

**PRAIRIE TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 22, 2009 MEETING**

Members Present: Howard Balzer, Glen Hymer, Hulda Moffitt, Chris Rymer (alternate), and Judy Stalter

Members Absent: Christopher Finn, vice-chairman

Others Present: Connie Swisher, zoning inspector; Dana Scott, zoning clerk

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Howard Balzer at 3:00 p.m. Because of the absence of Mr. Finn, Mr. Balzer asked Chris Rymer to be seated with the Commission for the purpose of conducting business during this meeting.

Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Balzer asked for a motion to approve or correct the August 25, 2009 Prairie Township Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes.

There were no corrections. Ms. Stalter made a motion to approve the August 25, 2009 Zoning Commission Minutes as written. Mr. Hymer seconded the motion.

Roll call as follows:

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|------------------|-----|
| 1. Glen Hymer | Aye |
| 2. Hulda Moffitt | Aye |
| 3. Chris Rymer | Aye |
| 4. Judy Stalter | Aye |
| 5. Howard Balzer | Aye |

The motion was approved unanimously.

Old Business:

Ms. Swisher provided updates on the conservation zoning district and riparian buffer.

Conservation Zoning District

The Big Darby Accord Advisory Panel has completed nearly half of a conservation zoning district. The Advisory Panel is still meeting every two weeks and is using the conservation district text written by Prairie Township as the base upon which to produce its code.

In the near future, we will provide Commission members a packet of materials representing where the Advisory Panel is at today, in effect, a status report of progress to date. The shaded part in the materials is where there has been almost nothing done. This is the area in which the Advisory Panel still has considerable work to do.

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Riparian Buffer

Connie Swisher, Tracy Hatmaker, Township administrator, and Don Brosius, attorney, obtained a map of the riparian buffer from David Lowell, GIS Manager of Franklin County Economic Planning & Development. With this map as a tool, we plan to work together to come up with something that is more doable for Prairie Township residents than the amended riparian buffer code as adopted by Franklin County. When our work is completed, we will present it to the Zoning Commission for its input.

If you live in Pleasant Township, Darbydale,¹ Brown Township or Harrisburg, you are within the Big Darby Creek Watershed and in the riparian buffer. As it stands, residents of these areas in Franklin County have to go to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) to seek variances for even relatively minor construction projects, such as porches, decks, pools, fences, and home additions, because they reside in the riparian buffer.

Although it was written with the best of intentions, the County has had only three applications since it adopted its amendment. Only three applications may be an indication that the County does not really know what is actually being built in the riparian buffer. The County is simply not as active in the field as we are in Prairie Township. Of course, Franklin County covers a much larger geographic area than Prairie, so having a presence on the ground is much more challenging, as is the job of scrutinizing zoning permits and answering violation calls.

Zoning Department's Goal for Early 2010

Early next year, Zoning Department staff has the goal of presenting to the Zoning Commission an entire package of items for it to consider and act upon. The package will include:

- Conservation Zoning District
- Riparian Buffer
- Amendments to the Zoning Resolution

New Business: None

Next Meeting:

Mr. Balzer announced that the next meeting of the Prairie Township Zoning Commission would be Tuesday, October, 27, 2009, at 3:00 p.m. at the Township Hall, 23 Maple Drive.

There being no further business, Mr. Balzer adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hulda Moffitt, Secretary
Prairie Township Zoning Commission



¹ Darbydale is an unincorporated community in central Pleasant Township.