

**PRAIRIE TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 27, 2007 MEETING**

Members Present: Howard Balzer, Glen Hymer, Bruce Whyte, Christopher Finn and Judy Stalter

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Connie Swisher Zoning Inspector, Dana Scott Zoning Clerk, Molly Mooney Field Inspector, Hulda Moffitt Board Alternate and Ben Weiner Franklin County

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

Meeting Minutes:

Chairman, Mr. Balzer asked for a motion to approve the February 27, 2007 Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Whyte moved to approve the February 27, 2007 Zoning Commission minutes. Mr. Hymer seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved. Roll call as follows:

Howard Balzer: Aye
Glen Hymer: Aye
Judy Stalter: Aye
Bruce Whyte: Aye
Christopher Finn: Aye

Ben Weiner with Franklin County gave synopsis of all the jurisdiction duties on the implementations of the Big Darby Accord.

- Franklin County and Prairie Township working together on these regulations.
- Adopted regulations are useable and workable.

Ben then asked if there were any questions from the board.

Bruce Whyte: I would just like to thank you very much for taking time out of your busy schedule to come and meet with us this afternoon. Connie has told us of your busy schedule, so thanks very much. At our last meeting, we did discuss conservation districts. I just thought that maybe we could pull the best of both documents together, meaning Prairie Township's and the Kirby Date documents. I have a few questions. First, looking at the western part of Prairie Township from the stand point of the Darby Accord and the development that is going to happen there, what do you see that may be some major issues that zoning should be looking very carefully into? What would you suggest if you were sitting on this board?

Ben Weiner: Do you mean mostly as far as residential development goes?

Bruce: Well, I was just talking about zoning as a whole. For example, I'm not an expert on soil, but the more I read about the kind of soil we have the more concerned I become over some of the development that I see happening in the future, especially with all of

the flooding that we have here in the township. It would just be kind of tragic if we as the Zoning Commission which would set up the zoning that allowed something to happen and didn't take into consideration these kinds of things. So, in that aspect should we be very careful with flooding regulations? What are your thoughts?

Ben Weiner: As far as avoiding unintended consequences, whenever you are doing something new or something different, that is always in the back of your mind and at least from that stand point, that is why we are having everyone around the table or involved in some way have a say in this project. There is always going to be something that you didn't think about that somebody is going to bring up. As far as what's going on in the western part of the township, in focusing in on "new regulations" I will tell you, at least from our collective new experiences with the Big Darby Accord which has changed a lot, and I think for the better. The Big Darby Accord set out a lot of duties, but I think the best advice that I can give you would be is focusing your efforts on what's most important first, and doing a great job with that. There are pages of regulations that need to be changed or policy's that need to be reexamined but, yet given all that, how can we make the most impact with the most reasonable amount of effort. The reason that we are talking about this now, setting up the cluster development or the conservation development district is one of those most important things, but it was probably the number two most important as far as zoning goes, that's why we are working on the stream setbacks right now. We just definitely have to work together and bounce ideas off of each other and not try and reinvent the wheel. There is just so much good work out there; it's only to everyone's benefit to build off that good work.

Connie Swisher: There is good work out there. Keep in mind that the Darby Accord tells us there's a few things that we need to do and it gives us some guidelines. You had some specific questions with the Kirby Date document, so with the exception of a few that I know I can answer, I wanted to know specifically what about that document that Ben could help you with. As far as the Rural Conservation District, the Darby Accord says that the township's got to have one. As far as storm water and things like that you have to keep in mind you are now going to have development with 50% open space, this has not happened before so the issues with flooding and too much impervious surface on a plat and things like that are going to be smaller issues than what we are going to be facing in the future as opposed to the past because the developers are not going to be able to come in here and try and fit as many lots on a plat as they can.

Connie: We keep teetering between our document and Kirby Date's document. Are we going to take the Kirby Date document and tweak it and mold it for Prairie Township, or are we going to take our basic design for a Rural Conservation district and build on that one. I know that the board is struggling between the two. I just can't move forward until you make a decision. I noticed a few questions in last month's minutes that need to be addressed. Chris had asked are there development standards and regulations in place for accessory structures, space and distances between houses. We had worked on that. You guys just probably didn't remember because it's been a couple of years. We not only worked on it but we had worked on exactly what those distances were going to be in the low, medium and rural conservation districts, so the answer to your question is yes. Then Bruce had a specific question, why would it be a benefit for a developer in the town center area wait to develop? I wasn't here but I did speak to Bruce on the phone, but I wanted everyone to hear the answer. The answer is because later on the developer is going to get water. Why would you develop now, if you owned land in the area of the town center, it would not make any business sense at all to develop a piece of property

today that is going to be given sewer and water tomorrow. The rest of your questions I can't answer because I am not as familiar with the Kirby Date-Countryside Document as Ben is. In order for you to make the determination as to which document were going to use or if we are going to combine them, I need you to ask those specific questions to Ben, he is more familiar with it.

Howard: Will this basically be adopted by the rest of the county?

Ben: You mean the Kirby Date Document?

Howard: Yes. Is the rest of the county leaning towards accepting this?

Connie: All the townships that don't have their own zoning will fall under this.

Ben: I think the Kirby Date document is very well written and very adaptable, which is why I like to use it as a base line. There are good things in what the township has worked on. I would just like to see them incorporated.

Glen: Franklin Township does not have its own zoning. Is that right? They rely on the County.

Connie: That's correct. But remember, Franklin Township is not in the Darby Accord.

Glen: So if we improve on this document, are there going to be two sets of standards? Is this going to hurt us or help us? Are they are going to be much more lax, and were going to have more restrictions.

Ben: That would be on my mind as well. That's why I think we should all have the same or as close as possible so that we don't have that situation.

Judy: But the only ones that would be required to use this document would be the ones only within the Darby Accord right?

Ben: You are correct.

Judy: Is it possible to take what we have written and compare it to the Kirby Date, can we combine the two and probably have essentially what you have for the county that would be as workable for the township and be consistent with what we have? Is that possible?

Ben: As far as using the best of both, I think I'm on board. What I would really like to do is for us to go through and turning our baseline, and then going together and moving from the baseline to the finished product.

Judy: But technically, this is not what you are going to adopt. You still have to work on it as well.

Ben: Right. We have a lot of work to do.

Judy: Which means we have a lot of work to do too, to get them to conform.

Bruce: Ben, are you familiar with the highlighted section of that document? The copies we received had a lot of highlighted areas.

Ben: Some of the highlighted areas have been revised a few times over the years. Ideally, I would really like to have the county and Prairie is able to go through this together for the conservation district.

Connie: The board's biggest concern is the fact that theirs is a base, and they know it needs to have a lot of the blanks filled in, but the legal foundation is there. And I think that's because Brosius was at the meetings and helped write that portion of the document that I shared with you, but we don't have a lot of time with the Darby Accord. Ben and I have attended all the meetings together. If your familiar with the Darby Accord there's three formulas to use and in Prairie Township we've got so much of the watershed we just can't go 100 foot from center line, you cannot do it. Everyone knows that after a hard rain you can drive down Alton Rd. or any other streets where we have these streams and you know 100 foot from center line is not going to be sufficient. That's just one of the components the document needs. I am trying to get David Lowell to come out and do the PowerPoint presentation that he did at the county here next month for you guys. So, as you can see this is not something that is going to happen overnight. Regardless what we do, they have got to be the same or real close.

Judy: That's what I would like to see. I don't think it totally has to be identical, but it better be as close as you can get it without too much deviation because you know we are going to have these developers come in and say that they can do this and that. So, I am on the same page.

Ben: Great. We will benefit from each others expertise. Even though we have different zoning regulations now, you know you always look to your colleagues for advice since so much of this is new with the Darby Accord especially.

Judy: I think the overall expertise from all the different departments and the input that you are going to have; I think we need that same input.

A brief discussion followed.

Ben: So with all of the different meetings and schedules, we would like to focus our intensions on Conservation District (as soon as the stream setbacks are finished.) I really do have to go now, but if you have any questions in the future I am always happy to answer them for you.

A brief discussion followed.

Connie: Ok two more things. One is the Comp Plan that we forwarded to you and then I wanted to give you an update on the Stream Riparian Corridor Setback meetings that I am attending at the county. First, Bruce and I have met with MSI on the Comp Plan update initially, and got back this document that has a lot of typos and things like that. So what we have done, Bruce and I have met 2 more times and I have also met with Tracy once, and we have not completely finished our review, but real close. We are just trying to get the Darby Accord and the future of the township changed. We have the last two chapters to review. Please look at them and see if there is anything that jumps out at you email me by the end of the week. Staff has to give them a written list so let me

know.

A brief discussion followed.

Pam Williams: I have a couple of questions. Is all of Prairie Township in the Flood Plain?

Connie: No.

Pam: So is the Darby Accord covering the entire township, even the areas that are not in the Flood Plain?

Connie: No.

Pam: So the Darby Accord's only concerned with the areas of the township that is in the Flood Plain?

Hulda: And on that same note, what map best shows the Flood Plain?

Connie: The reason I am hesitating on answering that question is because FEMA just changed the Flood Plain map and I have seen it at the county, but it has not been released yet for us to get a copy or for us to get it for the public yet.

Pam: What are they going to require of the developers who have already created a mess? For example, I know its Columbus but the Dominion Homes that are along Galloway Road. Are they going to make them clean it up?

Connie: A lot of the conversations now and up to now have not only been the ones under construction but the ones that have gotten there zoning prior to the adoption of the Darby Accord.

Glen: Pam you might want to attend the WAC when they present the development plan for the Blauser property. Its just plain black mail.

A brief discussion followed.

Motion by Mr. Hymer, seconded by Ms. Stalter to direct zoning staff to draft a letter to Franklin County recommending their consideration on the combination of both the Countryside document and the Township's Rural Conservation District. The Board believes the Countryside document is a great model, but we would also like to include the specifics of the Township's document, that includes a solid legal background. The Zoning Commission would like to know if this is a possibility, and what time frame would be appropriate. The motion was unanimously approved, with roll call as follows:

Bruce Whyte: Aye
Judy Stalter: Aye
Christopher Finn: Aye
Glen Hymer: Aye
Howard Balzer: Aye

A brief discussion followed.

Chairman Mr. Balzer stated that the next meeting will be on Tuesday, April 24th at 4:00.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Submitted by: Dana Scott, Zoning Clerk