

**PRAIRIE TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE JULY 25, 2006 MEETING**

Members Present: Bruce Whyte, Howard Balzer, Bill Rowe and Judy Stalter

Members Absent: Glen Hymer

Others Present: Connie Swisher, Zoning Inspector, Dana Scott, Zoning Clerk and Tracy Hatmaker, Township Administrator

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Howard Balzer, Chairman, at 4:05 p.m.

Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Bruce Whyte moved to approve the June 27, 2006 Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes. Mr. Bill Rowe seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved, roll call as follows:

Bruce Whyte: Aye
Howard Balzer: Aye
Bill Rowe: Aye
Judy Stalter: Aye

Old Business: Ms. Swisher announced that the Prairie Township Trustees adopted the recommendations forwarded to them on the “commercial vehicle parking requirements” and the new revised “commercial vehicle definition” at the public hearing on July 19th.

New Business: The Big Darby Accord

Mr. Tracy Hatmaker, Prairie Township Administrator was present to give a summary of the Darby Accord Master Plan and answer any questions from the Board.

Mr. Hatmaker explained the process for Prairie Township to adopt the Big Darby Accord. The Zoning Commission would make recommendation to amend the Townships Comprehensive Plan. This is done by the Zoning Commission holding a public meeting not a public hearing. Franklin County Development Dept. is currently reviewing the document for recommendation to the Franklin County Planning Commission.

Mr. Hatmaker gave summary on the creation of the Big Darby Accord: Ten jurisdictions got together at the invitation of the City of Columbus to prepare a land use plan that focused on water quality. This grew out of the 208 plan which is the plan for providing sewer in Franklin County. It also calls for special recommendations in the area of the 208 plan they call the E.S.D.A. (environmentally sensitive development area). A large portion of this area is in Prairie Township.

A group of advisors that included Township representatives came up with

recommendations to EPA for additions to the 208 plan. They felt the 208 plan was lacking a “land use component”.

This was how the Big Darby Accord policies began. It is an extension of the 208 plan with a series of policies on how to develop in the watershed and put control on the land uses in the area.

Water quality and the offer of water and sewer without annexation are key components of the plan.

Mr. Hatmaker referenced the plans mission statement and briefly went over the land use map. He explained that all the experts that were involved emphasized that the only way the water quality goals would be met would be through the implementation of all the green space. We accomplish this through adopting and implementing our conservation zoning districts. Secondly, by generating revenues through development. The plan proposes a Darby Town Center and high density development (5,000-8,000) units. Located west of Amity Rd. along West Broad Street north to Brown Twp.

Chairman, Mr. Balzer asked if there was a rezoning application previously approved for a portion of that area near the town center.

Mr. Hatmaker, Explained there was a rezoning application approved by the Township several years ago with a density of 3 plus units per acre.

Mr. Hatmaker continued; The area proposed for the higher density development between the two major east/west routes in this part of Franklin County that provides good access and is located on higher ground. So it is a good spot environmentally. The revenue would be used to provide facility services and acquire green space.

The Hilliard growth corridor west of Alton Darby Creek Rd. (one unit per acre, conservation style with 50% open space). It also includes stream restoration a new High School.

The third development area is the rural district and the plan is proposing small community based wastewater treatment plants. Similar to what the Township Comprehensive Plan currently recommends in this area for cluster type developments encouraging 50%-60% Open Space. There are discussions about a 20%-30% bonus incentive being given to encourage certain environmental goals. These are similar to the same bonuses the Board placed in the Rural Conservation Zoning District Draft two years ago.

Ms. Stalter asked, “Where will revenue come from”.

Mr. Hatmaker said, “The revenue will come from three places”.

- 1) Per unit fee tied to utilities
- 2) Community Authority
- 3) TIFS

Ms. Stalter asked if the mileage would only be assessed to new residents?

Mr. Hatmaker said, "Yes, it would not come from Prairie Township's existing residents".

Resident, Pam Williams asked "Who is the Community Authority? Will it fall under Prairie Township or each development?"

Mr. Hatmaker said, "There will be one Community Authority throughout, run by a Board representative of landowners/developers, government officials and others."

Resident, Pam Williams asked "If Prairie Township will have representation on the Board"?

Mr. Hatmaker said "All the jurisdictions will be represented but the papers for the Community Authority have not been drawn up so this is all preliminary."

Ms. Stalter asked "Does New Albany have a Community Authority in place?"

Mr. Hatmaker said, "Yes, so does Columbus. Plain Township didn't want in initially, but is coming on board with the Rocky Fork/Blacklick Accord now and that does involve a Community Authority.

Ms. Stalter asked, "Was that done under the rules of the Ohio Revised Code?"

Mr. Hatmaker said, "Yes, the attorney Greg Stype, worked on the project with the City and Mr. Wexner. They found the legislation and made good use of it. We feel it's a great tool and we are glad they found it."

Mr. Hatmaker continued with the implementation of this plan. Adoption phase, memorandum of understanding, lay out steps for the Darby Town Center Planning, the Zoning, and the revenue generation. Don Brosius is working on a Master Annexation Agreement on behalf of all the Townships involved and the details of this plan. Sewer and water without annexation and the legal contracts.

Resident, Pam Williams asked "Why was outside legal council contacted?"

Mr. Hatmaker replied, "We needed someone with experience with annexation agreements and Loveland and Brosius are Brown Township's legal council."

Resident, Pam Williams asked, "What will this end up costing the Township?"

Mr. Hatmaker replied, "We have \$10,000.00 budgeted for legal costs related to the Big Darby Accord."

Mr. Hatmaker continued; Town Center Planning would start by the end of the year and require more public input. This will require the creation and adoption of new zoning districts/guidelines and re-visiting the Rural Conservation District.

Mr. Whyte asked Mr. Hatmaker "You were quoted in the Columbus Dispatch when asked about the protection of the Big Darby Creek, you said at that time in your opinion there were no guarantee's that this plan does not in fact protect that environmentally sensitive area. Is that still true?"

Mr. Hatmaker, "There are no guarantees. If this plan were to be carried out exactly as it is shown on that map it would provide that protection".

Mr. Whyte expressed concerns from area residents in his neighborhood on the proposed high density development shown in the Darby Accord and the potential for drainage issues and other related problems close to the stream. After receiving and reviewing the document Mr. Whyte recommended the Board consider having work sessions with experts who could help provide in service training on the Big Darby Accord document.

A discussion followed about annexations in the Township and the implementation and enforcement of the Big Darby Accord. The Board agreed the work sessions would be beneficial and Mr. Hatmaker agreed to make arrangement with pertinent parties to participate.

Announcements:

There will be a re-zoning public hearing for next month's meeting. The location of the re-zoning is 174 Norton Road.

Next Meeting:

Next meeting will be on August 22, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. (Public Hearing)

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m. by Mr. Howard Balzer, Chairman.

Submitted by:

Dana Scott, Zoning Clerk