

The Chester Township Board of Trustees met in special joint session **Wednesday, February 28, 2024** in the Town Hall Meeting Room at 7:00 P.M. Chairman Craig Richter presided. Administrator Purchase was appointed Clerk pro tem.

**Roll Call for Board of Trustees:**

Present: Mr. Radtke, Mr. Mazzurco, Mr. Richter  
Absent: Fiscal Officer Jarrett

**Roll Call for Zoning Commission:**

Present: Mr. Chess, Mr. Lauro, Mr. Oswick, Mr. Peto  
Absent: Mr. Kats  
Admin present: Ms. McCarthy

**Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**

The Board led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**Public Comments**

Mr. Richter reminded the audience that this is a special meeting and the only things that the two Boards can discuss must be listed on the agendas.

David Onderdonk and his wife Kathleen Onderdonk came to voice concern over a zoning violation. Their property backs up to a huge industrial mulching operation. Contact has been made by Mr. Onderdonk to several Zoning Inspectors the Township has had over the years about this violation. Letters and photographs have been written and submitted to the Township. Mr. Onderdonk said the property in question is zoned residential. He wants it clear that it is not zoned commercial. However, it is being used as a commercial operation. Mr. Onderdonk said it was told to him the use was agriculture. However, making mulch does not appear to be agriculture in his opinion. He said they are not raising animals such as cows and pigs nor do they even have a horse. There has never been a cornfield or potato crop, only a large mess. He notes photographs have been submitted as well as lots of information given to the Zoning Inspector. He shared there are mounds and mounds of mulch as well as a large industrial mulching machine. Mulching makes a lot of noise. The trucks come and go including dump trucks and semi tractor trailers. Trucks come in from other municipalities. He does not know how they have continued to get away with running a commercial operation for so many years. Also added was the sound of the tailgates from these large trucks that make a lot of noise. Mr. Onderdonk stressed he feels this is zoned residential and is not meant to be an industrial mulching operation, let alone in his back yard. He emphasized mulch does not fall under agriculture. He discussed Mr. Radtke stating he wanted to keep Chesterland semi-rural in his campaign promise. Mr. Radtke said they were stepping outside the special meeting agenda and he reminded Mr. Onderdonk that they cannot discuss things that are not listed on the agenda. Mr. Richter invited the Onderdonk's to the March 7, 2024 regular Board of Trustees Meeting. Mr. Richter noted he will add him to the agenda at the beginning of the meeting.

## Electronic Signage

The first thing discussed by the Zoning Commission was changing the definition of signage to reflect what it truly means. After that is done they will dig deeper into size and everything else that goes along with it. During the last meeting it was discussed getting rid of the language electronic reader board. They would like to add electronic changeable copy sign. (Exhibit A)

Confirmation was received from the Board of Trustees that the Zoning Commission is on the right path starting with the definition. The resolution centers around the definition. Mr. Richter said it was agreed the definition was probably defined 20 or 30 years ago. Discussion continued over the future proposed amendment. Mr. Purchase stressed the concern regarding the brightness of the signs for passing cars. He suggests having the Chief of Police drive by and observe the brightness for public safety. Mr. Alusheff, Assistant Zoning Inspector noted that there are costs associated with a lumen calibration device and shared certification is required. Mr. Richter said this discussion is only for commercial property and it requires a certain frontage. Mr. Purchase said that any commercial property can have a ground sign out front. The difference is that you need 400 feet or more to have two signs. All ground signs can be electronic. Some of the electronic signs come with a high cost. It was suggested adding the language stating up to a certain amount of lumens and beyond and that it will be enforced by local police. Discussion continued over the brightness concerns and what could be done regarding the violation process. In addition, the Zoning Commission is looking for clarity with the entire message changing at once. It was agreed to use the language that says enforced by the Chester Zoning Inspector and/or Chester Township Safety Forces. It was suggested by Mr. Richter that when the permit is pulled for the sign that possibly the Township inspect the lumens and specs. The discussion continued about how the message will actually scroll.

The plan is to initiate the amendment at the end of the meeting.

Next was the topic of attached garages. The discussion began with going over what was discussed at the last meeting. They began discussing three different ways to measure how large a garage can be. Mr. Purchase said he is not aware of any zoning resolution that regulates the size of a garage in Geauga County. Mr. Purchase said the attached garage should not exceed the square footage of the first floor of the primary dwelling. The second item is the height. It is suggested to regulate the size of the garage height based on the height size of the house. This is just for a discussion and Mr. Purchase is hoping to get feedback and hear what the Zoning Commission has to say. A member of the Zoning Commission said he agreed with height recommendation and liked the idea of green space pertaining to the size of the lot. He did question the restriction concerning the requirement suggested of garage size and noted he does not agree with that. Conversation then was routed to the structure that was built near Caves Road on Sherman Road. Mr. Mazzurco suggested negotiating and stated there will be times when we agree to disagree. The Zoning Commission reminded the Board of Trustees that properties have wells, septic systems and leach fields. Mr. Richter said if there is an issue with someone that has a large amount of property say 25 plus acres and they want to place a large structure on their property, they can go to the Board of Zoning Appeals. It appears the height of the garage has been agreed upon and further discussion is needed for size.

Lynn Roman, a resident asked if the structure on Sherman Road is currently attached and the response was no. She is asking if they want to consider some type of language that talks about the attached part being visible. Mr. Purchase said there is going to be a living space connecting the two buildings or the

plans would not have been approved. He confirmed a breezeway is not acceptable. Mr. Alusheff explained the definition of a breezeway.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Richter adjourned their meeting at 8:52 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_ absent  
Patricia Jarrett, Fiscal Officer

5-15-2024 Motion # 2024-239  
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Approval Date

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Craig Richter, Chairman

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Joseph C. Mazzurco, Vice-Chairman

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Ken Radtke, Jr., Trustee