

PLANNING COMMISSION
May 13, 2025 @ 7:00 PM

Steve Thorn called the meeting to order at 7:09 P.M.

Roll Call: Mayor Tammy Meyer, Steve Thorn (chair), Kevin Maloney (clerk), Wes Hawkins

Others Present: Solicitor Bill Mason, Todd Peetz (Portage County Regional Planning), Cookie Vanek

- ❖ Minutes from April 8, 2025, were presented, and Tammy made motion to approve, Steve seconded, all voted in favor.

Old Business:

- Comprehensive Growth Plan / PCRPs status
- ❖ Todd Peetz presented proposal for Portage County Regional Planning to develop a Comprehensive Plan for the Village. Demonstrated their website, and comprehensive plans for other communities. Demonstrated the "story map" feature of the software they use. Tammy asked what can the Comp. Plan offer to the Village, given that we have no room to expand? Todd mentioned re-development as a possibility. Also cooperating with neighboring communities, like Mantua Township. Ellie brought up the Geiss buildings in Shalersville as an example of development without a plan. Todd mentioned that he brought up his concerns with the County Commissioners on that project, without much success. Todd mentioned the difference between zoning code vs. a Comp. Plan. Zoning Code doesn't really provide a vision for the future. Todd stated that a Comp. Plan should be a flexible, living document, allowing for changes as circumstances change. Wes asked how many communities actually follow through with their Comp. Plan. Todd cited the difference in Florida, where adhering to the Comp. Plan is mandated, unless a community changes their Plan. Here in Ohio, it's a matter of political will for the community to follow through. Tammy pointed out that Kevin might be interested in examples like Ravenna, which feature historic landmarks in the community. Todd showed Kent as an example. Todd explained the costs, and the hours that the Village had available as members of Regional Planning, to help offset some of the costs. Suggested we spread the cost across 3 years, as the development would span that time frame. Tammy stated that Council would be talking about this during the upcoming budget workshop.
- ❖ Wes asked Steve what he felt about the value of having a new Comp. Plan. Steve stated he felt it was very valuable, especially given how old and obsolete our current plan was, and the approach Todd had suggested about community meetings to get input from the citizens. Wes pointed out that there may not be community consensus, and we may not have the budget to implement the details of any Comp. Plan. Tammy mentioned that we don't necessarily have to opt for all the features of the Plan examples that Todd presented.
- Review 2025-19 legislation for Zoning Code Review: Chapter 400 & 440
- ❖ Steve noted that in reading the ordinance & his notes, he found a number of typos, and pointed them out to Bill Mason. He stated he was marking up a copy for Bill. Tammy suggested rather than reading through all the items, Steve could just provide a markup to Bill.
- ❖ Tammy made a motion to move to Council, Kevin seconded. Wes asked a question about 410.07 A. 1. - Whether R1 & R2 should be included. Tammy pointed out that it was appropriate for R1 only. Motion was voted on, and all voted in favor.

New Business:

- Discuss changes to allow village to do an electric sign (Section 450)
- ❖ Tammy stated that she received a phone call asking if she would be opposed to an organization raising money for an electronic sign for the Village, in front of Village Hall. This is normally precluded in the Zoning ordinances. 450.02 allows an exemption for Village government purposes. Wes was concerned about the look of a marquee type sign, given the historic nature of the Village. Steve mentioned that he has seen examples that are not gawdy or offensive. Steve pointed out that anything would have to be approved by the Planning Commission.
- Discussion about fountain in front of village Hall
- ❖ Talked about fountain in front of Village Hall and the removal of the figures from the fountain. Wes pointed out that the decision to place or remove things from Village property, it should come before Planning Commission. Tammy asked about whether Parks & Cemetery be part of those decisions. After further discussion, it was determined that the removal of the figures from the fountain was indeed under the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission. Wes stated he was in favor of replacing the fountain with another fountain, consistent with the aesthetic. Steve recommended we take up the issue again next month.
- Discuss changes to regulate planting street trees over new water lines (Section 460.11)
- ❖ Steve stated that with Portage County water tearing up streets and tree lawns for the water & sewer project, we didn't want people planting trees directly over those new lines. Steve asked if we felt that this existing legislation was sufficient to address the issue. Wes pointed out that while the County now manages our water & sewer, they shouldn't be able to dictate that we can't have trees on our tree lawns. Steve stated we will take up the issue again when we have more time.

Steve moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 PM; Kevin seconded; all voted in favor.

Please note: An audio recording of this meeting is available via public record request.