

Clare asked what the concern behind the item was and Jackie answered the concern was spot zoning. Rob and Shara disagreed it was spot zoning; Shara said “we can talk about that later.”

Regarding “Issue 5: Conflict of interest & ACPC board member?”, Shara added that having continuity as a group is important. Jackie stated that, after her comment on abstention in October 2020, Mr. Brand told her they had a ruling from the County Prosecutor that Trustees and County Commission members are permitted to serve, vote, and comment so he told her she no longer had to abstain. Shara replied “you are correct” and referred to the Ohio Attorney General opinions and past practices.

Jackie explained that she has 2 seats and is able to speak on both. She added that “sometimes people vote yes, sometimes people vote no or ask questions so I have every right to ask questions and vote whichever way.” Shara said she agreed but was “shocked” she did not discuss the comments with Commission and felt “ambushed”. Jackie responded that she had no meeting prior to the County Planning Commission to ask these questions; Shara countered that she had lots of opportunities through emails and phone. Jackie said she was interrupted and was not done speaking. Shara said, as chair, she was moving on to keep on agenda.

3. Review ZBA Hearing issue

Ms. Avsec reviewed the background on the application from Howard Beeman to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), highlighting the concern for emergency vehicle access and an industry standard on land-locked lots. She stated she requested to be placed on the County Planning Commission’s next agenda and suggested the Zoning Commission table any review on this issue until it is reviewed more by them. Ms. Avsec expressed her frustration for the applicants and reported that the County Planning Commission and the County Health Department insufficiently responded to her questions for the purposes of their regulations in this case. Ms. Avsec further suggested a standard business tool like a flow chart or checklist be created for residents to navigate through the various regulatory bodies.

Due to her experience on variances and conditional uses, Jackie asked Ms. Avsec to speak about the conditional uses stipulated onto the Austinburg Nursing Rehab when it was built. Ms. Avsec reported that a row of old trees be left in place was placed as a condition; however, the facility cut them all down about five years later and nobody wanted to pursue following up on it. Ms. Avsec suggested that conditions on lighting, signage, etc. would not be followed unless Commission created an AC1 district with different criteria like full cut-off lighting, sign limitations, etc. She added the sign companies are one step ahead of zoning regulations and often find loopholes.

4. Zoning Map status - 2020 amendment + 2021 current draft

Shara distributed color copies of the Zoning Map that she updated to reflect the 2020 amendment; however, she plans to wait to file it at the county recorder’s office and post online since it may be updated again with the current proposed amendment.

When Shara asked if there was any other business, Jackie reported on the “All In Ashtabula County” planning process, stating the Commission will have to follow the plan that will be created in the fall since it does not have one of its own. She reported on the survey results that were released and read portions from the results summary.

Jackie further stated that she has served her best about 13 years on the Zoning Commission and 8 years on the Planning Commission. She said she found it disrespectful to be “made out as not for this township”, citing examples like taking personal vacation days and monies to attend workshops and putting in hundreds of hours in meetings and research on her own. She emphasized that she did nothing wrong at the Planning Commission and was given full permission to speak.

Citing an appointment she needed to attend, Shara requested the Vice-Chair continue the meeting and exited at 5:49pm. Jeff motioned to adjourn the meeting; Clare seconded.

Shara - Not Present

Jackie - Aye

Phil - Aye

Clare - Aye

Jeff - Aye

Meeting adjourned at 5:50pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sarah Frank

Zoning Secretary