

The Knox County Regional Planning Commission
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April 18, 2024

The regular meeting of the Knox County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) was held on Thursday, April 18, 2024 at 7:30 p.m. in the Knox County Service Center, 117 E. High St., Mount Vernon.

Chairman Roger Yarman called the meeting to order. Darrel Severns, Secretary for the Commission, called the roll.

The following voting representatives were present:

Steve Bratton	Brown Township	Alan Doup	Morgan Township
Christa Ciotola	Butler Township	Curt Bechtel	Pike Township
Roger Yarman	College Township	Jim Hughes	Pleasant Township
Bob Elliott	Harrison Township	Darryl Frazier	Union Township
Monica Severns	Jefferson Township	Matt Ashcraft*	Wayne Township
Marta Hill	Liberty Township	Ray Brewer	Fredericktown
Kris Caldwell	Milford Township	Elizabeth Bonaudi	Gambier
Dave Marietta	Monroe Township	Matt Starr	Mount Vernon
Kevin Henthorn*	Monroe Township	Thom Collier	Commissioner

Others present:

Darrel Severns	Knox RPC	Kyle Shackle	KPH
Rob Clendening	KSWCD	Landon Magers	KPH
Cheryl Splain	Knox Pages	Chuck Rogers	Commissioner Candidate

*Alternate

A quorum was present with 18 voting representatives.

Approval of Minutes – Roger Yarman

Mr. Bechtel moved to approve the March 2024 minutes. Mr. Elliott seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Financial Report – Roger Yarman

Mr. Yarman presented the financial report for March 2024. The expenses were \$2,203.43. Income for the month was \$1,404.50. The month began with \$163,921.34 and ended with \$163,122.41.

Mr. Hughes moved to approve the March 2024 financial report. Ms. Severns seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Old Business

Monthly Meeting Time Change – Roger Yarman

Review the handout regarding changing the time of the RPC meeting.

Mr. Bechtel moved to approve keeping the current meeting time. Mr. Starr seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

New Business

Executive Committee Report—Roger Yarman

Null

Secretary's Report —Darrel Severns

We have been holding Executive Committee meetings with the Consulting group that is heading up the Comprehensive Plan Update with Matt Starr, Teresa Bemiller, Jeff Gottke and Mr. Severns. We have got a list of people that we are reaching out to now that will sit on the actual Steering Committee, a group of about 30 people. We do not have a first meeting scheduled yet, but it will be coming up soon. We are estimating it to be about a twelve month process, hopefully a little bit less than that. We are hoping to get a good product at the end of it all. We are trying to get as many people in the county involved as possible. We have a good start with a good consulting group hired.

Land Use – Steve Bratton

The committee met Tuesday evening. We just had one item on the agenda. The new members of the Land Use Committee are Joe Fritz, Christa Ciotola and Marta Hill.

Pleasant Township Zoning Resolution Revision – Steve Bratton

Pleasant Township Zoning Resolution Revision is 148 pages. The committee went through a lot of the highlights of the revision. Basically, the entire Zoning Resolution is being rewritten by a consultant from Cincinnati. In the review, there were some grammatical errors, misspellings, and typos. There was one question that had to do with agricultural use and whether they could limit agricultural use on less than an acre. It was a murky area because one part states that you couldn't do it and another part of the book allows you to do it. Mr. Clendening stated in a discussion in a section in the resolution and how it compared to the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) that dealt with a township's authority or lack of authority to zone agricultural use as acceptable in a couple of narrow instances. It would need to reference the ORC. Mr. Keaton brought up a few items as far as outlining where you are measuring from for the front set back line. Is it the middle of the road, is it the edge of the road because there were a couple of places there were discrepancies on that. In the definitions it defines that. They are going to clean it up. There wasn't anything the resolution that was red flags. The lady that is writing the proposal for the revision is also doing revisions for other townships in the county and some in the state. This revision for Pleasant Township was based on Howard Township's format. Once recommended approval by RPC it will go back to the township and the Trustees have to have a public hearing.

The Land Use Committee recommended approval of the Zoning Resolution Revisions with the stated issues addressed.

Mr. Henthorn moved to approve the Land Use recommendation approving the Zoning Resolution Revisions pending revisions. Mr. Ashcraft seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Social Improvement and Economic Development Committee – Matt Starr

The County Health Assessment has received more than double the responses that we wanted. We received over 800 and we still would like to get some more. We are trying to get some different groups represented and is ongoing. If you have any questions, contact Knox Public Health. This will help us set a Community Health Improvement Plan.

Education and Outreach Committee – Darrel Severns

We have a list of people we have been asking to come and speak. We have another speaker tonight. We are not sure who we will have next month, but in June we will have Sabrina Schirtzinger from the OSU Extension.

Transportation Committee – Jim Hughes

The roundabout on State Route 229 at Laymon Road and State Route 308, will start on May 28th and will take about five (5) months. A lot of trucks are now going to be going down Wiggins Street in Gambier.

Knox County Commissioner – Thom Collier

We are always open to questions.

Knox Public Health – Kyle Shackle

Null

Knox Area Development (ADF) – Jeff Gottke

Null

Knox Soil and Water Report – Rob Clendening

We still expect the Governor's H2Ohio incentive program to be rolled out for the Ohio River Basin, which most of the state of Ohio, to develop nutrient management plans on farms, by April 15. That didn't happen. We are being told right now that it should roll out next Monday. The goal for Knox County is going to be to sign up about 10,000 acres with agriculture producers for voluntary nutrient management plans that are in direct compliance with tri-state fertility guide. It will be \$10 per acre for development of the plan and then \$10 to \$15 per acre for implementation of that later this year. Contract size will be limited to 750 acres maximum per producer.

Question: Have you heard anything about the EPA doing a study on water sources in the MORPC region, i.e. streams and rivers? Years ago, the EPA was on a regular schedule to update the TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) studies for all of the major streams and they got away from that. They have been wanting to get back to it. In the process, the TMDL looks at a lot of things, i.e. from municipal to industrial discharges, agricultural runoff. They try to quantify whether or not they are seeing impairment in the streams in any areas based on any of those types of discharges.

County, City and Village Reports

Brinkhaven/Gann – Sheila Adams

Null

Centerburg – Daniel Hardwick

Null

Danville – Jeff Furay

Null

Fredericktown – Ray Brewer

Still working on the streetscape project.

Gambier – Elizabeth Bonaudi

The roundabout will begin construction May 28th for about five (5) months. There is a Frequently Asked Question meeting April 22nd at 7:00 PM based on just the roundabout. The state will have, finding out in advanced of that to let people know, and how to get around.

Martinsburg – Robert Collins

Null

Mount Vernon – Matt Starr

In May, our Municipal Planning Commission will hopefully be launching the draft of our new zoning code with drawings and pictures. We are really excited about it. There will be a lot of public meetings on this for people to weigh in on it. We have been trying to work on Edgewood Road. Mr. Starr's attempts to make friends on Edgewood Road are not panning out very well. This is a crucial part of our transportation plan that has been recognized for a number of years. We have difficult times traveling north and south on the east end of town. Edgewood is one of three or four different things we are trying to get going to be able to connect people north and south on the east side of town. The council passed a resolution to get grant support from ODOT. It would be Phase 1 would be from State Route 229 to High Street and it would be completely done with storm water and utilities. We have had a number of utility lines break there which affects the south of there. It affects about 131 homeowners, and to the north it affects wherever it goes. There are a lot

of natural springs in that area as well, so there are basements that are not in the best shape in that area. There is a group that is organizing a referendum. We will see where that is later this month if they do successfully get close to five hundred voter signatures, then it will likely go on the November ballot. Then it will be up to the citizens of Mount Vernon to decide. We have to be able to travel north and south. There is a lot of traffic going east and west, especially on Coshocton Avenue because they can't go north and south. It is very important to continue working on this issue.

The Memorial Day parade and the Memorial Service will be on May 27th. The Amvets and/or the VFW both are open to the public after the ceremony.

Speaker – Kevin Henthorn, Executive Director Veterans Services

Mr. Henthorn gave an overview of the Veterans' Services. We are a county general funded office. We are funded through your property tax. Ohio is unique because it is governed by the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and all 88 counties have a County Veterans' office. It is county money serving county veterans. We are dictated to on how we do that from the state. We are not federal, or state funded, and we are directed by the Governor's Department of Veterans Services and have a county office and are county employees. Your county tax dollars stayed right here, through our office, pays our salaries, buys our copy paper, pays for food, keeps electric and water on for Knox County veterans. We transport veterans to VA appointments and all those good things.

We do have our own appointed autonomous board, Veterans Service Commission. We can set some unique policies as to how to serve our veterans in our county. It will be a little different here in Knox compared to Franklin County or Cuyahoga County. There are different needs, so we have our own appointed board to setup strategies. They are appointed by the Common Pleas Court Judge as per the ORC.

We do a lot for our veterans, from taking them to appointments, helping them with food, water, and electricity. We help with state related benefits as far as it relates to getting them set up to coming over to this building and getting their property tax exemption, or free hunting and fishing license all the way up to getting the federal benefits. These are disability compensation or illness or injury; pension system for veterans and widows that is based on hardship, income for wartime veterans and widows of wartime veterans, and it is not an entitlement. It is also an educational time for veterans and their families on the benefits and procedures. The other benefit is the VA healthcare. This is mainly for the disabled veterans. The other way to get into the VA healthcare is income guidelines. Each one is different and has to be evaluated.

There is an endless ocean of forms, VA, federal benefit forms. The three big ones are compensation, pension, and VA healthcare, along with the federal and state benefits, and what we do on a local level where the money meets the road. We help with food, electricity, gas, water, and rent/mortgage, but not every month. We operate with a different standard than most places like the Salvation Army or different church food banks. We are not an open door every month to come in. It is two or three times a year if you get behind on the mortgage or electric bill or need the propane tank filled. It is called the Emergency Financial Assistance (EFA). Melissa Shank, who has been in our office for 17 years and is a Navy veteran herself, takes care of this. Almost every day we have someone come in that needs that little extra help for that one instance, it is not a monthly assistance. Every county will do this differently. There are some counties like Franklin, with a \$10 million dollar budget that can give food card every month, and we would be out of money the first 90 days.

When we started to give out hams for Christmas to all the veterans in the county, you would have thought they won the lottery. It may be all they eat that month, but struggle with coming in to come in and get the help they need. It may be pride that keeps them from getting help. We are getting ready to have an open house. It is the Monday before Memorial Day. **It is for the whole community.** You can come in and get a free American Flag and get some ice cream. We want you in our building to see what we are doing. Everybody knows someone that is a veteran and can get the word out. Come and see what we have in our building. We have snacks and coke, and a coffee bar called Patriot Café. We do a monthly newsletter that we put together inhouse and it is on our website. You can look at it online or call in and we can mail it out to you every month. It is basically what is going on that

month. This month's version had a picture of the Veteran's office staff with solar eclipse glasses. We gave away over 500 solar eclipse glasses for free. One back is a calendar with everything on there from speaking engagements, monthly radio show, setting up at Rural King once a day like you would at the fair. We would be happy to mail the newsletter to the township house, we just need an address. You could then educate veterans in your townships and villages, or wherever you are. For example, you know of a 90 year old vet who can't mow his yard anymore, just leave a newsletter on his door. We need everyone out there to help. All the people in the office are vets and were born and raised in Knox County.

What is a veteran? When it comes to Federal VA purposes, for 99 percent of all benefits, healthcare, pensions, everything right down to who gets a burial flag, normally for Federal benefits, it's active duty. If you were in the National Guard or Reserves and did four (4) years, six (6) years, or eight (8) years or whatever, did your one (1) weekend a month, that is all considered training in the eyes of Uncle Sam. So, you are technically not a veteran as it pertains to Federal benefits. If you did Guard or Reserve and retired, then your retirement status qualifies you as a veteran for most of the VA benefits. Each person is different and would need to be looked at all the requirements and such to get the most from the benefits. They could qualify for pension, nursing homes, and assisted living homes. We try to look at everything, from every angle to assist our veterans.

Others from the floor

Ms. Severns had asked Mr. Collier if the Power Siting Board had rescheduled their continuation of public hearings regarding Fraser Solar. They needed to schedule a meeting for the coming month because there were so many people that wanted to talk and couldn't because there were too many.

Mr. Starr moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

The next meeting of the Knox County Regional Planning Commission will be May 16, 2024, in the Knox County Service Center 117 E. High St., Mount Vernon, OH at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Darrel Severns

Attachments:

[04-18-2024 LU Secretary Report.pdf](#)

[04-18-2024 Proposal of Meeting Time Change.pdf](#)

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Land Use Report

Mr. Bratton

The Land Use Committee met Tuesday April 16, 2024 to review, discuss and make recommendations on the proposed Pleasant Township Zoning Resolution.

Pleasant Township Zoning Resolution Revisions

Pleasant Township has contracted with Wendy Moeller of Compass Point Planning and Zoning to assist in the updating of their Township Zoning Resolution.

After review and discussion of the extensive document, there were several minor issues that were brought to the attention of the attending Pleasant Township Trustees. They are as follows:

- Proof reading should make sure proper township, fire departments and local jurisdictions are referenced.
- Sections referencing setbacks should be consistent in where the setback is measured from.
- Confirm that sections conveying some sort of prohibition on agriculture are consistent and accurate according to ORC.

Overall, the format, content and detail of the proposed resolution is impressive and the Land Use Committee voted unanimously to **recommend approval with the stated issues addressed.**

The Land Use Committee recommends that the Planning Commission accept this report as its own.

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March 21, 2024

Proposal of meeting time change options

Option 1- No change

Option 2- 3rd Thursday November-March-6pm- April-October-7pm

Option 3- 3rd Thursday 6pm

Option 4- other options from the floor