

**MINUTES OF
Rensselaer Advisory Planning Commission Meeting 2023-04
Thursday, July 13, 2023 at 6:00 PM**

I. Call to Order:

The Members of the Rensselaer Advisory Planning Commission met on Thursday, July 13, 2023 in City Hall Council Chambers. Advisory Planning Commission Chairman Stan Haines called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM CST. He asked Joshua Davis to proceed with roll call.

II. Roll Call:

Present: Chairman - Stan Haines, Mike Davis, Jeff Rayburn, Joe Effinger, Bryce Black, Justin Wilson and Building Commissioner - Joshua Davis.

Absent: Vice Chairman - Cliff Wood, Deana Rule and Sean Cawby

Guests: City Attorney - Jacob Ahler, American Structurepoint - Philip Roth, Carolyn Ahler, Bob Schenk, Noelle Weishaar, Juanita Saucedo, Rick Wienrank and Scott Malone

III. Review and Approval of Past Minutes:

Chairman Haines presented the minutes from the previous Advisory Planning Commission Hearing 2023-03, held on Thursday June 8, 2023. Black made a motion to approve, seconded by Effinger.

Motion Passed.

IV. Old Business:

Commissioner Davis explained to the Members that more time was needed to work on the Zoning Amendment to Unify City Building Code requirements in the buffer-zone. This topic will be tabled until our next scheduled meeting.

V. New Business:

A. Overview of Comprehensive Plan; Philip Roth with American Structurepoint

Philip Roth with American Structurepoint is the project manager for the Rensselaer Comprehensive Plan, which is a strategic guide for effective decision making and implemental actions for the City of Rensselaer. The projected plan was to target the adoption process for the Comprehensive Plan; however, the Building Department was notified last minute that the advertisement did not make the newspaper, causing delay. The plan began in May of 2022, receiving content advice from ten (10) members of the Review Team, Plan Commission members, and recommendations from the community. Public outreach events took place at the 2022 Jasper County Fair, online community surveys, and outreach events held in City Hall Council Chambers. Focus areas for the plan are Saint Joseph's College, I-65, State Road 114, while soft suggestions included workforce, housing and quality of life. Commissioner Davis stated they will continue with Zoom meeting overviews to discuss the plan more in depth with the Advisory Planning Commission members, and he projects to recommend approval at the next scheduled meeting on August 10, 2023, continuing to City Council for adoption on August 14, 2023.

B. Discussion of Amendment of Zoning Ordinance for Swimming Pools

Commissioner Davis explained that in the *Zoning Code Section F: District Uses c) Accessory Uses (Page 92)*, his plan is to repeal paragraphs c, d and e. These paragraphs would be replaced with, "All swimming pools shall be in compliance with the current Indiana Residential Code, the current Indiana Swimming Pool Code and the current Indiana Electrical Code". The Indiana Residential Code will give the Building Department more authority to evaluate the effectiveness of fencing and pool covers and create more leeway to make proper determinations regarding safety. "Kiddie Pools" are just as dangerous as any other pool in regard to the safety of the children in our community, and may be subject to the same fencing guidelines if they are not being supervised. These pools are also subject to increased breeding grounds for mosquitos. At the next scheduled meeting, it is projected to propose to Attorney Ahler a resolution or ordinance for the Rensselaer Advisory Planning Commission to recommend for approval and for City Council to adopt.

C. Discussion of Amendment of Zoning Ordinance for Residential Dwellings in Business Districts

In the *Zoning Code Section H: Supplemental Use Standards (Page 118)*, it states the standards for residential dwellings in all business districts, which include single, two-family or multifamily dwellings are permitted contingent on they shall not be below street grade (no basement apartments), shall not occupy lot frontage (may be on ground level, but in the rear of the building) and shall have separate means of access and egress from the principle use(s), except when additional emergency egress is required (dwelling must have its own separate entry and exit, unless an additional exit is required that runs through the business). Commissioner Davis is currently working on the language to be used towards updating the Zoning Code. Chairman Haines confirmed this would be good for the downtown area and asked to have the changes ready at the next meeting for recommendation of approval for City Council.

D. Re-Plat Application; Richard N. Reese Family, LLC.

Commissioner Davis decided to present the re-plat application to the board since the petitioners were not present at the meeting. Jasper County has already completed the re-plat for this property. Eric Beaver, Jasper County attorney, had informed Davis that it was a quick-claim process, which bypasses their Plan Commission for approval. Genova purchased land from the CDC, and wants to utilize the city owned property at the end of Cherry St.; both parties are coming up with an agreement to do so. Black verified that the city would still maintain the setbacks and utilities for the borrowed property. Chairman Haines entertained a motion for approval. Motion made by Rayburn, seconded by Davis.

Motion Passed.

E. Designation of Representative to serve as an Advisory Member of the Jasper County Plan Commission

Indiana Code allows the Rensselaer Advisory Planning Commission to nominate a representative to the Jasper County Planning Commission as a non-voting member. Commissioner Davis made the proposal that he be the representative. Black made a motion to approve, seconded by Effinger.

Motion Approved.

F. Adoption of Regular Meeting Schedule and Filing Deadlines

The new Rensselaer Advisory Planning Commission meetings will now begin at 5:30 PM CST, leaving the Rensselaer Board of Zoning Appeals meetings at their regular scheduled time of 6:30 PM CST. The updated filing date is twenty-one (21) days prior to the scheduled meeting date, which will leave the Building Department fourteen (14) days to advertise and send First-Class mailings to the properties within 300 feet of the petitioner's property. These items were discussed, but no formal approval took place.

G. Discussion to revise the filing fees for Plan Commission and BZA applications

Just as the compensation for Board Members, filing fees for these meetings have not been adjusted. Entertaining the members' ideas; aspects to take into consideration are current filing fee costs, administrative costs for taking on the advertising and mailings and what other local municipalities are charging for their filing fees. Stan Haines suggested comparing our fees with those of the county and table until the next meeting.

H. Zoning Rules regarding Residential Post-Frame (Pole-Barn) Dwellings; Carolyn Ahler

Carolyn Ahler explained that there were two (2) lots they were interested in for her parent's potential barndominium; One on Lincoln St, across from the Water Treatment Plant, and the other on 231 south of town, near Houston's Subdivision. The main concerns of this concept is having this type of structure in residential areas, maximum structure height allowed for residential zoning, property values and insurance policies. Commissioner Davis did clarify that if the pole-barn structure is attached to the home, it is not considered an accessory structure. This means that the zoning code for maximum allowed structure height for accessory structures would not be applied. Chairman Haines would like to see the project renderings completed with conventional residential siding on the entire structure. Rayburn suggested reconfiguring the height requirements to that of the current Zoning Code.

VI. Adjournment:

Chairman Haines adjourned the meeting with a motion by Rayburn, seconded by Effinger.

Motion Carried - Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 PM CST.

Next Meeting: August 10, 2023 at 5:30 PM CST

Minutes Prepared by: Plan Commission Secretary, Jessica Call