

THORN TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION

Zoning Members Present: Wayne Gniwkowski **Guests Present:**
Ronald Bonnette
Brad Blain
Mark Huggins
Joe Blaine
Ed Corns, Zoning Inspector
Deborah Morgan, Zoning Secretary

Meeting: Date: 04/08/19
 Time: 6:00 p.m.
 Location: Thorn Township Building

The Thorn Township Zoning Commission Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Joe Blaine at 6:00 p.m. by saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Roll call was taken and all members were present.

The March 2019 regular Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes were distributed. Brad Blain made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, Mark Huggins seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous vote of members present.

The Zoning Commission Agenda was discussed in regards as to how items are placed on the agenda. Ron Bonnette discussed a complaint he received with Zoning Inspector Ed Corns. Inspector Corns stated that the issue has been handled.

Chairman Blaine distributed a proposal for fence regulations, members reviewed the document. Mark Huggins questioned canal front lots in regards to fencing. Brad Blain voiced concerns on heights in other areas of the Township for keeping deer in or out. Mr. Blain stated that six (6) feet would not be tall enough. Eight (8) feet was mentioned as an at least height. Joe Blaine stated that he would be in favor of adding exemptions for a greater height in agriculture. Ron Bonnette questioned if it would be better to be looking at boat docks that need repaired in regards to safety than dealing with fencing regulations. Joe Blaine stated that he understands that but that would be a property maintenance issue, which the Township does not have. Mark Huggins voiced concerns for fencing around pools, discussion was held. Joe Blaine stated that he feels there are much needed regulations for fencing to eliminate past mistakes for the future. Ron Bonnette stated that he disagrees, that regulations in regards to fencing is un-needed. Discussion was also held on the front and rear set-backs. Types of fencing was also discussed. Brad Blain stated that he doesn't like telling someone they can't have their privacy. Ron Bonnette stated that he agrees with Mr. Blain. Continued discussion was held on types of fencing and blocking views.

Ron Bonnette voiced concerns on the issue of fence regulations being a money maker for the Township. He feels there is more to this issue and feels money is the reason. Joe Blain stated that he doesn't care if they even charge for fence permits, but feels common sense regulations are needed for fencing. Ron Bonnette stated that survey language should be added if this does move forward, however he is still against any fence regulations. Safety issue of fencing was discussed, including line of sites. Ron Bonnette stated that there is not a one size fits all in the situations for line of sites. Zoning Inspector Corns suggested a solid privacy fence should not exceed the front of a house. Anything past the front of a home should be split rail, chain link, etc.

Joe Blaine discussed other area fence regulations in regards to how he came up with the example he distributed. He clarified his point that "You can have a fence", he is recommending common sense regulations. Mr. Blaine also stated that he has heard from residents that want some fence regulations. Ron Bonnette stated that he has heard the opposite from residents he has talked with. Ron Bonnette voiced his thoughts on having a vote for fence regulations such as a referendum from the residents of the Township.

Continued discussion was held on the proposed fence regulations handed out by Chairman Blaine. Ron Bonnette stated that the board needs to continue to review the proposal submitted by Mr. Blaine. Inspector Corns stated that any proposed language that may be agreed upon by the board would be sent to the Township zoning attorney for review. Proposed fees were discussed, Brad Blain stated that he is now going to be a no vote for any fencing regulations now that he has found out that it will impact him for fencing that he may want in the future. Mr. Blain stated that he is now a no vote since he would have to pay.

Inspector Corns stated that any proposed fence regulations would be contentious therefore any proposed regulations would need to go to the attorney for review. Joe Blaine moved to send preliminary draft to attorney first. Ron Bonnette stated he disagrees. Joe Blaine stated that this is part of what the board was asked to do. Wayne Gniewkoski stated that was correct, there were residents attend a previous meeting and did in fact ask the board to consider fence regulations. Due to no second on Mr. Blaine's motion to send the proposed regulations to the attorney for review, the motion died.

Joe Blaine stated that he would clean up the proposed regulations he distributed at this meeting after hearing the discussion at tonight's meeting and present them at the next meeting for further discussion.

Agenda items for the next meeting were discussed and it was decided that the following items would be on the agenda for the May meeting:

1. Adding language to the zoning regulations for required surveys
2. Fence regulations
3. Open items for discussion

Zoning Inspector Ed Corns reported the following permits for the year:

Four (4) new builds
Two (2) accessory buildings
Two (2) covered boat docks
One (1) deck

After no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m.