

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

WALNUT TOWNSHIP, FAIRFIELD COUNTY, OH - BOARD OF TRUSTEES
11420 Millersport Rd., Millersport, OH 43067

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Fairfield County Commissioners Hearing Room – 210 East Main St., Lancaster, OH
February 27, 2024 -1:00 PM

Township Officials present/absent:

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

Invited guest(s) present: Fairfield County Commissioner – Jeff Fix

Number of members of the public present: Various County departments were also represented plus 8 Twp residents.

The meeting was called to order by Trustee Chairman Yates and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was recited.

Advertised Purpose of Meeting:

1. Deliberations of the Land Use Plan proposed to date.
2. Deliberations of Economic Development potential.

If Needed- Section 121.22 Public meetings- Exceptions: (A)This section shall be liberally construed to require public officials to take official action and to conduct all deliberations upon official business only in open meeting unless the subject matter is specifically excepted by law.

Discussion:

1. Commissioner Fix welcomed all & indicated he & the County Team are meeting individually with all Townships & Villages on the County Land Use proposal. He updated everyone on where the proposal stood & what he feels the next steps might be.
2. Discussions were held on the benefits of adopting the County Land Use Plan or using it as a “tool box” to pull out only segments beneficial to Walnut Twp. Any Land Use Plan would be developed & tailored to Walnut Twp by the residents of the Twp. The County has covered the cost of the overall plan which will save the Twp several thousand dollars to use any or part of it. The County has no intentions to force the Land Use Plan on any Twp or Village.
3. A Land Use Plan would greatly assist the Twp in any new development (residential subdivisions or commercial) by making standards beneficial to the Twp. It would inform any developer what criteria are expected up front.
4. The Land Use Plan can partner with local zoning. Holly Mattei, Regional Planning Interim Director, stated Walnut Twp is headed in the right direction in updating local zoning. These updates should be beneficial to any land use plan.
5. Commissioner Fix highlighted the need for Townships & Villages to communicate better & possibly partner by creating a New Community Authority (NCA). Richard Ricketts explained the concept behind the NCA & its benefits compared to JEDDs. This allows the local entities to have greater leverage & control on development. Mr. Ricketts volunteered to attend a meeting at the Twp level to educate the residents on the different options available.
6. Utilities are a main concern on any future development. Tony Vogel, Director of County Utilities, updated everyone on current community water/sewer availability & where he views service extensions in the future. He also explained the financial expectations associated with new development & possible support.
7. Discussion was entertained on current & future expectations on development & how it might affect the various school districts in Walnut Twp, specifically Walnut Twp Schools. Rick Szabrak, Director of County Economic Development, stated Walnut Twp School District has 26% fewer students than in 2010 & 50% qualify for the School Lunch Program. A NCA type approach would be a financial benefit to the schools.

8. Michael Kaper, Executive Director of County Land Bank, updated everyone in attendance on the excellent partnership he has with Walnut Twp. He stated Walnut Twp has utilized the Land Bank program to reutilize properties more than all the other Townships combined.

9. In summary, the Trustees thanked Commissioner Fix for all his efforts in developing a Land Use Plan & for the open discussions with the Twp. Trustees pledged to keep the communications moving forward.

Adjournment: At 2:00 PM, Trustee Leith made a motion to adjourn. Trustee Yates seconded the motion. The motion passed with 3 yes votes.

Minutes Recorded By: Trustee Leith

Pam Underwood, Fiscal Officer

William R. Yates, Chairman

Terry W. Horn, Vice Chairman

Douglas G. Leith