

# THORN TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Date: 4/12/2021

Meeting Type: Regular Monthly Meeting

Meeting Location: Meeting held via Zoom

**Board Members Present:** Wayne Gniewkowski, Jim Hay, Brad Blain, Mark Huggins, & Mark Becker who joined later

**Zoning Department Members Present:** Ed Corns, Zoning Inspector

**Guests Present:** Mark Zawislak, Stacey, Cindy, Rhoda

The April 12<sup>th</sup> 2021 regular monthly meeting of the Thorn Township Zoning Commission was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairperson Wayne Gniewkowski. Roll call was taken and all members were present except Mark Becker. Meeting was held via Zoom.

The Minutes of the March 8<sup>th</sup> and March 22<sup>nd</sup> meetings were reviewed. Brad Blain moved to accept the meeting minutes from March 8, 2021 as presented, Jim Hay seconded the motion. The motion passed by a voice vote of all members present. Brad Blain moved to accept the meeting minutes from the March 22, 2021 as presented, Jim Hay seconded the motion. The motion passed by a voice vote of all members present.

## Open Items for Discussion

Mark Huggins voiced concerns over the traffic light at St. Rt. 13 and Honeycreek Road. Zoning Inspector Ed Corns advised Mr. Huggins that he should address the issues of the traffic light to the Ohio Department of Transportation (O.D.O.T) along with the Thorn Township Trustees.

Brad Blain wanted to know if there is any information on the development from F&F Holdings. Zoning Inspector Corns stated that the issue will be presented to the Thorn Township Trustees on their next meeting (4/14/2021) and they will set a public hearing.

Chairperson Gniewkowski reported to the Board that he is waiting on zoning language from the zoning attorney concerning "Cloud Zoning". Chairperson Gniewkowski stated that Orange Township, North of Columbus, has recently implemented it and he is waiting on some example language from the zoning attorney. Chairperson Gniewkowski stated that it has been reported that "Cloud Zoning" can make zoning more flexible, instead of having it zoned as one particular item such as rural business, commercial, etc., you may have multiple zonings up in the cloud and then the property owner or developer could go into the cloud and pull the zoning that they would want to use for that property, that is already approved. Chairperson Gniewkowski stated that he has just heard about the concept and has not done a lot of research on it, but he has requested the example language on it to review. He felt that it may be something that would benefit the property owners, developers, and the zoning board as well, and could be a win win for all involved. Chairperson Gniewkowski recommended that all board members review "Cloud Zoning" so that when we get some sample language they will have more information on it and it may be something that would be beneficial for Thorn Township Zoning. "Cloud Zoning" is new and is being reported as a much more streamlined form of zoning. Further discussion was held on the issue of "Cloud Zoning".

## Zoning Inspector Report

Zoning Inspector Ed Corns reported the following permits for March 2021.

- New home on Shoreline Drive
- New home on Twp. Rd. 493
- New Home on Honeycreek Road
- Agriculture Exempt on Zion Branch Road
- 2 accessory use on Twp. Rd. 493
- New home on McMurray Way
- Covered boat dock and deck on Twp. Rd. 403
- New home on Twp. Rd. 407
- Above ground pool on Highpoint
- Covered porch in Firemen's Park
- An outstanding permit from December of 2020 and February of 2021 was finalized

Zoning Inspector Corns stated that Snug Harbor is starting to ramp up and a lot of new homes are being built in the Township. Inspector Corns also wanted to discuss some things that have come up over the last 30 days. Inspector Corns gave a bit of history on the issue concerning property maintenance. He stated that in the recent past the Township dealt with a couple properties that was

overgrown, abandoned trailers, had a lot of debris, etc., and the neighbors had made numerous complaints on the properties. It took over 4 ½ months for the Township to have anything done with these properties, it took a lot of legal work with title searches, etc., to have the property cleaned up. The cost of having this property cleaned up will be assessed on those property owner's taxes. After this experience with these properties the Trustees had questioned the Zoning Inspector about ways for this to be handled that would be easier. Inspector Corns stated that he reached out to the Township zoning attorney with those questions. The attorney stated that the easiest, quickest, and most effective way to handle such issues would be a property maintenance code. Inspector Corns stated that in the Ohio Revised Code (O.R.C) it states that to put a property maintenance code in place you must adopt one that is has already been created and being used. Inspector Corns obtained two already existing property maintenance codes for the Trustees to review. The adoption of a property maintenance code was further explained. Inspector Corns stated that after the information was provided to the Trustees, in which they requested, shortly after that COVID 19 hit and the Trustees tabled the issue of the property maintenance code. The subject was then brought back up by the Trustees at the end of last year (2020). They requested that the zoning inspector get more information and examples of property maintenance codes. Inspector Corns stated that he reached out the zoning attorney for more information and did further research, as requested by the Trustees. The Trustees had requested this from the zoning inspector at the February 2021 Trustees Meeting. Inspector Corns continued the research and located a few existing property maintenance codes from other like sized Townships within the State. The information was provided to the Trustees at their March 2021 meeting. A hard copy of the information was given to Trustee Rick Wilson, who did not have email, the other Trustees had received the information via email. Inspector Corns stated that there were a couple other residents in attendance at this March 2021 meeting. Within 24 to 48 hours of this March meeting social media blew up with the conversation of this property maintenance code subject. The social media activity was centered around the intersection of Ridenour Road and Highpoint Road. Inspector Corns stated that quite a few people were concerned about the issue. Inspector Corns stated that he had made it perfectly clear to the Trustees, at the beginning of the discussion of a property maintenance code, that he is not for or against the issue of a property maintenance code and that he would not have anything to do with it if one was adopted by the Township. Inspector Corns reported that this progressed until it came to a head about 48 hours after the March 2021 Trustees meeting with accusations against him, stating that he was the one pushing this property maintenance code. Inspector Corns stated that this is false, he was not the one pushing the idea of a property maintenance code for the Township. Inspector Corns reported that he received a phone call on his personal phone from a blocked number, with a male on the other end of the line who threatened that if he (Inspector Corns) did not stop what he (Inspector Corns) was doing with the property maintenance code that damage to his (Inspector Corns) property and to his family would be at risk. Inspector Corns stated that he believes at least one of the current Zoning Board members was involved in this, somewhere along the line, either stirring the pot or in the middle of it. Inspector Corns stated that he is going to have this same conversation with the Trustees, he does not appreciate getting him personally involved in the issue of a property maintenance code. Inspector Corns stated that everyone is entitled to have their own opinions but when it gets to a point that threats are being made to property and persons, that is crossing a line. Inspector Corns clarified that he is not going to tolerate it and he is not going anywhere, people have asked for him to resign over this issue, he is not resigning. Inspector Corns stated that if people have a problem with him to come to him they are welcome to contact him to discuss it. Zoning member Brad Blain stated that he did get on social media, but he corrected the people in what they were saying, that it was not the zoning board, it was the Trustees and that it was not Ed Corns, that it was Bob Coleman. Inspector Corns stated that in his previous employment he is used to having disgruntled individuals and he can handle threats against him, but when they bring his family into it with threats against them, that is completely different. Inspector Corns thanked the Board for their time in allowing him to discuss what happened.

Chairperson Gniewkowski thanked Inspector Corns and stated that it is unfortunate that anyone's family would be brought into something such as a property maintenance code that the Zoning Board did not have anything to do with.

#### Visitor Comments

Chairperson Gniewkowski opened the floor up to the visitors, if they have any comments. Visitor Mark Zawislak stated that he was in attendance to observe, he moved to the Township recently. He was just seeking some information on things such as variances and issues regarding zoning, and how does he know if neighbors have the appropriate permits, variances, etc., and how would he find that information. Zoning Inspector Corns stated that he would reach out to him. Inspector Corns gave Mr. Zawislak his cell phone number and stated that he could call him and stated that he can email him as well if he would like. Visitor Stacy stated that she was just curious about all the action going on in the Township and she wanted to attend a few meetings to get more involved. Two more visitors joined the Zoom meeting along with Zoning Board Member Mark Becker. Mr. Becker stated his apologies that he was late in attendance but had a family matter come up. Chairperson Gniewkowski gave the new visitors and opportunity to comment, they did not have any comments. Zoning member Becker was given an opportunity to ask any questions, he did not have any questions.

Chairperson Gniewkowski reminded the board to review "Cloud Zoning". After no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Deborah Morgan, Thorn Township Zoning Secretary