

The Knox County Regional Planning Commission
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May 15, 2025

The regular meeting of the Knox County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) was held on Thursday, May 15, 2025 at 7:30 p.m. in the Knox County Service Center, 117 E. High St., Mount Vernon.

Vice chairman Steve Bratton 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
Joe Fritz	Brown Township	Brian Frazier	Morris Township
Ed O'Connell*	College Township	Jim Hughes	Pleasant Township
Bob Elliott	Harrison Township	Darryl Frazier	Union Township
Greg Lawson	Howard Township	Ashton Walls	Wayne Township
Monica Severns	Jefferson Township	Ray Brewer	Fredericktown
Marta Hill	Liberty Township	Elizabeth Bonaudi	Gambier
Dave Marietta	Monroe Township	Barry Lester	Commissioner

Others present:

Darrel Severns	Knox RPC	Millie Potter	Mt. Vernon Farmers Market
Shelia Adams	Jefferson Township	Paul Higgins	Chef/Advisor MV Farmers Mkt

**Alternate*

A quorum was present with 16 voting representatives.

Approval of Minutes – Steve Bratton

Ms. Severns moved to approve the March 2025 minutes. Mr. Lawson seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Financial Report – Marta Hill

Ms. Hill presented the Financial Report for March 2025. The expenses were \$2,401.00. Income for the month was \$27,408.25. The month began with \$87,517.10 and ended with \$112,524.35.

Ms. Hill presented the Financial Report for April 2025. The expenses were \$2,393.64. Income for the month was \$1,012.75. The month began with \$112,524.35 and ended with \$111,143.46.

Mr. Lawson moved to approve the March and April 2025 financial report as presented. Ms. Severns seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Old Business

Null

New Business

Executive Committee Report – Darrel Severns

Null

Secretary's Report —Darrel Severns

We are looking to contract with Compass Point Planning Consultants, Ms. Moeller, to help us with the update to the Subdivision Regulations. We have seen a draft contract for that. We had a couple of little changes that needed to be made. Mr. Severns hasn't seen the updated copy of the contract, with the scope of work, she was going to look over our current subdivision regulations, go through and try to summarize what she thought would be things that we need to update take out or put new sections in, etc. She can then give us draft of that then sit down with Mt. Keaton and Mr. Severns as they are heading this up. She gave us a price that was not to exceed \$8,100 to do the whole update process. It will probably be a longer term project after getting her recommendations and some of the stuff we want to include from the Comprehensive Plan that we just finished and adopted by the Commissioners. Over the next four to five months, we will be working on this pretty heavily. As the Comprehensive Plan process went, this subdivision regulations update will have the same process with public feedback and the RPC, then at the end we will have public hearings and then once the RPC recommends it for approval, it will go through the Commissioners process with more public hearings then approval.

TogetherKnox.org will be on the RPC website under the Comprehensive Plan tab. The consultants are working on getting us 40 hard copies of it which will go to several different entities. We are not sure we will have enough to give everyone a copy of it. The RPC is going to have a new color copier so if we need to make some more, we will have access to do that. The entities that are not members of RPC are the City of Mount Vernon, Village of Centerburg and Clinton Township are the only ones not members and did not join this year.

EMA Director, JT DeChant sent the flyer that is out on the table in the hallway regarding the Work Session. They are starting into their Hazard Mitigation Plan update, and they need lots of input. If you are inclined and want to participate in this, you are definitely invited, just reach out to Mr. DeChant and put in your RSVP to this meeting on the 27th at the 4-H Center at the fairgrounds. There are three different sessions to choose from that are about two-and-a-half to three (3) hour sessions. They look at different situations to see what could create an emergency in the county and how to react to them in an organized fashion.

Land Use – Steve Bratton

The committee met Tuesday with one item on the agenda, the Monroe Township Zoning Resolution revision.

Monroe Township Zoning Resolution Revision

Monroe Township is trying to change a section to their zoning. The proposed changes are as follows:

Article 8:

District Regulations

801. A-1 Agricultural District

iii. Developmental Standards

The new section 7:

7) The **exposed** foundation of any “Dwelling” – shall consist of brick or finished masonry and shall be continuous and unpierced except for ventilation and access.

They brought this to the committee in April and we needed clarification on what the intent is. We didn't get a lot of clarification as they submitted the same exact wording the second time. It relates to a company putting in a doublewide and was putting it on about 14-16 pillars instead of a permanent foundation. The concern was doing this with skirting around the bottom, which after a few years may come off and some use it as storage. They are wanting to make permanent foundations for these types of homes.

The Land Use Committee's recommendation was to add “the exposed foundation of any dwelling shall consist of brick, finished masonry and be continuous and unpierced except for ventilation and access.”

Ms. Walls moved to recommend approval of the Land Use Committee's recommendation. Ms. Bonaudi seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

The Comprehensive Plan Update: The Land Use Committee discussed the Comprehensive Plan Together Knox and looked over the implementation initiatives developed by the updated Plan and attempted to prioritize the initiatives. There are multiple times it is mentioned in the Plan to “preserve prime farmland in the county.” How do we preserve the prime farmland without restricting property owners’ rights? The formation of a taskforce to spearhead and oversee the different aspects of the Plan would report on the progress of implementation of the initiatives. Some townships had changed their zoning to increase the size of the parcels being built on for housing and found this didn’t work out as well as you are taking more farmland out of production because of requirements were set up for building a house. In order to have onsite well and septic the Knox Public Health (KPH) recommends that you have at least two (2) acres. An acre may not be enough to accommodate an onsite well and septic depending on a number of factors, soils, elevation, etc. This all depends on your township. In the subdivision regulations the county minimum acreage is one (1) acre. The townships can set anything higher. There are some rural areas where an acre is not sufficient enough for septic.

Another issue is high C.A.U.V. recoupment. Farmland that is taken out of production that is in the C.A.U.V. program. The developer should pay the recoupment fee for the land taken out of production. Right now, when you take land out of C.A.U.V. you have to repay three years of taxes. This is set by the Auditor’s office. There could be penalties in addition to what there is already. It is suggested having a fine for taking the land out of the program in addition to repaying the taxes. Right now, typically it is the seller’s responsibility to repay the taxes. It is the buyer’s responsibility to put it back into C.A.U.V. This is generally written into the contract.

We discussed where the highly productive farmland is located. This is one of the initiatives that we worked on in the meeting. This is another gray area. Eventually, at some point, money is going to come into play on selling the farmland and nothing is really in place to prevent it. Inherited property is something else that is to be considered and is possibly where you will see it the most. Someone inherits the property and has no intention or interest in farming, but sometimes it stays in production.

The exercise that we did at the Tuesday night Land Use meeting, we may have to put blinders on us and just pick one of those items at a time to work on. We were looking at the whole list of things that the RPC has tasked with being the lead entity. In future meetings we are going to have to pare that down to one at a time to prioritize them. The exercise was to prioritize the initiatives and we got off track with them. We need to focus on this more closely. We did lose a committee member when Mount Vernon left RPC, so if anyone would like to be on this committee, let us know. You don’t necessarily have to be a member of the RPC; you can be a citizen and be on that committee.

Social Improvement and Economic Development Committee – Shelia Adams **Null**

Education and Outreach Committee – Darrel Severns

We do have a speaker tonight, Millie Potter for the Mount Vernon Farmers Market.

Transportation Committee – Barry Lester

For the county, Knox Area Transit (KAT) originally was going to go where the old Sports and Shoes building was located, and the other part was going to be at the County Garage. By the time the state got around to approving it, it was going to cost the taxpayers somewhere around \$8 million with the percentage of the state pitching in. We decided to park that operation. We just got 60,000 square foot facility at the Heartland Park. It will be able to house all the busses, plus house most of our county vehicles in the 29,000 square foot warehouse and 30,000 square foot of office space. By the time we are done with the rehab it will have a total of \$900,000 instead of \$8 million. There will be plenty of space for large conference room for RPC and the community to hold meetings.

Knox County Commissioner – Barry Lester

We did have public hearings on the industrial solar and passed a resolution regarding the large solar facilities and banned it from the 20 townships with exception of Middlebury and Wayne Townships will be on a case by case basis.

Knox Public Health – Landon Magers

Null

Knox Area Development (ADF) – Jeff Gottke

Null

Knox Soil and Water Report – Rob Clendening

Null

County, City and Village Reports

Brinkhaven/Gann – Sheila Adams

Null

Centerburg – Daniel Hardwick

Null

Danville – Jeff Furay

Null

Fredericktown – Ray Brewer

Null

Gambier – Leeman Kessler

Null

Martinsburg – Robert Collins

Null

Mount Vernon – Matt Starr

Null

Speaker – Millie Potter, Mount Vernon Farmers Market Coordinator

Millie Potter gave an overview of what the Mount Vernon Farmers Market entails. This is her first year as Coordinator. This is the 23rd year for the Farmers Market on the square. It runs from May to October every Saturday from 9:00 am. to 12:00 pm. There are 20 plus **local** vendors. They have to be within 25 miles of the square. These local vendors are selling products that they produce themselves. They can't buy produce at an auction and bring it in and sell it. We have everything from bakers, honey, maple syrup, all kinds of produce in season, soaps, goat milk soaps, etc. All the vendors have gone through training that is required and is held at the end of February. It is mandatory that they attend and goes over all of the requirements. Anyone that is raising produce to sell has to go through a separate training, so they know how to handle the produce. There are a lot of regulations there. We accept SNAP. There is a program that is called Produce Perks that goes along with SNAP (up to \$25) and is a matching program that if they want \$20 on their SNAP, they can also get \$20 of Produce Perks that is for produce only. As of right now, that program may be ending this summer. Ms. Potter was notified that the funding has been cut on this program but is available through the end of July. They are working on getting something else in place going forward. There are a couple of senior programs; Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program where they have to be 60 years of age or older and there is an income base on it, there is another program that runs from the beginning of June for 60 and older and just show up with your I.D. and you can get tokens for free produce. They handle a lot of SNAP and WIC. It is a very good market. There are a lot of people that go through it. For as small as Knox County is a lot of traffic goes through the market. The first market day this year had horrible weather, there was still a good turnout. The months of June, July and August the market will be swamped, and parking is at a premium.

The sales for SNAP and the programs are tracked. Last year all the programs generated over \$26,000. All the vendors do not turn in their total sales amounts. As they build their businesses at the market, they garner a following. Eggs sell out fast as they are actually cheaper than retail. The vendors pay a fee to participate in the Market and it is based on how many weeks they will be there, and we do 26 weeks. There is a high schooler that pays for how many weeks she will be there. They did move it indoors for the winter last year for November and December. It worked out great. It was located down where Habitat for Humanity has moved in. They are planning to do it again this year. For any questions, Ms. Potter gave out her phone number, 740-668-4822. You can also contact the OSU Extension, Knox Public Health, and Knox County Taskforce for Older Adults, all which has information about all or part of these programs. The Senior Nutrition program is a federally funded program. The Knox County Taskforce for Older Adults program starting in June, with the tokens, is partly county funded and the other part is donation funded. It is not only the Mount Vernon market, but also, Fredericktown, and Centerburg. The vendor fee is used for advertising, promotion, and the coordinator fee. Right now, there are 34 spots available with 20 plus vendors normally there. It is too late to get in because of the mandatory training. There is no cost for the training, just go to the meeting and get all the information. The market also supports some local musicians by having a few weeks where they can play at the market. They are sponsored through vendors and businesses, like Park National Bank. Red Cross sets up on the square occasionally. The SNAP will sometimes set up and do small samples.

Others from the floor

Next month's meeting lands on a federal holiday, Juneteenth, June 19th, do we want to cancel this meeting?

Ms. Bonaudi moved to cancel June 2025 meeting. Ms. Walls seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken with a unanimous aye vote. Motion carried.

Could we get someone to come in and educate us and give information on what can be recycled and what does go into the recycling bins? Mr. Severns stated he would get in touch with the solid waste department, DKMM. It was recommended to have Ms. Splain write an article and put it in the paper on what does and what doesn't go in the recycling bins.

Ms. Hill moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

The next meeting of the Knox County Regional Planning Commission will be July 17, 2025, in the Knox County Service Center 117 E. High St., Mount Vernon, OH at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Darrel Severns
Executive Secretary

Attachments: