

Franklin Township, Portage County  
Zoning Commission Hearing  
March 21, 2024

**Members Present:** Beth Geist, Glenn Luttner, Greg Huck, Scott Stiegemeier, Travis Copen, and alternate Judy Spencer.

**Others:** Zoning Inspector Joe Ciccozzi, and Secretary Jenny August.

**Call to Order:** Mr. Ciccozzi called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**Nomination of Chair for 2024 and 2025:**

Mr. Ciccozzi asked if there was anyone that wanted to volunteer to be the Chair for the next two years. Mrs. Geist said she would be the Chair. Mr. Stiegemeier nominated Mrs. Geist, with a second from Mr. Luttner. All commissioners voted yes.

**Approval of Minutes from May 18, 2023:** Mrs. Geist moved to approve the May 18, 2023 meeting minutes with a second from Mr. Luttner. Mr. Stiegemeier and Mr. Copen abstained. All other commissioners voted yes. The minutes were approved.

**Welcoming new Zoning Commissioners Scott Stiegemeier and Travis Copen:**

Mr. Copen and Mr. Stiegemeier were introduced and welcomed. Mr. Copen gave some background as to his business and properties in the area. Mr. Stiegemeier told the commissioners that he has previously served as a township trustee and lived in this area almost his entire life.

**Discussion Topics:**

**ACCESSORY BUILDING MAXIMUM HEIGHT- SECTION 405.06.A.6**

Mr. Ciccozzi explained to the commission that this topic results from excessive variance requests for people who were building accessory buildings that needed to be over 16 feet in height. Mr. Ciccozzi said the Portage County building standards are for accessory buildings to be a maximum of 20 feet in height. The commissioners agreed that it makes sense to parallel the county standards. After considering several ways to make the language change, the commission decided the most practical way was to:

Eliminate Section 405.06.A.6, and renumber the remaining numbers 7, 8, and 9 to become numbers 6, 7, and 8.

Additionally, section 405.06.A.2 would read as follows:

2. The total combined gross floor area *and maximum height* of the accessory buildings and/or structures shall meet the following requirements:
  - a. Accessory 1 – in all districts for lots up to one and one-half (1-1/2) acres in size, the aggregate gross floor area shall not exceed 768 square feet *and shall be limited to a maximum height of twenty (20) feet.*
  - b. Accessory 2 – in all districts for lots greater than one and one half (1-1/2) acres in size, the aggregate gross floor area shall not exceed 2,000 square feet *and shall be limited to a maximum height of twenty-four (24) feet.*

Mr. Luttner moved to forward the amended language of Section 405.06.A to Portage County Regional Planning Commission for review and consideration. Mr. Copen seconded the motion. All commissioners voted yes.

**FENCE RULES- SECTION 410.00.E**

Mr. Ciccozzi explained to the commission that this came about because of a business that was attempting to create a fenced in area using fence posts (tree trunks) that exceeded the maximum 6-foot height. The business owners argued that the fence was not along the side or rear property lines as specified in the zoning code, so they were not in violation. The purpose of changing the language is to prevent excessively high fencing in areas of the property that are located anywhere in the side or rear property areas. After considering many options, the commission amended Section 410.00.E to read as follows:

E. Any fence, wall, hedge, and berm, or any combination ~~along any side or rear property lines~~ *located in the side or rear* of any property in any zoning district may be permitted according to the following standards:

1. Any fence, wall, hedge, and berm, or any combination shall not exceed six (6) feet in height above the finished grade in all zoning districts, except districts designated for industrial uses.
2. Fences in residential districts shall be of a decorative design to include wrought iron, wood and chain link, but to exclude barbed wire, chicken wire, and similar type fences, and shall be designed so that 25% of the surface shall be open to light and air. Decorative posts shall not exceed a height of five (5) feet in height.
3. In districts designated for industrial uses, any fence, wall, hedge, and berm, or any combination shall not exceed twelve (12) feet in height above the finished grade.

Mrs. Geist moved to send the proposed amendments to Portage County Regional Planning Commission for review and considerations. Mr. Huck seconded the motion. All commissioners voted yes.

**New Business**

Mrs. Geist asked about the former Hookah Lounge. It has a new sports related business The new business has purchased and will be moving to the former pet shop on SR 59.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for April 25, 2024 at 7:00 pm.

**Adjournment:** Mrs. Geist moved to adjourn at 8:03 pm with a second from Mr. Luttner. All Commission members voted yes.

Respectfully submitted by Jenny August, Zoning Commission Secretary.

Approved:

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Elizabeth Geist, Zoning Commission Chair