

MINUTES

September 5, 2023

The minutes of the Regional Planning Commission meeting held at the Fairfield County Records Center, 138 West Chestnut Street, Lancaster, Ohio, and via livestream and conference call.

Presiding: Jennifer Morgan, President

Present: Bernice Anderson, Frank Anderson, Robert Alt, Scott Barr, Carol Bault, Steve Bault, Paul Bender, Linda Berge Dissen, Ric Biling, Debbie Blue, Ann Brandt, Jay Brandt, Sharon Brewer, Mark Boring, Anne Brown, Francis Brown, Vince Carpico, James Carter, Dave Catnic, Clement Chukwu, Patsy Cole, Melissa Conner, Aundrea Cordle, Beth Cottrell, Jim Cottrell, Chad Crose, Nancy Crow, Bev Cusic, Stephanie Cusic, Anne Darling Cyphert, Michelle Dumolt, Joe Ebel, Cindi Edies, Todd Edwards, Gail Ellinger, Mark Fleming, Rich Foreman, Jim Glasure, Edward Gamble, Craig Goodman, Linda Goodman, Melissa Gutridge, Dave Gry, AnnMarie Haemmerle, Cathy Haemmerle, Mary Haemmerle, Mike Haemmerle, Diane Harper, Tim Harper, Chad Hawkins, Christina Hill, Patricia Hill, Charles Hockman, Gina Homa, Amber Hoisington, Ralph Hugus, Rick Hulse, Kent Huston, Gregory Jenkins, Cathy Jerric, Michael Jones, Don Keller, Randy Kemmerer, Lonnie Kosch, Brenda LaVeck, Jack LaVeck, David Lowe, Chusea Maociomu, Matt Maociomu, Jarrod Mahaffey, Sean Maloue, Barb Martin, Kelly McCully, Melinda McManis, Patrick McManis, Barbara Metz, Jim Miller, Marlene Miller, Roger Miller, Andrew Murray, Rich Navin, Janis Neeley, Paul Neeley, Mitch Noland, Julia Noor, William Patterson, Bishop Pierce, Joseph Poston, Kate Poston, Jeff Porter, Sherry Pymmer, Donal Rawlings, Teresa Rawlings, Diana Reichelderfer, Austin Reid, Cathy Rennell, Dean Rennell, Steve Rickly, Dennis Rider, Shirley Rider, Debbie Rockwood, Matt Rumora, Frank Saltsman, July Saltsman, Lori Sanders, Denise Sayre, Amy Schleich, Kent Searle, Marcey Shafer, Dan Singer, Robert Slater, Jason Smith, Andrew Steveson, Matthew Stitzlein, Michelle Stitzlein, Nathaniel Stitzlein, Dan Solt, Audrey Stoffel, Rick Szabrak, Mary Turley, Melissa Tremblay, Morgan Twehues, Darlene Valero, Tony Vogel, Linda Waidehil, Ira Weiss, Chad Wertz, July White, Wendy Wiley, Lee Winters, Curtis Witham, Joe Young and Commissioner Jeff Fix.

RPC Staff: Holly Mattei, Tamara Ennist and Sharlene Bails.

ITEM 1. MINUTES

The minutes of the August 1, 2023 and August 3, 2023, Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission meeting, were presented for approval. Dan Singer made a motion for approval of the minutes. Kent Huston seconded the motion. Motion passed.

ITEM 2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Jennifer Morgan welcomed everyone to the meeting and made announcements. She explained how the meeting would be conducted, including the structure of the Public Hearing.

ITEM 3. SUBDIVISION ACTIVITY

Tamara Ennist presented the following report:

Sycamore Grove Subdivision – Violet Twp at Tollgate Rd– Variance Request

A request was submitted for a Design Variance to Fairfield County Subdivision Regulation Section 4.10.3(B), Vertical Alignment, Grade at Intersection.

The applicant is requesting an approach grade of 3.20% while maintaining no more than 2% in front of the ADA ramps. The location of the variance request was identified as Walden Drive at the Bemington Trail intersection.

The variance request was reviewed by the Technical Review Committee at their August 21st meeting.

The County Engineers office agrees that this is a reasonable request and determined that this small change will not be detrimental to the overall design, safety, and public welfare. FCEO supports the passage of this variance request.

The Subdivision Regulations Review Committee recommends approval of the design variance from Section 4.10.3(B) for the Sycamore Grove subdivision.

A motion was made by Joe Ebel to approve the Subdivision Regulations Committee recommendation. Ira Weiss seconded the motion. The motion passed with Lori Sanders, Violet Township, abstaining.

ITEM 4. PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Fix explained the concept and wanted to clear up some misconceptions about the planning process for the 2023 Comprehensive Plan. He said growth is coming to Fairfield County and this plan was created as a tool for use by the townships and the villages. He emphasized the fact that zoning still falls under the jurisdiction of the townships and villages.

Commissioner Fix said the Route 33 connector road concept has been discussed for many years. The estimated cost of \$240 million has not been budgeted and no one knows if or when this project would happen. This was included in the plan in the event future funding became available.

The plan does include solar but does not promote or discourage solar farm development. The reference to solar farms was to simply state there is land currently leased for solar and therefore would be unavailable to be used for other development.

Vince Papsidero from Planning Next gave an overview and summary of the Fairfield County 2023 Comprehensive Plan. This plan does not replace zoning and is to be used as a tool. The planning process was about nine months, including input from the public and public meetings. The growth concept map was created from input from the public meeting. The concept was to preserve agricultural, plan for growth, and focus development where it needs to be in the next 5 to 10 years.

RPC Members

Gail Ellinger, Hocking Township, said she supports the effort but has heard a lot of misconceptions regarding the plan and the process. She would like to see the adoption of the plan moved to December 2023.

Lori Sanders, Violet Township, said she went through this process about a year ago and appreciates being involved in this process.

Don Keller, Liberty Township, said their citizens want open green areas and they will be holding meetings to discuss options available to support their needs.

Public Comments

Michelle Stitzlein does not feel the plan preserves green space and farms. She wants to see the preservation of the rural landscape, jobs, and the quality of life.

Nathanal Stitzlein, resident of Liberty Twp, his emphasizes was on the land and water resources. Are we giving away our water for other people's benefits.

Roger Miller, resident of Liberty Twp, had concerns about transparency and prior notice to the public for the planning process.

Sherry Pymer, resident of Walnut Twp, appreciated the solar comments from Commissioner Fix and Vince Papsidero. There are currently 5,000 acres of leased land and she was concerned about the lack of support to deal with upcoming solar projects.

Ralph Hugus, resident of Richland Twp, voiced concerns about shared revenue and he personally wants his money to go to his township. He stated we live in Fairfield County not downtown Columbus.

Melissa Conner, resident of Walnut Twp, was upset about the loss of prime farmland. She would like a complete agriculture impact study to ensure what is best for Fairfield County.

Joe Young, resident of Richland Twp, his objective was to support land preservation and ask for more time to evaluate the plan.

Jarrold Mahaffey, resident of Liberty Twp, discussed managing growth, job creation and employment.

Frank Anderson discussed concerns about the road connector corridor, asking what studies have been done on road alignment, environmental impacts, residential development and limited access.

Edward Gamble, resident of Pleasant Twp, was deeply concerned about the connector corridor affecting his property and farm.

Steve Rickly, resident of Amanda Twp, was concerned about the loss of his farm and felt growth and expansion is not always good.

Andrew Stevenson, resident of Greenfield Twp, said he is committed to the preservation of the rural areas. The proposal lacks transparency and does not live in the environment we live in. Also, the plan does not discuss the negative impact of growth.

Nancy Crow encouraged everyone to do their part to preserve our way of life and to protect our waters.

Mathew Stitzlein, a resident of Liberty Twp since 1979, said he wants to be involved in the process and asked for an extension of the time before the adoption of the plan.

Melissa Trembley, resident of Amanda Twp, asked for a delay in the passage of the plan.

Bob Slater, Walnut Twp, would like to have this issued tabled.

Andrew Murray, Local 18 Operating Engineers, voiced his support of solar projects in Fairfield County.

Morgan Twehues, posed the question, does the data show the connector would alleviate the Route 33 congestion.

Andrew Lewis, resident of Liberty Twp, commented on the map, was the county GIS mapping department involved with this process.

Kevin Elder said he owns properties in several townships. He feels the data is questionable and was upset about how the information was provided to the public on these controversial issues. He felt we will continue to lose farmland. Why do we need to redo a plan that is only five years old.

Richad Jolley, resident of Liberty Twp, said he does not want to see warehouses everywhere in Fairfield County. He did applaud the work that went into this plan. He wanted to know where our mass transit system is, and he felt this would help lighten up the traffic on Rt. 33.

Betty Bennett, resident of Walnut Twp, said there are solar fields going in across from our land and the topsoil will be gone. She felt it would not be possible to reclaim the land for farming in the future.

Robert Alt, Liberty Twp, said they will prepare their own land use plan.

Jennifer Morgan said we will not be voting on the plan tonight and we will consider postponing adoption of the plan.

ITEM 5. ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT

Holly Mattei presented the following report:

APPLICANT: Rushcreek Township

Rushcreek Township is proposing changes to its zoning resolution, adding Section 11.9 (A) – Short Term Rental. Rushcreek Township has submitted Section 11.9 for consideration. The Fairfield County Prosecutor's office has reviewed and provided feedback prior to submitting to the Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission.

Staff Recommendation:

Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission staff recommends modification of Section 11.9 (A) in accordance with the analysis.

A motion was made by Ira Weiss to approve the RPC staff recommendation. Dan Singer seconded the motion. The motion passed with Charles Hockman abstaining.

ITEM 6. APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS

A resolution was presented to the board to allow for the proper appropriation of funds for contract services.

A motion was made by Todd Edwards to approve the appropriation of funds. Gail Ellinger seconded the motion. Motion passed.

ITEM 7. DISCUSSION ON RPC MEMBERSHIP

The board discussed the RPC membership and participation in the meetings. Holly Mattei suggested adding some presentations on different topics to the agenda to attract more participation and the board agreed this would be beneficial.

ITEM 8. BUILDING DEPARTMENT APPLICATIONS UNDER REVIEW FOR BUILDING PERMITS

RPC staff presented a list of building permit applications under review.

ITEM 9. BILLS

Holly Mattei presented the following bills for payment:

530000	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	
	Crossroads Community	\$11,000.00
	TOTAL	\$11,000.00

A motion was made by Gail Ellinger to approve the bills for payment. Ira Weiss seconded the motion. Motion passed.

ITEM 10. OTHER BUSINESS

Holly Mattei gave an update on the new applicants starting in September.

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Lori Sanders and seconded by Kent Huston. Motion passed.

Minutes Approved By:

Jennifer Morgan, President

Kent Huston, Secretary