

The Knox County Regional Planning Commission
117 East High Street, Suite 221
Mount Vernon, OH 43050
Phone—740-393-6718 Fax—740-393-6705
knoxplanning@co.knox.oh.us

September 19, 2024

The regular meeting of the Knox County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) was held on Thursday, September 19, 2024 at 7:30 p.m. in the Knox County Service Center, 117 E. High St., Mount Vernon.

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

The following voting representatives were present:

James DeChant	Berlin Township	Dave Marietta	Monroe Township
Steve Bratton	Brown Township	Brian Frazier	Morris Township
Christa Ciotola	Butler Township	Curt Bechtel	Pike Township
Roger Yarman	College Township	Dave Smith	Pleasant Township
Monica Severns	Jefferson Township	Ray Brewer	Fredericktown
Marta Hill	Liberty Township	Robert Collins	Martinsburg

Others present:

Darrel Severns	Knox RPC	Shelia Adams	Guest: Brinkhaven
Kyle Shackle	KPH	Barry Lester	Commissioner Candidate
Rob Clendening	KSWCD	Drenda Kessee	Commissioner Candidate
Jeff Gottke	ADF	Jeff Egolf	Guest: Joy of Life Camp

**Alternate*

A quorum was not present with 12 voting representatives.

Approval of Minutes – Roger Yarman

Approval the August 2024 minutes is deferred to October meeting.

Financial Report – Roger Yarman

Approval the August 2024 minutes is deferred to October meeting.

Old Business

Knox Comprehensive Plan Update – Roger Yarman

Null

New Business

Executive Committee Report—Darrel Severns

Null

Secretary's Report —Darrel Severns

Mr. Severns attended the Statewide Flood Plain Conference and was educated on new happenings that is going on with the flood plain. One item talked about was the flood plain maps, the Regulatory Flood Plain is called a 1% Chance Flood or 100 year flood, which is the map that you see on our GIS Map on the Auditor's website. Since we have been having larger type events going on, they have been getting into a .2% Chance Flood or 500 year flood. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is talking about possibly moving up to that 500 year flood regulatory. In Knox County we do have the 500 year overlay on our inhouse flood plain map. There is not a lot of difference in that area, but there is some difference if it went to that stage of things, there would be some changes in

the county flood plain. It is only in the talking stage right now. It generally takes a long time, federally, to get things passed the talking stage. Most of it is based on the increases in the amount of rain in short periods of time. This was the major take-away from the conference. Mr. Severns had not been to the conference in a couple of years, and it was good to get back in and network with others you haven't seen in a while. It is a tight knit group and if there is a problem in an area that you need extra help with, they can help you out and get the job done. Mr. DeChant probably has some interaction with the Flood Plain people in other areas. It is a conglomerate of building officials, emergency management folks and people on the ground level doing flood plain management.

We have been having Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee meetings, a group designed to be about 35 people. We have been having trouble getting that number of people to the meetings, averaging about 15 to 18 people. We are progressively getting information in. In the last meeting we talked about getting everybody to do the online surveys or participate in the meetings-in-a-box that are out there. We had good participation in those things. We had about 1,200 people (1-2%) that participated in the online survey or the meeting-in-a-box. We came pretty close to what our goal was on participation. Now, they are starting to gather the data. The meeting earlier this evening was talking about the principles of what we're wanting to use in coming up with strategic planning. There were ten principles that were thrown out there from the feedback of the survey:

- Strengthen the center of each community including villages and Mount Vernon,
- Focus growth inward, prioritizing infill and redevelopment over greenfield locations,
- Protect natural assets, including streams, stream corridors, wetlands, ponds, lakes, and steep slopes,
- Conserve agriculture land,
- Dedicate places for industrial employment,
- Provide housing choices,
- Stabilize established neighborhoods,
- Manage unique residential places (Apple Valley),
- Leverage the campuses of the higher education institutions,
- Improve major corridors,

These are the principles that we are trying to bring together and develop land use mapping, and areas of conservation and development. We are planning to have an open house for the community where we will have speakers talking about different things, i.e. economic development, housing development, and social type things. Having an open house where people can listen and look at the maps that are draft form and get input from all the local folks that come to develop this plan. Right now, they are looking at the dates of October 22nd, 23rd, and 29th. The date and place have not yet been confirmed. The direction we are going with this plan is looking for more public input. There may be other focuses or other principles that may come into the plan. We are working with a firm called Planning Next, out of Columbus who will put all of this together for our Comprehensive Plan Update. They are more or less guiding us, through the community input, in putting this together. The plan is updated every five to ten years, five years is better. The last update was in 2018. There is going to be a concerted effort to get the information out regarding the open house. The people that were at the meeting earlier had the opportunity to weigh in and rank or put a rating from 1-5 and most were in the 4-5 range. There has been a push to have it completed by the end of the year.

Mr. Clendening noted in regard to the 1-2 percent of responding people, we are talking about the numbers in comparison to the entire county population. It would be more accurate to compare those responses to the adult population in the county, of voting age. The number would be statistically higher than that. Even though we have an outside firm that is being employed to help with the development of the plan, nothing in that plan will ever be imposed on the citizens of Knox County without some locally elected body doing it. Hopefully they are useful and reasonable recommendations that we finally get into the plan. The thing to keep in mind is it will be the individual Township Trustees, County Commissioners, and the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) is where the rubber meets the road eventually on the implementation of anything that might be in there. Nothing is locked in. **Mr. Severns stated the RPC is the one that takes it, looks at it and says to the County Commissioners "yes we**

agree with this plan.” The RPC still has a lot of say as to what happens to that plan. We would recommend it to the Commissioners, and they would be the ones that would be adopting the Comprehensive Plan for the county. Mr. Gottke stated these things only work if they have broad support. Mr. Lester asked a question about whether this could result in rezoning around the county. Mr. Gottke stated that if could, but to Mr. Clendening’s point, that’s a decision that those local bodies would make. Starting out with the Land Use Committee of this body, if there is a rezoning that comes into the RPC, it starts out with the Land Use Committee and it is looked at how it fits into what has been said in the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Keesee asked why the push to lock the plan in and to be completed by the end of the year since it is an election year, and the new commissioners wouldn’t be in office yet. Mr. Clendening stated that the newer members to the RPC, it seems like we are rushing through it, but if you have been involved in the processes over the years, a couple of the recent versions we have done ourselves, it was like getting your teeth pulled to get it done. There was some funding available to expedite the process. It has likely been the lacking element of the prior Comprehensive Plans we have done. It has been lacking in public input, we have had some, but not near close of what we have had this time.

There is a packet of population estimate information out on the table. Next month we will be approving the population estimates for next year’s membership dues for the RPC. The other packet was where the figures are taken from, which is the Department of Development. Mr. Severns always wondered how they came up with the numbers for the estimates. The other three to four pages in the packet is their explanation and their summary of how they do the estimates. The first page of the packet is the numbers that are pulled from to do the membership dues. As he looked at it, a number in the right hand column with the percentage of change over time that the census was taken to 2023, Jefferson Township had a huge increase compared to the other ones. He called the Department of Development to figure out why there was such a large increase. Their answer at that time was. “We don’t know. We will have to check into it.” Jefferson Township has had the least amount of growth in a long time, and to have amount of growth was alarming. We know that we have been getting an influx of people, mostly Amish, into the township. Everyone in the county is talking about the influx of people coming into the county from Columbus, but we are getting it from the north and northeast. A lot are coming from Holmes County where land prices are through the roof. Ms. Severns stated that part of the problem is when the Amish see the land, they snatch it up quickly, not realizing that we are a zoned township because they are coming from an unzoned area. It throws them for a loop, when they are told, no you can’t do that, or you need to apply for a variance. They are not used to having zoning because Holmes is generally unzoned. Hopefully, we will have an answer from the Department of Development in a week or two.

Land Use – Steve Bratton

Null

Social Improvement and Economic Development Committee – Shelia Adams

Null

Education and Outreach Committee – Darrel Severns

We have a speaker tonight, Jeff Egolf, Director of Joy of Life Ministries Campground.

Transportation Committee – Jim Hughes

Null

Knox County Commissioner – Bill Pursel

Null

Knox Public Health – Kyle Shackle

Null

Knox Area Development (ADF) – Jeff Gottke

If you recall, after the Intel announcement a couple of years ago, MORPC created a drive time map that shows a 20, 40, 60 minute bands. They are assisting communities within those different bands to prepare for growth. The 20 minute band they did last year and this year. They worked with the Licking County Transit, O.D.O.T. to identify transportation projects that will help get traffic in and out of the site and funding and build it. They are now looking at the 40 minute band, which includes most of Knox County. If you draw the line from Fredericktown, straight down southeast to the southeast corner, everything south of that is in the 40 minute band. What they are offering this group is, instead of identifying projects and helping with funding things, as there is too much work to do this and instead are working local jurisdictions like ours to help with planning the Get Ready Initiative, which analyze your planning documents that you have, i.e. maps, zoning codes, and any kind of plans. They are analyzing those and looking for ways they can help. Right now, they are in the plan collection phase of the process. They sent out an online survey, Mr. Severns sent it out to most of you. If you didn't get it, please let Mr. Gottke know, and it will be sent to you. It was sent to one person in each of your entities. You can upload your plans or email your plans directly to MORPC. They are using a firm, Burgess and Niple, that is a transportation, architecture, engineering planning firm to manage this information.

Knox Soil and Water Report – Rob Clendening

Knox Soil and Water Conservation District is in the middle of the implementation of the state's H2Ohio program in Knox County. We have contracts for around 16,000 acres of nutrient management plans on private crop land around the county. The KSWCD staff will be tasked with writing those plans. That will include everything from looking at the person's application, equipment, to soil test data, crops grown, projected yields for those crops, all of the things that go into an ag nutrient management plan. We hope to have those done by the 1st of December. Big talk right now is drought conditions. The latest drought report is for Knox County has the bottom third of the county in moderate drought and the top two-thirds of the county transitioned into severe drought over the last two week period. With the wheat harvest being a couple of weeks early this year we had a lot of double-crop beans planted, which the drought affected. We use some cover crop work on problem areas around the county. Right now, there is not enough moisture in the earth to germinate any seed and is not important for the fall. What we have growing out there next spring is what's important about a cover crop that is planted right now. We will wait and see what happens through the winter.

County, City and Village Reports

Brinkhaven/Gann – Sheila Adams

Null

Danville – Jeff Furay

Null

Fredericktown – Ray Brewer

The streetscape project is winding down.

Gambier – Elizabeth Bonaudi

Null

Martinsburg – Robert Collins

Still working on the water line.

Mount Vernon – Matt Starr

Null

Speaker – Jeff Egolf, Director of Joy of Living Ministries

Jeff Egolf, Director of Joy of Living Ministries Campground, which is in Jefferson Township. Mr. Egolf stated the camp is located along the Mohican River, close to Brinkhaven. They have been there for 31 years, and he gave an overview of the camp. It is a faith based camp. We get a lot of kids that need help, that maybe the parents can't afford to send them to camp. The mission is to reach those kids that have hurts and need help. We do fundraising to get as many kids to camp as possible. A large amount of support comes from people in Pennsylvania. A few weeks ago, Mr. Egolf became the director of Joy of Living Camp after being involved with it over the last 25 years.

We are a non-denominational camp. We have a goal this season of 250 kids. This would be the greatest number of kids that we have had camp. Our goal is \$120,000 to bring kids to the camp for the summer drive. With your help, we can change the lives of kids, through finance, prayer and through volunteering. We have Apple Fest coming October 5th starting at noon and we have flyers for this event. There is a Men's Camp coming up as well. We have 787 acres to maintain. One way to help is volunteer to help with your time, with maintaining the property, from weed eating to maintaining the footing.

The kids that come to camp are from broken homes, some needing counseling. We have cooks, counselors, cleaning staff, and some needing financial support, missionary support. You can go back to your communities and churches and see if they would be willing to help support the camp.

Others from the floor

Ms. Adams asked Mr. Egolf what the best way would be to donate to Joy of Living Camp? There is information/handouts available to take with the information.

Mr. Bechtel moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The next meeting of the Knox County Regional Planning Commission will be October 17, 2024, in the Knox County Service Center 117 E. High St., Mount Vernon, OH at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Darrel Severns

Attachments:

[..\County Stats\Knox County Population Estimates-2025.xls.pdf](#)

Joy of Life Camp Handout

THE KNOX COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION 2025 Population Estimates

	2022 Estimates	2023 Estimates	# of Reps	2025 Dues
Knox County	63,196	63,320	1	
Townships				
Berlin	1,780	1,775	1	\$443.75
Brown	2,069	2,071	2	\$517.75
Butler	1,286	1,277	1	\$319.25
Clay	1,310	1,298	1	\$324.50
*Clinton	2,830	2,813	2	\$703.25
College	334	332	1	\$83.00
Harrison	877	881	1	\$220.25
Hilliar	2,113	2,141	2	\$535.25
Howard	5,968	5,975	3	\$1,493.75
Jackson	1,053	1,046	1	\$261.50
Jefferson	1,286	1,592	1	\$398.00
Liberty	1,947	1,945	1	\$486.25
Middlebury	1,407	1,410	1	\$352.50
Milford	1,942	1,955	1	\$488.75
Miller	1,056	1,053	1	\$263.25
Monroe	2,331	2,328	2	\$582.00
Morgan	1,056	1,057	1	\$264.25
Morris	2,088	2,077	2	\$519.25
Pike	1,679	1,673	1	\$418.25
Pleasant	1,671	1,669	1	\$417.25
Union	1,480	1,470	1	\$367.50
Wayne	1,480	1,470	1	\$367.50
	38,104	39,308	30	\$9,827.00
Municipalities				
*Centerburg	1,680	1,671	1	\$417.25
Danville	1,003	996	1	\$249.00
Fredericktown	2,638	2,619	2	\$654.75
Gambier	2,304	2,330	2	\$582.50
Gann	112	111	1	\$27.75
Martinsburg	223	221	1	\$55.25
Mount Vernon	16,690	16,551	4	\$4,137.75
	24,774	24,499	12	\$6,124.25

www.odod.state.oh.us

42

\$15,951.25

*current nonmember



**INVEST IN THE
LIFE OF A CHILD**



How?

Prayer Partner:
Nothing of value happens unless God is in it!
Your prayers mean the world to us!

Financial Donations:
A gift of any size will help one or more children have an impactful Christian summer camp experience. If you have given before, will you consider repeating or increasing your gift this year?

Will You Help?



Our goal is to raise \$120,000 to send 250+ kids to Joy of Living. Our desire is that every child who wants to come to camp is able, regardless of financial ability.

We also desire to provide them with a camp experience that is second to none. To this end, we humbly ask that you would prayerfully consider partnering with us to make summer camp happen.

I Pledge...

- ☐ To pray for Joy of Living Camp
- ☐ To donate to the Camp Fund
- ☐ To volunteer my time



Joy of Living Camp
18860 Dodd Rd.
Brinkhaven, OH 43006
(740) 599-7707
officejoyoflivingcamp.com