as the meetings that have been ongoing with the city of Lancaster and the mayor and county commissioners. Trustee Searle clarified that the interested party should write a letter to the Zoning Commission expressing their concern with having larger lot sizes, and asking for them to look at doing an amendment to the zoning resolution. If they created that amendment and recommended it to the Trustees, a public hearing would be held, then the Zoning Commission would make a recommendation to the Trustees. The Trustees would then hold another public hearing and make a decision on the matter.

The group continued to review the map. Trustee Searle pointed out the R1 areas, indicated in green. He stated most attendees probably lived in an R1 area, which is one residence per acre and a half. The R2 areas, in yellow, contained more houses per acre; 20,000 square feet are required per house. He went on to explain that the county commissioners had indicated a very large R2 area in the Township when they developed their draft Comprehensive Land Use plan in the fall of 2023. However, a large group of constituents from across the county voiced their

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concerns and opposition to the county-wide plan. The commissioners then went back and recreated their plan, which indicated a much smaller area of yellow - R2 - in Greenfield Township. He stated the Township fought to get that R2 removed from the county plan, and he didn't want to see the Greenfield Township Board return to adding too much of the R2 area back to their Comprehensive Plan. He explained his opinion and concern is that the county will come back and want the Township to revise their Zoning Resolution to make the yellow more dense. He noted the county's suburban land use plan is four houses per acre or more. For Greenfield Township, it is two houses per acre, which is a little over 20,000 square feet.

Trustee Cotner stated he agreed with Trustee Searle, and reiterated that if someone wants to be annexed, there is nothing the Township can do about it, and they would lose the money and the property. It was noted that annexation does not change the school district boundaries.

A participant asked if the R2 area is left as indicated on the map, what happens. The Board explained that they would be required to hook up to water and septic, and those services could be brought into that area by the county; then, Lancaster would not be the only utilities available.

A participant asked Trustee Searle what his opposition was to the R2 areas being discussed on the map. He explained that he felt there was too much R2 indicated on the map. He pointed out an area and stated if a property owner in that area came and wanted the use changed to R2, they would be required to go through the whole process and hearings to do so. But he noted that most residents likely do not want a housing development going in around their property; they don't want high density housing going in next door to them. He went on to explain a different area where a border against Lancaster could be used. He noted the Comprehensive Land Use Plan does not change any of the zoning, and the green areas would stay green until the property owner requests a change from the Township. He explained one benefit of a Land Use Plan is that it prevents things from coming in that the Township does want. For example, for an area that is indicated as industrial and business and someone wants to build apartments there, it will show that it had been pre-determined that the Township had already indicated the area for a specific purpose. However, with the large area of R2, if anyone comes into those parcels and asks to be rezoned so they can put a development in, he feels the Township will be tied to that because it was already in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan; and then it can be challenged in court and the developer would likely win.

The participant asked if there needed to be a certain amount of acreage or area to be considered R2 in order for the water and sewer services to be brought into that area. The Board responded that the answer is unknown; however, Trustee Cotner reiterated that the lift station would be put in the specific area on Coonpath discussed previously, and that's why they made that area R2. A participant asked if the R2 area could be made smaller, and another suggested that Mr. Vogel needed to state what minimum amount of R2 was needed in order to bring the water and sewer services to the area. Trustee Cotner noted that the R2 area had already been decreased, and stated that Greenfield Township was the only Township in the county that had a way to stop Lancaster from annexing, which was to make it available for the water and sewer services to be brought into the area. He noted the area at Ety Road had been Greenfield Township property before Lancaster annexed it.

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A participant asked if there was a chance the county would not bring the water and sewer services in if the Township makes the R2 area smaller. Trusted Searle replied that the conversation needed to be held with the county water department. He stated his opinion that the yellow R2 area needed to be made smaller, and concentrate on making a border from Lancaster annexing. Trustee Cotner stated he had had multiple conversations with Tony Vogel and had a good idea of what he needed to see and where.

Discussion continued regarding the size of the plots where a development could potentially be built, and decreasing the size so developers couldn't put so many houses in a plot of land, as well as the advantages to doing so.

Another participant referenced the yellow areas on the map with green dividing it, and it was explained that those areas do not have direct access to a road. It was noted that a developer could build a road in that area. Trustee Cotner also noted that the map can be changed and updated in the future; it is not set in stone.

Additional details regarding section lines/red lines on the map were discussed in the area of Lamb Road, Lithopolis Road, Mt. Zion and Carroll Southern Road, as well as moving the section lines to provide a block. Trustee Cotner reiterated that nothing would be changed at this time, but he has another meeting with the mayor, Tony Vogel, and the others in the coming week; all of the comments and questions will be discussed with them at that time.

A participant expressed their concern with the possibility of Lancaster annexing more property while the Township is in the process of creating their Comprehensive Plan. The Board responded that nothing has been discussed or indicated regarding any type of annexation at this time. Trustee Cotner also stated he had asked the mayor to put any type of potential annexation areas on a map for the Township so they can see what the intentions are. Discussion continued regarding the fact that the property owner makes the decision about asking to be annexed into Lancaster, as long as they are contiguous to Lancaster. It was also noted that developers will look for the specific types of areas they want, as well as calling Lancaster to ask what areas are around them where they could develop.

A participant asked if the Board had a timeline for finalizing the Comprehensive Plan. Trustee Cotner stated they do not, and said the county was satisfied with what the Township has in place currently. Trustee Searle pointed out the goal was to get the plan done so the Board could vote on it and approve it; it can be amended in the future.

Discussion continued as to the process for finalizing the Comprehensive Plan, as well as the formulation of any NCA's with Lancaster and the timeline for that process. It was pointed out that an NCA could be done in a six to twelve month period. Trustee Kosch stated he wanted to have the Comprehensive Plan done this year.

Trustee Searle asked if anyone in attendance lived in or near the yellow areas on the map; there was not. He stated he would like to see the area in yellow reduced, but stated they needed to talk to Tony Vogel to discuss the ideas that have been given at the meeting. Trustee Cotner stated he had the question in place to ask him at the upcoming meeting about the minimum amount of R2 in order for him to bring in the water and sewer lines. The group continued to

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review the map to discuss the lines that are intended to come into the area. Trustee Cotner noted that the lines are gravity drains, so they follow the water.

A participant referred to the map and asked about switching some of the industrial to residential. However, it was pointed out that there were farm fields in the area he was indicating, and that's why the Board made that area industrial; no one wants to have the industrial area near their house.

The Board discussed what happened with Violet Township and Pickerington several years ago, and how they fought against each other and didn't have good planning in place, and stated they were working through this process for Greenfield Township, including seeking input from the community so they didn't have the same issues.

Another participant asked about the purple/industrial areas and whether the Board had any indication of what could potentially be going in those areas. The Board stated they did not have any idea at this point, but stated anything is possible. The Township zoning resolution defines what qualifies as industrial, and defines what can and cannot be done. Additional discussion was around the major landowners and what their intentions were with their land, and how the zoning changes would potentially occur, depending on what developers would come into the area.

A participant asked if Tony Vogel had given a timeframe for when he wanted to begin the work to get the water and sewer brought into the Township. He would like to get started as soon as possible; however, it was noted that he would not begin the work until the Comprehensive Plan is finalized. Trustee Cotner reiterated that he will be discussing the minimum required size of the R2 area to bring the services in.

Jeff Williamsen recommended to the group that they download and read the Zoning Code on the Township website, so they can see where the various areas are indicated currently. That will help to give a better understanding of the work on the Comprehensive Plan map.

The Board asked that if anyone was interested in becoming the next Zoning Inspector, to please let them know, as the position was going to become available. A participant asked about the outstanding zoning issues, and stated there were two in her development - one for which they have been waiting on a decision for over a month. The Board responded that he is currently working from home, so all issues are continuing to be worked on.

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 7:05 p.m.