

**MINUTES OF THE:  
WALNUT TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SPECIAL MEETING  
December 16, 2021 – 7:00 PM**

**Township Officials present:**

Trustees Terry W. Horn, William R. Yates and Douglas G. Leith

**Department Heads present:**

Mike Berry; Property Maintenance Inspector – Rick Singer

**Invited guest(s) present:**

Mike Fornataro – Buckeye Lake Region Corporation

Mrs. Fornataro

**Number of members of the public present: 65**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Trustee Terry Horn and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was recited.

**MEETING PROCEEDINGS**

**Advertised Purpose of Meeting:**

The purpose of this meeting was for the property development & public input of the area at Lakeside and North Bank roads, Schilling property containing approximately 2.4 acres.

**Discussion:**

**Meeting Minutes - written by Mrs. Fornataro**

**Walnut Township BLRC Visioning session**

**Walnut Township High School December 16, 2021**

There were approximately 65 people in attendance when the meeting opened.

Walnut Township Trustee Terry Horn opened the meeting with a welcome and introductions of Walnut Trustees Doug Leith and Bill Yates. Other officials introduced: Pillon, Patterson and Berry

The group joined Terry in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Terry introduced Mike Fornataro, Executive Director of Buckeye Lake Region Corporation

Mike thanked the Trustees for inviting him to the Vision Session.

Purpose of the meeting

BLRC along with Walnut township trustees and have created an Advisory Task Force for the development of two parcels of property within the Walnut Township region.

Overview of BLRC and what we hope to accomplish tonight

- The BLRC is a non – profit organization made up of our neighbors and officials around the Buckeye Lake region.
- By neighbors being a part of the board, they help represent the values and uniqueness of each community around the region.
- This is actually the second time we have created an Advisory Task force, the first was created in Thorn Township with a developer of a 55-acre parcel of property in the Thorn Township community. We met with their trustees and community members and conducted a vision session just like we will do tonight.
- We then presented those ideas to the designers to include the communities’ ideas in what they would like to see as it is being developed.
- These sessions give an opportunity for elected officials, the community to provide input on what they would like to see as part of the development we know is coming.
- This can be a very positive process in the development of your community.

The 2 parcels we would like to discuss tonight and brainstorm about are the properties adjacent to the Old Minthorn – 2 acres and from the lakeshore to canal to lake side (there is a drawing in the handout).

Purpose is to discuss what ideas you have for the use of this area.

What could it be, what would you like to see? Let’s take this opportunity to put forth ideas to the owner of how you would like to see the area developed.

Who would like to share their ideas of what they would like to see?

Thor Triplet:

- I would like to know is it still zone residential? Envisioning what could be there means it would be re-zoned again. Is it single family resident?
- Where the property is for the VFW, to have a vision we need to know the variance of what has occurred, has it been done – what is permissible?

TH:

There has been no zoning changing – zoning district change to B1 – everything else stays in place. The owner can apply for a zoning district change – you can have input into that process.

The process can lead to a change, which is a legal process that you can participate in as part of what could happen, tonight is your chance to give your input into the process.

How does it get zoned or what it gets zoned to, the process is the same as it always.

MF: What would you like to see? Don't want to reinvent the wheel, the VFW property is entertainment.

Thor:

Property to the North was zoned to be consistent to the VFW post, but that zoning was changed. A lot tie taking 2 parcel into 1 for additional parking for the VFW.

The house is inconsistent with commercial use, no signage for the lawyer conducting business from that location.

TH: Tonight is a special meeting for the development of these two parcels, visioning, a dreaming session, an opportunity, What can it be?

MF: What would you like to see in your neighborhood. What is it going to be? Let you have some input.

What is the best use of the property, we would love to hear from your experience and ideas.

Community Member:

The 2 ac beside the old canal is close to the bike path.

I would like to see a spot where bikers can pullover and take a rest enjoy the lake even a picnic.

Park green space to complement to the bike path.

MF: We did exactly this in Thorn Township: community said they wanted access to wildlife areas, the developers included that in each of their designs, just as an example.

We had a lot of meetings and their input included retail and Multi-family homes as additional examples. You come up with the ideas first, then we can go back to the developer and designers.

Peggy Wells: Is there a way to make a water features nice, incorporate a nice feature adjacent to the property and make it nicer for everyone.

Thor: Area is zoned 8. Sketches show a hotel an INN and then a path and a crosswalk to access the lake.

MF: We conducted a Hospitality study of the region and determined that it might make sense for a small hotel to be a part of this property. This study was looking at the area at large, you can make business case for this this study and the development of the community.

**Thor:** The house I have has the largest footprint near these properties. If there is going to be multifamily retirement community, then density is a concern. How many stories can the buildings be and how much

access will they have to the water? How will they access the property? I don't like the idea of going down Sheppard with a lot of traffic.

**Jen Gorham:** I know what I would like to see and not like to see. I would like to see a Farmers market that can be accessed from the bike path. Or small local businesses. I do not want to see a Dollar General type strip mall. We have those in Millersport and in Buckeye Lake.

Single family dwelling would be nice, see more families would be great. I like the idea of senior living. I am more in favor of housing then commercial development.

**Mark Thogmartin:** I have Biked for decades. I like keeping the bike trail but connecting it to the Fish Hatchery bike trail. It is almost not usable, it needs to be developed more. Can we bike through this property? How far is that going to the connect? If the bikers can drop down at the Spillway we could make that more of a park district but will need to improve the biking area to 79 to Hebron.

Other comments:

We could even see a bike shop – buy it from someone local

Bike shop, bike rental, bike fixed

Thor: Zoning changing has occurred, what happens – if the developer is shovel ready? Is all this a done deal?

MF: This is your chance to offer your input, what is possible? Family homes, community park, green space. BLRC did a Feasibility to look at what is economically sustainable – hospitality, retail.

**Jamie Brag:** I would hope we can keep the memorial to the vets at the Minthorn. Remember part of it is the oldest structure in our region. Near the stage entrance. It was a store, hotel, back in the early 1800 – keep some of the historic content around the lake.

MF - Website and the facebook page for the new lounge called The Hereinafter cocktail tavern.

**Sherry:** What about a Veteran's home? There is public funds available for disabled vets, maybe it could be here by the monument, close to everything.

**Thor:** What about a dock in front? What kind of plans with ODNR will be made? Will they add the stick docks like at the condo complex? Will there be multi slips docks?

**TH:** this is a visioning session, on what it could be. We don't have any details on what it will be.

**Thor:** Developers create their highest best use for the property. They will want more access to the water. More density of what the population then what is on the tract of land now.

**Robin Thompson:** Licking River and Spillway issues. Can we fix the flooding to a point we can even create a scenic ride to Zanesville on our pontoons?

MF gave a brief update on the Bric project.

**Terry Fisher: Bike Buckeye Lake:** Bike and hiking path is funded 79 to Hebron in 2022 – 2023. We would like to see 360 developed for safety connecting to the trail and dam trail, safe riding in the overall area.

**Thor:** What is the tallest space about the dam? How many stories?

**Trustees: 35 feet above the grade**

**Bill:** What about having near the Minthorn a water park ... splash pads for kids?

**Doug Turlo:** Single family makes the most sense, close together, sustainable, affordable.

**Thor:** Request access from the aspect of large tract to the land, access only from lakeside not through the gravel road, Sheppard. Not to improve any access to that property.

**Sharon Selito:** No retail, add vets memorial

**Thor:** What are the building roofs and run off area? We struggle with water flooding already. Is it impermeable surface?

MF/TH: Nothing is developed yet, but they would meet regulatory requirements for their development.

Bob Slater: Old canal providing hydrology to Fish Hatchery. Told not impressed with water quality?

Heard there were Rumors – capping the canal?

**Terry Bike buckeye –** We had conversations on how we could connect the biking paths. The property lines are on the auditor site, and the right of way. and how the water flows to the fishery. We discussed with ODNR on how to connect the paths, and one way is to put a pipe in and fill in the canal. This was just one idea.

Peggy: Walking and running events have been successful, why would we want to fill in the old canal. Let's leverage the history of the Ohio Erie canal.

Jamie: The Ohio Erie canal has a strong group of support. Not filling in canals, keep this history alive and create a tourist destination, don't take everything down.

Peggy: We should have an entire history display of the canal, get stones there from the historical group in Newark, add them there to create just one more stop.

Sherry: Can we put aerators in the canal to clean it up?

MF: Buckeye Lake and ODNR test water, looking at how to put aerators in Crane Lake. Pay for electric is the issue.

Canals are not deep very shallow, they can be dug out and cleaned up.

Jerene: If we enhance the canal becomes an aesthetic value to the area and region, waterway focal point now you are enhancing the community. Canals are a cool feature, embrace the history and signage of the canal's history.

Seth: Canal could be incorporated by a bridge and included in the design.

Licking park director: Richard Waugh– good idea – Hebron to 79 – signage along the trail

Jamie: Museum owns the ditch from I-70 to Hebron (remnant of the canal) - Don't step on the canal

Peggy wells: Winterfest - does the canal freeze – skating – bridge – ice skating – curling?

Thor's wife: Can we include outdoor exercise equipment are into the design?

Could we include a stop for ice cream or quick refreshment from the dam to the Minthorn?

Meeting concluded at 8:30 PM.

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Jane Baker, Fiscal Officer

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William R. Yates, Chairman

Terry W. Horn, Vice Chairman

Douglas G. Leith