

Chester Township Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes

| Wednesday, April 3, 2024 7:00 PM |

Chester Town Hall

Audio Recording on file

Meeting Called to Order by Vice-Chair, Mr. Lauro at 7:00 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Chess, Mr. Kats, Mr. Lauro, Mr. Peto

Members absent: Mr. Oswick

Admin present: Ms. McCarthy

Pledge of Allegiance

Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

- Motion to approve the minutes of February 28, 2024 as presented.
Moved by Mr. Peto; Seconded by Mr. Chess
Mr. Chess/yes; Mr. Kats/abstain; Mr. Lauro/yes; Mr. Oswick/absent; Mr. Peto/yes
Motion approved
- Motion to approve the minutes of March 6, 2024 as presented.
Moved by Mr. Peto; Seconded by Mr. Kats
Mr. Chess/abstain; Mr. Kats/yes; Mr. Lauro/yes; Mr. Oswick/absent; Mr. Peto/yes
Motion approved
- Motion to approve the minutes of March 20, 2024 as presented.
Moved by Mr. Kats; Seconded by Mr. Chess
Mr. Chess/yes; Mr. Kats/yes; Mr. Lauro/yes; Mr. Oswick/absent; Mr. Peto/abstain
Motion approved

Mr. Chris Alusheff – Assistant Zoning Inspector

Accessory Building placement considerations

This has been a frequent request. If the regulations allowed accessory buildings at the front building line, as opposed to the rear building line, this could help a lot of residents. Mr. Kats believes this has been brought up in the past. The amount of requests from residents is unknown as they have been turned away in the past. Usually handled by several residents pouring additional concrete to get the distance needed. Concern was raised with “L” shaped ranches and how accessory buildings may be placed. The Zoning Commission (ZC) agrees with this request, but felt further research was needed. In the past, there was a reason for not doing this. Would like to follow up with Board of Trustees (BoT) to make sure they are in agreement with this. (May need to check with the Fire Chief as well.) ZC Board felt the general health, safety and welfare of the public was not affected by this potential change. This would still be done using the existing side yard setbacks of 10 foot.

Mr. Alusheff will write up the first draft of a potential change to the Zoning Resolution and bring to a future ZC meeting. Mr. Radtke, will make the Board of Trustees aware of this consideration at the next meeting scheduled for April 4th.

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Zoning Forms modifications

Section 13.00.01 of the Chester Zoning Resolution has a detailed list of the items that must be included in the current Zoning application. Copies of the current Zoning Form #1 and #1a were distributed to those in attendance. Residents who would like to submit an application for a simple request (such as a fence or smaller accessory building) are required to fill out the entire application. To streamline the application, Mr. Alusheff suggested a possible line-strike amendment that would simplify the application for residents by only asking for information needed for their zoning request.

Mock-ups of possible Form #1 and #1a were distributed to illustrate a more streamlined form. The ZC Board was receptive to the possible change.

Samples of other Geauga County Zoning Resolutions were reviewed. The Bainbridge Zoning Resolution seemed to have the most workable wording:

Zoning certificate applications shall be filed with the Zoning Inspector who may waive the requirement for any information deemed unnecessary, and/or request additional information deemed necessary to the filing and approval thereof.

This would potentially replace the second paragraph of Section 13.00.01 beginning with “All application for zoning certificates shall contain the following language...” We would be able to eliminate all of that.

A draft of this mockup will be presented to the ZC on May 1. Potentially, that mockup will be presented to the BoT at their May 2nd meeting to verify they are in agreement with this potential change.

Enforcement

A second commercial vehicle being allowed on a property is a potential area of concern. Mr. Alusheff presented two cases. One is in an R-1 district and the two pick up trucks were wrapped with a landscape business name displayed. It was clearly not a case of a business being run out of a home. That's two commercial vehicles on a property. The question of how the vehicle was plated was brought up. That home has complied and only one pick up truck is presently visible in the drive.

Perhaps we want to change the definition of a commercial vehicle to include the type of plate shown on the vehicle. Only difficulty is the Zoning Inspector cannot go onto the property to see how the plate is registered.

The other case is a resident who drives a semi tractor for their business. One tractor is used for driving and the other tractor is for parts. Suggestion to modify ZR to say something like the second vehicle should/could be stored in a barn/garage and not be visible from the road.

Trailers and RV's may all be stored on a property currently. Discussion on how property owners store multiple vehicles/trailers etc. on the property. If it's stored neatly on a property, it isn't a problem. When it is strewn around the property it begins to violate the spirit and

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intent of the ZR. Could we consider asking them to park it in the back of the house? Discussion continued regarding junk cars. Junk cars are allowed on property if they are properly screened. Section 5.00.01 (e) of the ZR may need to be reviewed. Feeling was if the “junk” is not seen from the street and the neighbors can’t see it, why consider it to be a problem? Definition of “junk” was reviewed.

Determined that the ZC should look at commercial vehicles section and see if modifications are necessary. As for people who have a lot of “junk” in their yards, it may be easier and cheaper to have the people enclose their yard in a fence.

Mr. Alusheff will bring more information to the next meeting he attends. This will be put on a future agenda for ZC to look deeper at what constitutes a commercial vehicle and options of expanding a storage/enclosed building.

Platted subdivisions

A map of the platted subdivisions in the township was distributed. The ORC regulates certain lots in platted subdivisions for agricultural use. If Chester chose to pursue these regulations, the areas that may be affected were indicated on the map.

The ORC allows regulation, but it appears that a new section of the ZR would need to be developed. It is believed that Bainbridge has this in their ZR, but we believe this is the only township in the county that does have it. This would require a tremendous amount of time and research on the part of the ZC to develop this section.

The ZC will reach out to the BoT to determine if this is something they would like the ZC to pursue.

Wind and Solar Power

Near the end of 2022, the ORC changed to allow townships to regulate small scale solar and wind farms under 50 megawatts of generation. For instance, in Windsor there is one going in that will generate 25 megawatts and it’ll take about 100 acres. Currently, if someone has a very large parcel of land, they could set up a solar power farm and it is not regulated at all in the township.

This has come up before, and it needs to be determined if it warrants regulation through the ZR. Mr. Alusheff will bring the ORC for this to a future meeting. In the meantime, we will check with the Board of Trustees to see if they are interested in pursuing this.

The ZC appreciated the visit from Mr. Alusheff and asked if he might consider visiting once a month. Mr. Alusheff agreed.

Swimming Pool Covers

The position of the Zoning Commission is to not take away the current regulation requiring fencing around a swimming pool.

Chester Township Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes

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Item was tabled to review with Mr. Oswick, Chair of the Zoning Commission before being moved forward. Question arose if this needs to be formally moved through as a motion or would a simple memo suffice? Ms. McCarthy will follow up if this needs to be formally moved.

Attached Garages

Questions listed on agenda still need to have a full Zoning Commission Board in place for a discussion to occur. Tabled to the next meeting.

Open items

- APA meeting invite
- Need to formalize document for swimming pools to submit to Board of Trustees. Look to work on at April 17, 2024 Zoning Commission.
- Mr. Alusheff will attend May 1 meeting
 - Zoning Resolution modifications for streamlining Zoning Forms
 - Zoning Resolution modification consideration for Accessory Building placement as it relates to principal structure.

Meeting Called to Close at: 8:01 p.m.

Approved by:

Chester Township Zoning Commission April 17, 2024

Final Review by: _____
Jon Oswick, Chair