

THORN TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Date: 03-11-2024

Meeting Type: Regular Meeting

Meeting Location: Thorn Township Building, 13780 Zion Road, Thornville, Ohio

Board Members Present: Wayne Gniewkowski, Mark Becker, Mary Alice Stidham, Alternate Sandy Davis, and Alternate Chad Eveland

Zoning Department Members Present: Ed Corns, Zoning Inspector and Deborah Morgan, Zoning Secretary

Guests Present: Zach Gorsuch, Gillian Gorsuch, Brian Ruff, Aaron Freeman

District Change Application Public Hearing

Zoning Commission Chairperson Wayne Gniewkowski opened the public hearing at 6:30 p.m. Roll call of members was taken and all members were present except for Mark Huggins and Jim Hay who were absent. Alternates Chad Eveland and Sandy Davis will be voting in the absence of regular members Mark Huggins and Jim Hay.

Chairperson Gniewkowski stated that the District Change Application is for the property located at 11977 State Route 188, Thornville, Ohio, and is owned by Zachary and Gillian Gorsuch. Chairperson Gniewkowski requested that the applicants give a brief statement and explanation for this request.

Mr. & Mrs. Gorsuch both spoke to the board explaining that they want to request this change of zoning to special use to open and operate a home school. They want to make their current barn into the school for their children and then to Co-op to others who want to home school their children. It will be for ages 4 to 11 and it will be a tuition based partnering program. Mr. & Mrs. Gorsuch went on to explain their reasonings for this idea, they stated that this will not be a money-making venture, rather, it will be for the children and give them the education they deserve. They will follow home school rules for Ohio and all basic required classes will be offered. They will focus on others as well, such as, nature skills, nutrition, cooking, every day life skills, etc. Guest Aaron Freeman, who is a neighbor of the proposed property, stated that he is in full support of this school and plans on having his daughter attend. Continued discussion was held on the further details of what the school will offer.

After no further discussion was held the Mark Becker moved to close the public hearing at 6:53 p.m. Mary Alice Stidham seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous yes vote of all members present.

March Regular Zoning Meeting

Chairman Wayne Gniewkowski opened the regular zoning meeting at 6:54 pm, by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Roll call of members was taken and all members were present except for Mark Huggins and Jim Hay who were absent. Alternates Chad Eveland and Sandy Davis will be voting in the absence of regular members Mark Huggins and Jim Hay.

The minutes of the February 2024 meeting were reviewed and Mary Alice Stidham moved to approve the minutes as presented, Sandy Davis seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous yes vote of all members present.

District Change Application Discussion

Zoning Inspector Ed Corns recommended that if the board is interested in recommending the district change application, heard this evening at the public hearing, that they consider adding verbiage that would state if the district change is permitted, it be only for the current owners. If the ownership of that property would change, then the zoning district would go back to the original zoning of rural residential. Inspector Corns stated that Special Use would allow a multitude of things and if the current owners would sell then a new owner could operate something different on that property, if the special use district was to remain. Mr. Aaron Freeman, who is a neighbor to that property, stated that he definitely thought that Inspector Corns suggestion was wise.

After no further discussion Mark Becker moved to recommend this district change request to special use, with the stipulation that if the property would sell or change ownership, the zoning would return to rural residential, and this be moved on to the Thorn Township Trustees, Sandy Davis seconded the motion. By a unanimous yes vote the motion passed.

Open Items for Discussion

None

Zoning Inspector Report

Inspector Corns reported the following recent permits:

- New build on South Shore
- Dock on South Shore
- Lot split on Rt. 13
- New build on King
- Accessory building on High Point

Inspector Corns reported that he has seen an uptick in zoning violations, therefore, he has been out knocking on doors and notifying those with violations. He is actively working on handling current zoning permit requests and reviewing for violations.

Visitor Comments

Brian Ruff was in attendance and he wanted to introduce himself to the board, Mr. Ruff is running for Perry County Sherriff. Mr. Ruff stated that he is a resident of the Township and has been in law enforcement for 14 years. The board welcomed Mr. Ruff and thanked him for coming and introducing himself, they also wished him well in the upcoming election.

Zoning Commission Member Comments/Questions

None

Agenda for next Monthly Zoning Meeting

Open Items for Discussion

After no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Deborah Morgan, Zoning Secretary