

# Chester Township Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes

| Wednesday, April 16, 2025 7:00 PM |

Chester Town Hall

Audio Recording Available

Meeting Called to Order by Mr. Oswick at 7:04 p.m.

Members present: Mr. Chess, Mr. Kats, Mr. Lauro, Mr. Minello, Mr. Oswick

Zoning Inspector: Mr. Alusheff

Admin present: Ms. McCarthy

BoT present: Mr. Radtke

Mr. Oswick led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance

## **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Lauro moved to approve the minutes of the April 2, 2025 meeting as presented; Mr. Kats seconded.

Mr. Chess/yes; Mr. Kats/yes; Mr. Lauro/yes; Mr. Oswick/yes; Mr. Minello/yes

Motion passes

## **Public Hearing for Proposed Chester Township Zoning Amendment ZC-2025-1**

- Mr. Oswick asked Mr. Alusheff to give an overview of the amendment.
- The Chester Township Zoning Commission initiated the proposed amendment on March 19, 2025.
- In accordance with ORC Section 519.12, the proposed amendment was properly noticed and transmitted to the Geauga County Planning Commission.
- As required by ORC Section 519.12, the recommendation of the Geauga County Planning Commission must be considered during the public hearing.
- Ms. McCarthy read the recommendation of the Geauga County Planning Commission into the record for consideration while the amendment was displayed on monitor.

## **Public Comments**

Ms. Muehling – Asked if the modifications recommended by the Geauga County Planning Commission have been discussed amongst the Board members. (Board members had not yet discussed as they only saw the modifications via email yesterday.)

She asked the board why this amendment had been written. Board replied because of the continuing requests from residents for the ability to put accessory buildings in their side yard.

Ms. Muehling is of the opinion that accessory buildings have never been allowed in the side yard of a residential neighborhood. The intent is to keep the buildings in the backyard. Now that storage is increased to up to 2,500 square feet – that's a big building to be visible from the street. Times and cost change and suddenly wood is a lot more expensive than metal. Many of these buildings begin to look industrial. Now that these buildings may be allowed in the side yard, you don't want an industrial looking building in a residential neighborhood. We should try to maintain as much a residential look as we possibly can. In summary, I think this amendment should be denied.

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Ms. Gifford is of the opinion that just because a lot of people are asking for that, I don't think that means we should change the resolution.

Mr. Alusheff was invited to speak in support of the amendment. He questioned the detriment to public health, safety or welfare and is not aware of any detriment to the general public with this proposed change. We don't zone for looks. The question should start from, "why shouldn't we allow it, not why should we allow it." Lifestyle changes have shown us that people want these buildings.

Ms. Muehling asked what the purpose of Mr. Alusheff speaking was.

The board responded they wanted to hear his observations from being in the field.

## **Zoning Commission Deliberations**

Mr. Minello made the point that people have this property and we don't want to infringe on them using their own property.

Board reviewed the suggested changes from the Geauga County Planning Commission and implemented the suggested changes as highlighted in blue as modifications on Exhibit A.

"Move that the Chester Township Zoning Commission recommend the approval of the following modification to the proposed amendment, ZC-2025-2, to the Chester Township Zoning Resolution, as attached hereto as Exhibit A with modifications." (Form No. 31)

- Moved by Mr. Lauro; Seconded by Mr. Kats  
Mr. Chess/Yes; Mr. Kats/Yes; Mr. Lauro/Yes; Mr. Oswick/Yes; Mr. Minello/Yes  
Motion passed

## **Form Nos. 31 and 32 were signed.**

## **Public Hearing for Proposed Chester Township Zoning Amendment ZC-2025-3**

- Mr. Lauro asked Mr. Mersol to give an overview of the amendment.

Mr. Mersol explained that his application for solar roof panels was turned down by the BZA as they weren't sure of the legality of it. At that time, he wrote an amendment using the Ohio Township Association model to write an amendment that would allow solar panels.

- Per HB 501, townships are allowed to regulate up to 50 MW, I proposed 100 kW. That is 1/500<sup>th</sup> the amount the township is allowed to regulate. Our home is projected to need 15 kW based on electricity usage last year.
- Wind farms are prohibited in this amendment.
- There is a preference for roof top panels which are the least obtrusive in appearance.
- Ground mounted units will be allowed through a conditional use permit.
- Geauga County Planning Commission (GCPC) has suggested adding small solar facilities as a prohibited use – that strikes me as reasonable.

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- GCPC also recommended adding it to the Commercial District. That's for you to decide.
- In terms of decibels – one of their recommendations – First of all, solar panels don't make noise. I used the word "whisper quiet" as one of the measurements.
- The maximum height – I pulled 6 foot out of my head. I would leave that up to you. 10 feet seems reasonable to me.
  
- Mr. Alusheff explained what was discussed by the GCPC. There is an Amish gentleman on the GCPC Board who suggested anything higher than 12 feet would be difficult. In the winter, snow must be cleared from the panels.
- Mr. Alusheff was in agreement with the recommendations of the Planning Commission.
  
- The Chester Township Zoning Commission initiated the proposed amendment on March 19, 2025.
- In accordance with ORC Section 519.12, the proposed amendment was properly noticed and transmitted to the Geauga County Planning Commission.
- As required by ORC Section 519.12, the recommendation of the Geauga County Planning Commission must be considered during the public hearing.
- Ms. McCarthy read the recommendation of the Geauga County Planning Commission into the record for consideration while the amendment was displayed on monitor.

## **Public Comments**

Ms. Muehling recommended continuing this hearing until the Zoning Commission has time to go into further depth of these changes. Consider hiring an expert to help answer any questions or suggested changes.

If the amendment is not thoroughly vetted for Chester Township, I think this should be denied.

## **Zoning Commission Deliberations**

Zoning Commission revised Exhibit A with suggested modifications highlighted in blue. The group considered statutory definition from the ORC along with Planning Commission comments and combined comments and produced yet another definition that all agreed upon.

"Move that the Chester Township Zoning Commission recommend the approval of the following modification to the proposed amendment, ZC-2025-3, to the Chester Township Zoning Resolution, as attached hereto as Exhibit A with modifications." (Form No. 31)

- Moved by Mr. Lauro; Seconded by Mr. Chess  
Mr. Chess/Yes; Mr. Kats/Yes; Mr. Lauro/Yes; Mr. Oswick/Yes; Mr. Minello/Yes  
Motion passed

**Form Nos. 31 and 32 were signed.**

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## New Business

Mr. Radtke, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, asked the Zoning Commission to reconsider the rezoning of the Fire Station #2 property which involves these properties: 11-189700, 11-714400 and 11-088600 to an Industrial District. The Zoning Commission asked questions about the property and discussed future use and possibilities of the properties in question. Mr. Oswick acknowledged that in the past the Zoning Commission agreed to doing this and thanked Mr. Radtke for coming and offering further clarification on why the property is being considered for rezoning. The ZC asked Ms. McCarthy to assemble forms to initiate an amendment on May 21<sup>st</sup> for rezoning the three parcels.

Mr. Radtke also talked about a recent BoT meeting where the color on the Zoning Map indicates Township Park, but we do not have a zoning district and it is technically, Residential. Because of the public fervor, the next request is to ask the Zoning Commission to look at adopting two new sections to the Zoning Resolution to include Parks as a District so we may recognize the parcels we have in our community.

Ms. McCarthy displayed on the monitor for the ZC board the beginning of the reformatted Zoning Resolution. Many formatting concerns were addressed. Direction given to continue with the format as shown.

Mr. Alusheff will be presenting to the Board of Trustees on April 17th, the need for Erosion Control Regulations being put back in the Zoning Resolution. This should be coming before the Zoning Commission soon.

BZA request to look at Section 5.00.02 E for supplemental variances for landscaping – was tabled for future discussion.

Mr. Chess asked if any determination has been made on members of the Land Use Plan. Mr. Alusheff said all applications will be sent to the Board of Trustees on April 24<sup>th</sup> and the Board of Trustees should be deciding at the May 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. The first Land Use Plan meeting is scheduled for May 20<sup>th</sup>.

The APA meeting will be held at Eastwood Event Center in Niles, OH on June 13, 2025.

## Next Meeting

May 7, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

**Meeting Called to Close at:** 9:07 p.m.

Approved by:

Chester Township Zoning Commission May 7, 2025

Final Review by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jon Oswick, Chair