

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

WALNUT TOWNSHIP, FAIRFIELD COUNTY, OH - BOARD OF TRUSTEES

11420 Millersport Rd., Millersport, OH 43067

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

November 02, 2023 - 8:30 AM

Fairfield County Commissioners Hearing Room – 210 East Main St., Lancaster, OH

Township Officials present/absent:

Officials present – Trustees, Terry W. Horn and William R. Yates. Officials absent – Douglas G. Leith; Fiscal Officer, Underwood.

Department Heads present: None

Invited guest(s) present:

David Levac, County Commissioner & Aundrea Cordle, Fairfield County Administrator; Holly Mattie, Interim Administrator, & Joshua Hillberry, County Regional Planning; Steven Darnell & Ausin Lines - County Prosecutor's Office; Jonathan Ferbrache, County Soil & Water Conservation District; and Eric McCrady, County Engineer's Office.

Number of members of the public present: 0

The meeting was called to order by Trustee Chairman Yates.

Advertised Purpose of Meeting:

To consider the regulating of fill materials in the north Walnut Township Floodplain.

Discussion:

Considering regulating fill in the north Walnut Township Floodplain:

Josh Hillberry presented his findings on the research that he performed (which he has as an unfinished preliminary report that was not distributed) in the area of limiting the use of fill for building within the north Walnut Township flood plain.

Josh started with five (5) possible options that could be taken:

1. Allow fill for new development, per the current floodplain regulations (do nothing).
2. Prohibit or restrict the use of fill within the floodplain.
3. Purchase land for conservation easements within the floodplain utilizing grant funding.
4. Prohibit or restrict all new development.
5. Invest in large scale infrastructure improvements.

Trustee Horn noted that studies have been performed (relative to item #5) and are on-going to try and reduce the larger scale flooding of the South Fork of the Licking River and its impact on Walnut Township's north Floodplain.

Josh went through each option and highlighted the pros and cons of each:

Option #1 – maintain current regulations.

Pros:

- No work for the county or township. Easy to regulate.
- Attracts new developers because investment is safer.
- Able to take advantage of potential growth in the region with higher tax revenue.

Cons:

- Flooding is consequential to existing residents and property owners.
- Affects the current stormwater infrastructure.
- Affects the storage capacity of the floodplain.
- Not considered environmentally friendly or sustainable.

Option #2 - structures would be elevated without the use of fill.

Pros:

- Does not impact neighbors with construction. Regulation is relatively easy, there are other entities that have implemented this type of regulation that we could borrow from.
- Has the least effect on storage capacity when building.

Cons:

- Potential for less investment in the area, since some developers would not want to develop utilizing that method of construction.
- Does not address the flooding issue.

Option #3 - purchasing of land for conservation easements. This can be developed concurrent with other options.

Pros:

- This gives the County and Township complete authority of the area. The Township could still benefit economically and developed as a park.
- Depending on what types of grants are attained, some portions of the land could still be developed for development and still maintain the floodplain storage capacity.
- The biggest benefit is that the area within the easement would be preserved for floodplain storage capacity.

Cons:

- We would miss out on the development and investment of the land put into the easements and resulting tax revenue.
- Current property owners are still at risk for flooding.

Option #4 – Prohibit or restrict development. the pros and cons are nearly the same as #3.

Option #5 – Josh is still working on this item but some ideas are:

- invest in larger scale infrastructure improvements such as widening and enlarging the South Fork of the Licking River for a larger capacity and placing wetland buffers around it which would utilize different approaches.

Trustee Horn noted that the recent ms consultant’s stormwater improvement study was for improving the short-term, 10–25-year storm events.

This area has recently been studied extensively by the South Licking Watershed Conservancy District. It was generally agreed that to implement a large-scale infrastructure improvement would be cost prohibitive.

Josh ran an evaluation matrix with a point system for each of the options considering the following criteria:

1. Impact on existing residents/property owners and infrastructure.
2. Impact on floodplain storage capacity/natural benefits.
3. Opportunity to take advantage of growth/development in the region (tax revenue).
4. Improves infrastructure.
5. Overall cost of approach (for Township and County)

The scores for the Options were as follows (the higher the points the better):

- Option 1: 4 points
- Option 2: 5 points
- Option 3: 4 points
- Option 4: 5 points
- Option 5: 7 points

Option 5 being beyond the control of the Township and County and extremely high cost will not be considered at this time. Options 2 and 4 was a tie. Given that the Township and County want to see land being utilized for development it was the general consensus that we should consider Option 2 as a preliminary direction moving forward.

It was noted from the first meeting that the County can carve out different floodplain regulations for specific areas of the County including specific areas of Walnut Township.

Considering option #2 – This would require the use of piles, piers and walls building elements to set the structure(s) on to maintain an occupied/habitable first finished floor elevation of 1'-0" above the base flood elevation. As part of the Flood Permit from Regional Planning, the owner/contractor would need to be provide an engineered set of plans signed and sealed by a Professional Structural Engineer licensed by the State of Ohio that the design meets the current Ohio Residential Building Code. This would be transmitted to the Zoning Inspector who would then be able to issue a Zoning Permit based on a valid Flood Permit and Zoning Resolution requirements. Upon construction completion, a licensed Professional Structural Engineer would need to confirm in writing to Regional Planning with a Signed and Sealed Certification that the construction was performed in accordance with the approved plans and to certify that the first habitable floor has been

constructed to 1'-0" above the base flood elevation. Once this certification is provided from Regional Planning, the Zoning Inspector would provide an Occupancy Permit.

It was noted that currently no fill can be placed in the floodplain without a permit from Regional Planning.

Ramps if required for access to the finished floor would need to be constructed utilizing the same type of structure as the residence.

Holly and Josh will take these ideas back to the ODNR State Floodplain Administrator, Alicia Silverio and put together a draft for review as the next step. An issue was brought up about how additions to current structures are handled. Holly will direct that question to ODNR.

Once we have an ODNR review, this working group will come back together for further discussion.

Josh will formalize his report and submit to the group.

Compensatory storage was discussed as another measure that could be utilized in addition to Option #2.

Adjournment: At 9:36 AM, Trustee Horn made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Yates seconded the motion. The motion passed with 2 yes votes.

Minutes Recorded By: Terry Horn

Pam Underwood, Fiscal Officer

William R. Yates , Chairman

Terry W. Horn, Vice Chairman

Douglas G. Leith