



BATH TOWNSHIP ZONING COMMISSION
JANUARY 9, 2025
WORK SESSION

Approved: 1/24/2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice Chair Maryellen Burnham, Joy Kosiewicz, Emily Hete, Kyle Craven, Kristin Sanchez, Planning Director/Zoning Inspector Bill Funk and Zoning Assistant Nanci Noonan. Chairman Richard Bradner and Marshal Pitchford were excused. Trustees Elaina Goodrich, Sharon Troike and resident Joann Alexander were also present.

- I. Call to Order – Roll Call
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Approval of Minutes – no pending minutes needed approved.
- IV. Zoning Report – Mr. Funk will give the 2024 Year End report at the next meeting.
- V. Unfinished Business: When the Comp Plan is finished, we will dive into the recommendations from the Committee as well as update the code regarding outdated issues. Our code is from 2014 and there are things that we know need some tweaking. Most likely we will get a consultant to help us walk through the process; it is a pretty daunting process and the zoning staff probably could not take something that large on and perform our day-to-day duties. With that being said, Mr. Funk informed the Commission that there is one part of the Zoning Resolution update that we would really like to get a jump on. That is the Ghent corridor.
 - a. Updates – n/a
- VI. New Business: The Ghent Road Corridor. As we began the process of updating the Comp Plan, the UH property was listed for sale. Initially, we were told the price was rather high so we thought it would sit there for a while and not move quickly. Now the price may not be as high and we are starting to get some interest in the property. Currently, there is a moratorium in place which would cover that property until June, so any construction should fall under that. Mr. Funk said that we have interested parties who are looking at that site for anything from pretty intensive commercial to some type of mixed use, to straight residential. We want to make sure that we get ourselves in the best position possible for when that moratorium is no longer in place. We have let the interested parties know about the moratorium and have sat down with a few of them and informed them of what we have seen from the Comp Plan Committee’s recommendations as to what the Township would like to see for that site.
 - a. Ghent Corridor Overly discussion – Mr. Funk presented an exhibit from the draft portion of the Comp Plan for the Ghent Corridor. He explained that this area was one of five focus areas the committee identified. Again, with the threat of sale of the property, and what potentially could go there, that is why we would like to jump on this now instead of waiting for the Comp Plan to finish and get adopted and approved. Writing language and code would be pushing is right up to the end of the moratorium. However, it would be helpful to have some type of draft language, that when we are working with a developer, we can point to it. Mr. Funk walked them through the exhibit on screen to speak further on the corridor stating it is a step approach, keeping density towards Route 77 with commercial

and maybe some mixed use. Then as you go north that density would drop. We want to maintain that residential, with some buffering, as you extend north. The thought is to help stop the commercial creep down the hill.

So, to achieve this ultimate goal the thought is an overlay district, a topic which we have talked about in the past. We would still have the base zoning; the B-1 and the R-2 base zonings would still be there. He pointed out the overlay district that sort of floats on top of that. The thought is, if a developer would choose to come in, there needs to be some incentive for the developer to choose and they could develop under that overlay district. The nice thing about an overlay district is that when we write these regulations, we can write stronger, more specific language in an overlay district that we can in your typical zoning districts. Mr. Funk stated that in an overlay district the Ohio revised code gives us more powers as to what we can control. Zoning is kind of tough when you get into architectural standards and uses, where as in an overlay district we can spell those out in more detail. I.e. building materials, landscaping, lighting etc. Also, within an overlay district, we choose how the approval process goes. Meaning we can have that go through Appearance Review Commission and also through the Board of Trustees for final approval. The Trustees provide another layer of approval to ensure that what that developer is trying to develop on that site, under that overlay district is what we would get. Again, this would help prevent some of the commercial creep down and also provide, what has been looked at for years while doing the Comp Plans, some step-down housing. We've always had this contingency of people who live in Bath Township, who have 2.5 – 5 acres, who want to downsize and stay in Bath Township but there is no opportunity. They move to Copley or Akron or other areas. We are not talking about large-scale, but a smaller scale project like a Sparrow Pond or Crystal Shores. That would fit that kind of need that we have heard is desired. Mr. Funk clarified that the corridor would be from the Dimitroff property down to the cookie lady's house, and anything going down the hill from there we would maintain as is. But it will be up to the Zoning Commission to lay the actual lines out. Mr. Funk shared that he has spoken with the Trustees about this and will be making a recommendation shortly to work directly with Envision, the Comp Plan consultants, to help guide us through this portion of the update. There will be an early February meeting with the Comp Plan Committee, the Trustees and Envision to review the Comp Plan draft. We will have the draft on the website and also a section to allow for public comment. Realistically, we are looking probably at an April or May date for the Comp Plan final adoption.

VII. Miscellaneous:

- a.** Committee discussion – Members discussed density, use options, zoning across the street and other ideas for the overlay. Mr. Funk stated this will go through the normal process as if it is like a rezoning or text amendment. Envision will join us for Work Sessions and we may have to meet more than once a month to accomplish our goals. Zoning Commission member comments included the fact that we have been working on this for a while and it will be good to focus on one section at a time. Also, the fact that an overlay gives the Township more control and a voice in the development makes it a good tool. Mr. Konstand has always said to prepare proactively so, when the time comes, we are prepared. This is a wise decision. At the same time, we will have to balance the uses of what is there today versus uses we might want to transition to.

Mr. Funk informed that there is water and sewer at the UH property and some of that sewer could be potentially somewhat limited. There are only so many benefits to be had for

the site. Also, UH claimed it would cost them a fortune to tear the building down so part of their agreement in the sale is it that the new buyer is responsible for tearing that building down.

The members were on board with the direction that the Zoning Commission will be taking.

- VIII. Citizens' Comments – Mrs. Joann Alexander commented to say that after working with Envision, the problems you were describing, they are very good about handling them. She asked the Commission to pay attention to the details and make sure the product is what you wanted when you get done with that process. Mrs. Alexander stated that any concern on the overlay are concerns that the committee was having, and Envision's response to us was that it will be for the Zoning Commission. The questions you have, the committee had on the other side also. Lastly, she asked that when you define "R" residential zones, her request is that you please make them only residential. Don't make them quasi-office, quasi-public or anything like that. She asked that they really define the R zoning designations as only residential uses.
- IX. Next Meeting – Thursday, February 13, 2025 at 6 PM
- X. Adjourn