

- PRAIRIE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS  
Minutes of February 9, 2010 Meeting

Members Present: Mark O'Loughlin, Lee Shoaf, Doug Owsley, Pam Williams, (BZA Alternates)

Members Absent: Bill Gallaer, Christy Overla, Jan Pitts  
Others in Attendance: Dana Scott, Connie Swisher (Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M.

Old Business: None

Mr. O'Loughlin swore in those wishing to speak.

Chairman O'Loughlin told the applicant that only 4 board members were present and the applicant has the option to proceed or table until next month's meeting. There was a brief discussion among church members and applicant decided to proceed tonight.

New Business: A) Variance application No. 101-SSU-10

Applicant: Ibrahim Soliman, 328 Hastings Court, Westerville, Ohio 43082

Owner: St. Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church, 200 Old Village Road, Columbus, Ohio 43228

Location: 191 North Greener Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43228

Request: To grant a Substantially Similar Use Permit from the Provisions of Section 940 of the Prairie Township Zoning Resolution for the purpose of conducting Sunday School Classes, Church Meetings and other uses in a Single Family Home that would be compatible with the specific use of St. Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church located at 200 Old Village Road, Columbus, Ohio 43228.

Ms. Swisher presented the facts of the variance request and did a power point with pictures. Ms. Swisher said that Churches are permitted in every district in Prairie Township. A discussion followed about the variance and setbacks. Fire, Building Inspector, and an Engineer have been to the site and letters submitted. House will remain as is and parking will be on the North and South side of Beacon Hill.

Mr. Soliman spoke for the Church and its members. He said house would stay and look like a house from the front. He said that they will put up a wood privacy fence in the rear

for the privacy of the neighbors. There would be Church activities only. He said that he cares about the neighbors and the community and is willing to do whatever is needed. There is a proposal from a lawn company to take care of the property once a week. (Contract given to Board members).

Mr. Owsley asked about the hours of operation and Mr. Soliman said on Sunday from 1-3, sometimes meetings in the evening.

Ms. Williams said that drove by last Sunday and every parking space was taken. She asked about handicap parking and Mr. Soliman said parking would be at Church. He said ramp would be put in front or back, whatever needs to be done to be in compliance. There was then a discussion about the fence and the proper height.

No one else spoke for.

Speaking against was Kenneth Smith, 179 North Greener, the corner house. He said that he purchased his property about 3 years ago. Since he has been there people have parked on side yard and at times in his front yard. He asked what guarantee he has that they will not continue to park in his yard. He has issues with overgrown weeds, thistles and shrubs on there property. He asked what about the effects on his property value? Also he asked how this benefits the community, stating that he does not believe that anyone in this community attends that church.

Mr. Frank Short, 305 North Greener spoke against saying that he has gone up and down the street and there is no room left in their lots. He would like to second what Mr. Smith had just said. As for taking care of the property he said that hedges need trimmed, poison ivy growing and trees need trimmed.

Mr. Denny Austin, 201 North Greener said that he does not have a problem with Church's in the community as long as they follow guidelines. He is usually out in his yard on weekends and a privacy fence would probably suffice, but he has problems with privacy fences and theft.

Mr. O'Loughlin asked if Mr. Austin wants a privacy fence or not and Mr. Austin said yes for his privacy.

Mr. O'Loughlin asked Mr. Smith if security lighting would bother him and he said yes.

Mr. O'Loughlin said that anyone can report noxious weeds to the township.

Mr. Skaggs, North Greener, spoke saying that there are parking problems all the time. When the church bought the property he was told that a person would be living in the house.

Mr. Walt Asbury spoke and asked if anybody will be living in the house and will people be staying overnight. Mr. O'Loughlin replied that it is a residence and people can stay overnight. Mr. Asbury asked what stops them from parking in their own yard once fence is put up and Mr. Owsley replied Township Ordinance.

Ms. Nadia Soliman spoke on rebuttal saying that Church would love to have community join them, no problem with anybody coming to services. She said she is willing to do anything possible to satisfy her neighbors and the community. There will be announcements after services about parking issues and educate the church on what can be done. She said home was purchased in January 2009.

Entrance to the house will be from the rear of property with no entrance in the front.

Mr. Shoaf asked Ms. Swisher if her office had received any complaints of high grass or weeds on this property and she replied no.

Discussion continued about property and possible stipulations if Application is approved.

Chairman O'Loughlin asked for a motion:

Mr. Owsley made a motion to approve with the following stipulations:

- 1) Maintain landscaping and fence in yard as residential.
- 2) No greater than (2) motor vehicles to be parked on drive-way.
- 3) Primary entrance and exit to be at rear of house facing church.
- 4) Privacy fence (6') to be constructed at North and South boundaries of Property at 191 North Greener and to the rear of the property at 179 North Greener.
- 5) Gatherings are to held on Church property and not on the Residential Property.

.Seconded by Ms. Williams

Roll Call Vote:	Mr. Shoaf	For
	Ms. Williams	For
	Mr. Owsley	For
Chairman	Mr. O'Loughlin	For

Motion Passed: Substantially Similar Use Application Approved

New Business: Election of Officers

Nominated for Chairman:	Mark O'Loughlin
Nominated for Vice-Chairman:	Lee Shoaf
Nominated for Secretary:	Bill Gallaer

ADJOURNMENT: 8:20 P.M.

Submitted by Bill Gallaer

