

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Greenfield Township Trustees

Special Meeting

February 5, 2025 - Held 7:00 PM

The Greenfield Township Trustees met in special session at the Firehouse. Trustee Cotner called the meeting to order and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Trustee Cotner thanked all the participants who were in attendance. He noted the postcards that had been mailed to notify the residents about the meeting, and stated it apparently helped since there were so many in attendance. He introduced himself, Trustee Kent Searle, Fire Chief Brad Smith, Zoning Inspector Jeff Williamsen, Fiscal Officer Jessica Kull, and Tony Vogel, Director of the Fairfield County Utilities Office.

Trustee Cotner continued with a review of the Land Use map which was projected onto a screen. He pointed out Coonpath, Lithopolis and Wilson Roads, as well as the Village of Carroll. He explained the purple area was for Industrial Use, noting that nothing is set in stone; it is subject to change; Special Use is for churches and schools; Local Business is noted in blue; Proposed housing was pointed out, and he noted this may be changed upon consultation with developers. He noted there had been multiple meetings with the city of Lancaster over the last year to work on the Land Use Plan. He explained both a CEDA and NCA were being discussed with Lancaster, which would bring tax money into the Township; if Lancaster annexes the property, the land would not belong in the Township any longer, but the Township would still receive tax revenue. He went on to point out the land areas that are touching Lancaster boundaries, and stated those property owners could ask to be annexed into Lancaster. He explained the Board of Trustees was creating the Land Use Plan to encourage the developers to want to come to the Township, rather than going into Lancaster.

He again thanked those in attendance, and asked for their input. He also asked for anyone wishing to speak to raise their hand, state their name and address, and give their comments during the course of the meeting.

Discussion continued regarding cities annexing land from Townships. Trustee Searle explained the law in Ohio allows this to happen without the Township being notified. He gave the example of seven acres that was annexed on Old Columbus Road south of Bob Boyd. The Board had no knowledge this activity had occurred until they read it in the newspaper. He explained the only way the property can be annexed to a city is if the property owner applies to the city for annexation. It was also pointed out that the land must have a contiguous border with the city in order for the annexation to occur. He cited the two main reasons an owner sells their property: they are trying to gain access to water and sewer services, which Greenfield Township cannot provide; those come from either the city of Lancaster, or Fairfield County Water & Sewer; or - if they cannot get the zoning they want for the project they want to complete.

Trustee Searle went on to explain the history of the Land Use Plan and how the Board came to develop it. The Fairfield County Commissioners had originally created a plan which was presented in 2023; however, there was a major public outcry over the proposed plan, and

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how it would affect the Township. At this time, the Board determined they would create their own plan to have more control over how the Township was developed in the future. He noted the growth that is coming to the area, and stated the Board was working to keep the community the way the residents wanted it, while still allowing for growth. He noted if annexation comes in, the Board has no control over what is built. He went on to refer to the map and yellow areas which are potential housing areas (currently mostly farmland). He explained the potential for how many houses/how many people could potentially come to this area. A participant asked what school districts would be affected. The Board noted the school districts would not be changed/moved.

Fairfield County Commissioner Jeff Fix went on to discuss and explain the creation of the Land Use Plan and the purpose. He reiterated that the change and growth is coming, and noted the planning and managing of the growth and density was the point of the plan, as it relates to the taxpayers. He reviewed the map and the residential area noted in yellow. He explained the NCA - New Community Authority - would be a partnership between the Township and the city of Lancaster, if they choose, to create a new tax district on the new development. He reviewed an example of an NCA with a proposed number of homes with the additional tax, and stated the money would be distributed among the Township, the city, and the school district. This would only be an additional tax on those who purchased property in the designated area under the NCA; it would not tax the current residents/taxpayers. He also pointed out the same scenario for the purple area where industrial businesses would potentially be built, and noted there would be no additional students coming from those areas. He noted there were a lot of calculations and numbers that are associated with the NCA development, but the outcome would potentially mean no additional levies would be needed for schools, fire departments or roads in the Township. All the additional money would be coming from the development done on the designated NCA property - both residential and industrial.

A participant asked where the money would come from for the water and sewer lines that would be needed for new development. Commissioner Fix explained the developer would pay for the infrastructure if the building was done with enough density. The city of Lancaster or the county could also provide those services, depending on where the building took place.

Another participant asked about other Townships and how they are handling the future growth. Commissioner Fix responded that Pleasant Township, as well as Hocking and Berne Townships, are working on similar plans. Walnut Township is working in partnership with Millersport and Thurston, and eventually Pleasantville.

A participant asked if there was a model where this has been successful. Commissioner Fix cited New Albany, noting their beautiful school buildings and public buildings. A similar model that works in Fairfield County can be established.

Another participant asked why a developer would decide to stay and build in the Township and pay the extra taxes rather than build in the city of Lancaster. Commissioner Fix

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responded that with the NCA in place, the city and the Township would be in agreement and partnership, and both would receive revenue from the NCA.

Another participant asked how income would be generated if a developer builds apartments and has a 15-year tax abatement. Commissioner Fix responded that the Township and city are not talking about doing tax abatements. He noted there is enough demand in Fairfield County that the developers will be looking to build apartments, condos, patio homes and single family homes when the interest rates come down. The income generated by the people who live in those places and have an additional income tax will generate revenue for the city and the Township.

A participant inquired about the orange areas on the map. Trustee Cotner noted those were special districts for schools and churches. The participant also asked why someone wouldn't go outside of the proposed residential building area in order to avoid the additional tax. The response was a lack of utilities, as well as the current zoning requirements, such as agricultural or rural residential.

A participant asked about the purple area on the map along the 33 Corridor and why the land is being cleared. Trustee Cotner explained the property owners are clearing the land and plan to use it for farmland at this point. He noted he had spoken with the major land owners in the Township, and they had expressed their desire to have their land zoned as industrial (purple).

Another participant asked about the yellow areas and whether it was private property. The discussion continued with more explanation about the development of the Land Use Plan. Trustee Searle explained that the plan was a zoning map of the Township, with the green being R1 Residential. He noted the Land Use Plan will not change the zoning, but it provides a guide for the incoming growth. Any property owner who wants to change their zoning would be required to apply to the Township in order to request a zoning change.

Another participant asked about what would prevent annexation to Lancaster on the southeast corner/portion of the map. The response was the availability of water and sewer services.

A participant asked to have the Greenfield Township Fire Department pointed out on the map that was being viewed.

Discussion continued with another participant asking about developing a yellow strip of land around the edge of the Township to block Lancaster from annexing. Trustee Searle explained the issue of doing that was the county would not want to run the water and sewer needed to that area. Commissioner Fix also pointed out that the density would need to be high enough to support bringing water and sewer to the area.

Tony Vogel explained the CEDA and NCA with the city of Lancaster and the Township was stopping the annexation by Lancaster. The documents stated that they will share the

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revenue from the taxes in the area.

A participant asked if there were legal things the Township could do to stop the annexation. Commissioner Fix explained the law in the state of Ohio was set up generations ago to promote the growth of cities and, over time, diminish the Townships. The Townships and the County Commissioners do not have a say in it. The city of Lancaster has been aggressive in their annexation, and they will continue to grow. The point is for the Township to gain financially from any annexation that is done by having the agreements in place.

A participant asked why the map showed purple - industrial area - right across the street from some very expensive homes. Trustee Cotner stated the land owner wanted the property to be designated as industrial. He reiterated that the map being shared was a wish list for the future, and noted the land would remain farmland until the owner sells it. The person also asked if the water services that were being brought in along Carroll Southern and Lithopolis Roads would require the current property owners to tap into them? Tony Vogel responded that in the state of Ohio, the property owners were not required to tap into the water. The sewer service is based on distance from a house to the sewer line, and the Health Department determines that issue. He also noted the owner would pay to connect to the sewer line; the developer would pay for the infrastructure.

Another participant asked a question in reference to the same area being discussed, as to whether the sewer taps could be forced on a land owner. Tony Vogel responded there are some counties that do that, but Fairfield County does not do that.

A participant asked if rezoning could be done to create any park land/preservation, or green spaces to stop annexing. Trustee Cotner stated this would require money to purchase the land first, but noted the Board did consider this for the future as revenue is received.

Further discussion revolved around the Land Use Plan, with Trustee Searle reiterating that the Plan is a plan for the future; it does not change any current zoning. Until someone buys property and then petitions to have it rezoned, it remains with the current Township zoning. The plan gives the Township leverage in the future to guide development. Without it, the developers will continue to come in and buy the farmland and do what they want. He went on to explain the process when a land owner wants to change the zoning of their property. Two hearings are required once the application is received by the Township. The Zoning Commission, made up of five Township residents, hears the rezoning request and public input. Then, the issue comes to a public hearing before the Board of Trustees for a decision. This is the process that has been in place since 1959, and will continue.

A participant asked if the CEDA and NCA documents exist currently. Trustee Searle explained they do not exist yet; however, the drafts are in the process of being finalized. Commissioner Fix stated after the current meeting, the Board will review the public's input, make adjustments to the draft documents, and have them reviewed again, before being voted on by the Board of Trustees.

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Another participant who lives on Coonpath Road asked about the value of his property as development is done around his property. It was pointed out that his property value would continue to increase as the development occurred.

A participant asked about how the Land Use Plan could change in the future. Trustee Searle explained the CEDA - Community Economic Development Agreement - was in draft form and in the process of being finalized with the city of Lancaster. It sets some boundaries with the city of Lancaster where they cannot come any further into the Township to conduct any annexation. He again noted the Land Use Plan was a work in progress, and expressed his gratitude for all of the residents who came to the meeting to give their input, and have discussion.

A participant asked about the green strip on the map between the airport and Meijer. It was noted this property belongs to the county Port Authority.

A participant asked if they would be notified when the plan is finalized. Trustee Searle stated a post card likely will not be mailed out, as it was expensive to do so, but he encouraged everyone to go to the Greenfield Township website, and also to sign up for the app "Savvy Citizen". All meetings and hearings are posted there, along with notifications sent via the app., either to cell phone or email. He noted all Township meetings must be public meetings.

A participant asked to have the industrial designation defined. Trustee Searle noted this could be manufacturing, business, warehouse, shopping centers, etc., but cannot be apartment buildings or dwellings. Commissioner Fix went on to explain that the county has created a model zoning plan, which very clearly defines what can and cannot be built in every type of zone. This is free and available to every township and village. Trustee Searle also noted the Greenfield Township Zoning Code was on the website and clearly defines what can and cannot be built in each zone.

Another participant asked for an explanation regarding the funding statement in the NCA. Commissioner Fix explained the five points of property tax and two points of income tax coming only from the developed area. He reiterated that protecting the taxpayers was the primary goal. Anyone who buys the property in the areas covered by the NCA will be paying the extra taxes.

A participant asked about the R1 and R3 areas in the Zoning Code, and the water and sewer department department; however, for the R2 area, it only stated for a 20,000 square foot lot; and did not state whether the sewer authority could provide sewer, or whether septic could be done. Trustee Searle responded that the R2 and R3 both require water and sewer services; R1 is the single family homes, and they don't require water and sewer. Additional discussion was held about the requirements stated in the current Zoning Code regarding sewer services.

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Another participant asked whether people who live in an apartment building built in the NCA property would receive their own tax bill. Commissioner Fix explained the building owner would pay the property tax, or pass that bill along to the renters in the apartment building.

Another participant noted that when apartment buildings are built and there are additional students in the school system, it will affect the current land owners who will need to pay for an additional school building to be built to accommodate the additional students. Commissioner Fix pointed out that it was a matter of timing with the new and additional development, and when the tax money is generated, which is when the building starts. The income tax will be placed on those who are building the apartments, and then the apartments will be leased out. The idea is that the amount of money being generated through the development process will put the school district a little ahead of the curve. He noted the concept is that the NCA - from the day it is developed - by the time the residents move into the homes and apartments in the NCA area - it will have built up enough money to pay for whatever the school needs.

A participant asked about a yellow area - R2 - on the map, and the Board confirmed it was currently zoned as two single family homes per acre. Trustee Searle reiterated there were no apartment complexes noted on the map. The participant also confirmed that if a developer wanted to build apartments, they would have to go through the Zoning process, and stated that is when the residents needed to attend the Zoning meetings.

Another participant asked to have more information regarding the success of the New Albany area as it relates to the subject. Commissioner Fix explained they had started their process approximately twenty years ago with ten mills of property tax; he was unsure as to the income tax amount. He noted their school buildings, amphitheater, white fencing and park district that had been built over the course of the time period, and also stated that as a result of the NCA they had had in place, they had lowered taxes after this time frame. A participant noted there were wealthy land owners such as Les Wexner who had contributed to the community to assist with the building that had taken place, and not all of it was gained from taxes. Commissioner Fix agreed this was true to an extent, but noted the parks and bike paths had been paid through the NCA. Trustee Searle stated the Board did not want to create another New Albany in Greenfield Township, but the NCA allowed the Township to reap a higher tax rate from the developed land, and not from the current tax payers.

Additional discussion was held when a participant stated he worked in New Albany, and noted the people who live there are millionaires, they don't work; they own businesses all over. He went on to state that he felt the houses were ugly, and that if the Township allowed four houses to an acre, they were going to end up with the same situation. He also asked who was deciding where the yellow goes on the map that was being viewed.

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Commissioner Fix stated no one involved in the process or the conversations about the Land Use Plan stated they wanted to be like New Albany. The question was pertaining to an example of a financial model showing the system works. He noted New Albany had collected millions of dollars on the new people who had moved in there with the NCA in place. He reiterated that no one was suggesting that anyone wanted to turn Greenfield Township or Fairfield County into New Albany. He noted they had done twice as much in New Albany as what Greenfield Township intends to do in the future. Once the basics such as new firemen, a firetruck, paved roads, etc. were taken care of, a new park may be something that happens down the road.

A participant asked what the incentive was for a city to go along with the NCA. Commissioner Fix explained that the city of Lancaster has easy access to some properties in Greenfield Township where they would annex the property and generate NCA money from the properties. There are other parts of the Township that they do not have access to because county water and sewer are already there; those are the more commercial industrial areas; they will share in that money, as well. The idea is both the Township and the City will receive revenue generated from the areas because they have entered a cooperative agreement.

Another participant asked how the emergency services would be provided - from the Township or from the city of Lancaster. Commissioner Fix stated with the CEDA - Cooperative Economic Development Agreement - that is being created, it states Lancaster will provide emergency services to any area they annex. The participant expressed concern that as the development grows, additional police services would be needed. Commissioner Fix confirmed that Lancaster would cover the police and fire services for the areas that are annexed in, and the County Sheriff's office will continue to provide police services. He noted that as Greenfield Township grows, he anticipated an agreement between the County Sheriff's Office and the Township for continued coverage. He noted his experience with living in Violet Township over the years, and stated they had a similar agreement with the County Sheriff's Office as the area grew.

A participant asked the Board whether they were receiving queries from developers about coming to the area. Commissioner Fix responded that Route 33 and also Coonpath Road are generating interest. He noted it was all speculative as of now, and much of it depended on the speed of Intel's building, as well as Anduril's building near Rickenbacker Air Force Base. He noted their suppliers are already looking for areas that are 25-30 minutes away from these companies, stating that the current Land Use Plan map is 35 minutes from Intel, and 30 minutes from Anduril.

Another participant asked about whether County water and sewer services were currently in the area around Fairfield Career Center. Tony Vogel explained the services come over to Old Columbus Road and Route 33. He noted it comes to the south side of the Career Center, this year, they would have a project that would loop the system for better services, so it will go across Business Route 33. He confirmed there is nothing to

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the west of the bypass. He noted he had discussed this with the Township Trustees, and explained he needed an idea of the size of the development in order to build the appropriate size lift station for sewer services to that area.

A participant asked how the yellow areas on the map were determined. Trustee Cotner explained that they were trying to get water and sewer services to the area which would require enough housing to be built. Commissioner Fix pointed out the gray area on the map which is Lancaster, and noted they could quickly and easily build in that area. The way to block their access to that area is to build there.

Another participant asked about the purple area between the Bypass and Old Columbus Road, where there are railroad tracks on one side and Route 33 on the other side. It was noted it was vacant farmland at this time, but it could be developed in the future.

A participant reiterated that if Lancaster were to take the yellow areas, they would double or triple the amount of housing going in those areas, so 2,000 to 4,000 plus.

Chief Smith again noted that the CEDA and NCA would generate money to help the Fire Department. He pointed out the current price of a new firetruck was close to one million dollars, and it takes two to three years to build the truck. He noted in the future when a new truck is needed, the cost would probably be closer to \$1.5 million dollars.

A participant thanked the Board for sending out the post card regarding the meeting; they stated they felt it was money well spent. They also stated they felt the plan needed to move forward in order to benefit the community.

A participant asked how long it would take before the CEDA was finalized. Trustee Searle responded that the current project is in draft form, and noted the city of Lancaster and the county are involved. Commissioner Fix stated he anticipated the earliest it could be brought to the Township to vote would be March.

Another participant asked if any green space was being considered for the Township in the future. Commissioner Fix noted the model zoning code does speak to that, i.e. bike paths and/or dog parks, and part of the NCA money goes to those types of projects. He also noted any larger park would come after the Township has taken care of the Fire Department and the Road Department needs.

Additional discussion was held about the reality of the NCA and how long it takes, i.e. many years, and the actual things that could be built as a result of the revenue generated from it.

A participant asked about the southeast corner of the map and any development that could potentially happen there. Trustee Cotner stated there were a lot of hills, rock and sandstone there, so it wasn't as likely to have the water and sewer service brought to

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the area for development, but it could be developed in the future. He reiterated that the plan was not set in stone, and could be changed and amended going forward. Commissioner Fix noted when they developed their County Land Use plan, they made any area contiguous to a village or a city as a yellow - suburban residential - area, so it had the potential to grow. He noted that Lancaster had indicated they wanted to grow to the south and west, and not interested in annexing to the north and east. He again reiterated that the CEDA has a long life, so the boundaries could change.

Trustee Searle noted that the proposed Land Use Plan belongs to the Township, and can be modified at any point. He noted these plans are typically done every ten years. He explained that the County Land Use Plan was done in 2018; however, with the development coming in, they saw the need to create a new plan. He reiterated that the 33 Corridor is the prime area for development, and that's where they have focused their efforts.

Another question was asked about the area around the 84 Lumber and the old Highway Patrol Station. Various businesses have been rumored to be coming to that area. It was noted that the city had annexed the land several years ago, and it belongs to them.

Zoning Inspector Jeff Williamsen noted two numbers for the group: 750 - the number of square miles annexed by the city of Lancaster over the last 20 years. The other number is 288; the land recently annexed by Lancaster behind Waffle House will be used to build 288 apartments.

Another participant noted back in 1993, the Township had an opportunity to stop a lot of the annexation, and they did not do it. It was pointed out what has happened in Violet Township over the years.

Another participant asked the Board if they had heard anything about a northeastern leg of the Bypass being built parallel to Coonpath Road, as this had been discussed back in 2002. Trustee Cotner stated they had not heard anything about it.

The group thanked the Trustee for their work on this project. Trustee Cotner stated there will be another meeting scheduled, and thanked everyone again for attending.

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.