

Franklin Township, Portage County
Zoning Commission Hearing
January 20, 2022

Members Present: Chair Mary Organ, Mekal Banyasz, Beth Geist, Reed Havel, and Glenn Luttner.

Others: Jenny August, Zoning Commission Secretary. BZA Chair David Hansford observed.

Call to Order:

Mrs. Organ called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. She introduced the two new members of the zoning commission; Reed Havel and Glenn Luttner. They each spoke briefly about themselves and their interest in serving on the commission. Mrs. Organ gave a quick summary about what the zoning commission does.

Nomination of Chair:

Mrs. Organ asked the commission if they would prefer to move the nomination to the end of the meeting so she can finish up the medical marijuana discussion. The commissioners agreed.

Minutes:

Mrs. Organ moved to accept the minutes from the December 16, 2021 meeting. Ms. Banyasz seconded. Mr. Havel, Mr. Luttner, and Mrs. Geist abstained. Mrs. Organ and Ms. Banyasz voted yes. The minutes were approved.

Discussion Topics:

Continued Discussion on Medical Marijuana in Franklin Township

Mrs. Organ explained that there are limited licenses for medical marijuana facilities. The state has a "lottery" type of system that selects applicants. The trustees lifted the moratorium on medical marijuana, giving the zoning commission one year to work on the zoning language. The commission submitted the language to Portage County Regional Planning Commission (PCRPC) for their considerations. PCRPC sent back their staff recommendations.

- They did not recommend having Sect. 312.02(b)h add to R-1/C-1 and section 322.02(b)h because they allow residential use.
- After discussion with the Portage County Prosecutors office, the PCRPC did not recommend adding section 601.01(B061(d) because they did not think it was a valid use for zoning.
- PCRPC staff prepared separation maps to determine which properties may be available at 1,000 feet of separation, and also 500 feet of separation. At 1000 feet, there is only one available location. Using a 500-foot buffer allows for several more locations along east SR 59. Based on these maps, PCRPC recommended a 500-foot buffer from residential properties.
- The staff of PCRPC supported all definitions that the commission proposed adding to the code relating to medical marijuana.

The zoning commission agree that it is in the best interest of the township to leave the residential buffer at 1000 feet. They also think it is best to limit medical marijuana facilities to just dispensaries. While reviewing the maps, the zoning commission agreed that

clarification was needed for the zoning of a property along SR 43 which is known as the former Tree City Mold property that is listed at Research-Office (R-O). Also, PCRPC is putting possible medical marijuana dispensary locations in the R-O and Open Space Conservation (O-C) areas. The zoning commission recommended only Commercial districts for location of a dispensary.

Ms. Banyasz moved to table this discussion until clarification is received from PCRPC. Mrs. Geist seconded the motion. All commissioners voted aye. Mr. Havel said he would also like clarification as to why PCRPC did not flag the commission disallowing medical marijuana cultivation and production facilities.

New Business: Mrs. Organ said there has been discussion about a possible Planned Residential Development (PRD) near the corner of Summit Street and Cline Road. The developer has two options: they can either request a zoning change, or they can go to the Board of Zoning Appeals and apply for a PRD. The PRD request will allow for smaller property parcels and open space. This will allow for more homes to be built in the development.

Next, the PCRPC has an annual orientation meeting at the beginning of the year to let the new people understand PCRPC's role with the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Zoning Commissions in the county. Due to the corona virus, it has been postponed, but may happen later this year.

Lastly, Mekal said if anyone is interested in learning about the Sunshine Laws, they can visit the Ohio Attorney Generals website and there is a lot of information available to read and also an online webinar that you can sign up for.

Nomination of Chair:

Mrs. Organ nominated Mekal Banyasz to be the Chair of the zoning commission. There were no other nominations. Mrs. Geist seconded. Ms. Banyasz accepted the nomination.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is to be held February 17, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

Adjournment: Mrs. Geist moved to adjourn at 8:32 pm with a second from Mr. Luttner. All Commission members voted yes.

Respectfully submitted by Jenny August, Zoning Commission Secretary.

Approved:

Mekal Banyasz, Zoning Commission Chair