

**REGULAR MEETING** of The Conneaut Planning Commission – July 27, 2021 at 6:00PM in Council Chambers

Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM.

**ROLL CALL**

Absent 2 – Jared Ankrom & Diana Spencer - excused

Present 4 – Rebecca Gaugh, Mindy Notte, Jennifer Simpson

Also present were Nicholas Brent City of Conneaut Zoning Inspector and Molly Turnes – City of Conneaut Planning and Zoning Manager.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES** – Ms. Gaugh asked if all had a chance to read the minutes from the June 2021 Planning Commission meeting and if there were any corrections. A motion to approve the June meeting minutes was made by Ms. Simpson and was seconded by Mrs. Notte. Nicholas Brent called roll and all members present accepted the approval of the June minutes.

Ms. Gaugh began by introducing new business.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**CONNEAUT CREEK VET EXPANSION – 382 W. MAIN RD**

Dr. Curie was present. Ms. Gaugh introduced Dr. Curie and asked him if he **had** any information he would like to inform the board of and also apologized in regards to all the questions the board had asked. Ms. Gaugh explained that they were just doing their due diligence. Dr. Curie stated that he hoped the answers were satisfactory in regards to the stormwater drainage and sewer questions. Ms. Gaugh stated that yes, they were. Dr. Curie proceeded to give background information on the clinic and explained how they have outgrown the 900-sf space and are looking to double the size with the expansion, adding the additional 1,000 sf. He further outlined his other locations and how the growth across the board has been steady. Conneaut is his smallest facility. The board congratulated Dr. Curie on his growth. Ms. Gaugh asked for motion for approval. Motion to approve was made by Ms. Simpson and seconded by Ms. Notte. Roll was called and all members present accepted the approval of the site plans for the Conneaut Creek Vet expansion.

Ms. Gaugh mentioned that after the member of the public speaks, the board will need to discuss the board secretarial issue and one house keeping item.

**OLD BUSINESS: NONE**

**AUDIENCE COMMENTS:**

Ms. Gaugh welcomed the member of the public, Mr. Dan Eden, to speak on the topic of allowing chickens in the city limits of Conneaut. Mr. Eden stated that he was under the impression that the board was going to look into an ordinance to allow chickens in the residential districts. Ms. Gaugh stated that the board has been looking into this for months and that it's a process and they like to hear input from the public. Mr. Eden started out by saying that his experience with chickens has not been pleasant in the city. He lives at the end of Orchard Street and his neighbor has chickens, ducks and dogs. And he feels like allowing chickens will hurt the neighborhood and also neighborhood relationships. He's been dealing with it for a couple years. He proceeded to tell of an exchange that he had with his neighbor who has the chickens and how it has negatively impacted their relationship. He also stated that she has a rooster that wakes them up.

Ms. Gaugh asked Mr. Eden to clarify if he was not wanting chickens in the city at all. He replied that it was not up to him. Ms. Gaugh asked Mr. Brent to pull up the Conneaut districts map so Mr. Eden could see the city limits. Mr. Eden said that one time he was led to believe there was a red zone and a blue zone and wasn't sure what zone he was in. He understands letting people south of Conneaut having chickens. The map was shown to Mr. Eden and how diverse all the zoning districts are.

Ms. Notte thanked him for his perspective and feedback and asked Mr. Eden if he could tell her a little bit more about what aspect of having a neighbor with chickens he is struggling with the most. Mr. Eden feels the cons are that he doesn't know what she does with the waste and also the rooster wakes he and his wife up early. He stated that he tried to go through the police department, Law Director and even his councilman concerning this but said nothing has worked and that the neighbor will do anything she can to keep the chickens. He claimed that she takes the rooster inside of her house to keep the noise down and mentioned that she also has little kids. He doesn't want to call the health department on her either. Mr. Eden also said that they are free ranging and she allows them to come across the street onto his property.

Ms. Gaugh explained that presently you can have anything anywhere in Conneaut because there is no ordinance. And this is the exact reason the board is working on an ordinance. She asked him if he's spoken to the zoning department. Mr. Eden said it was only the one time when he asked if they were allowed to have chickens.

Ms. Notte summarized that waste, noise and trespassing were his main concerns. He stated yes and wondered what would be next.

Ms. Gaugh explained the process of passing an ordinance into law to Mr. Eden. The board members showed Mr. Eden where his home is on the map and that he resides in an R4. Ms. Turnes asked if we could have the address of where the complaint is. Ms. Turnes explained that zoning can take a look at the coop and make sure that she is abiding by the zoning code for accessory structures. She also explained that when the animals are on his property the police can cite her for animals at large no matter if it's a chicken, duck or a dog and result in a criminal charge. Mr. Eden reiterated that his main concern is having a good neighborhood and being a good neighbor.

Ms. Gaugh explained to Mr. Eden that what the board is considering with the fowl ordinance is not allowing any roosters and there will be parameters set for those who have chickens. Ms. Simpson further explained the guidelines and parameters are being set up to help people meet in the middle to fulfill their needs. The city limits are huge and diverse. She mentioned a bill that's moving through the house of representatives right now that had it's first reading in November that is looking at prohibiting municipalities from banning backyard agriculture and this is happening at the state level. She mentioned how there needs to be a balance within the neighborhoods to accommodate both sides. She further clarified the idea behind the draft ordinance in regards to space, structures etc. Ms. Simpson also stated that we are looking at other municipalities, the USDA and state information to see what others are doing in regards to backyard agriculture. Mr. Eden asked how this will be policed or checked on. He suggested that we require a permit and that way the city will know who has the chickens. Ms. Simpson responded that the board is considering how to permit and enforce. She also spoke on how she looked at the agricultural ordinances for Cleveland and Dayton. Both allow small animals and small fowl. Ms. Notte commented that the board is trying to find the balance between allowing homeowners to have the rights to use their property the way they see fit but to do so in a manner that doesn't negatively affect the neighbor's enjoyment of their property too. Mr. Eden thanked the board for listening to him. The board thanked Mr. Eden for his input and coming to the meeting. Ms. Notte explained when a public meeting is held for the chicken ordinance that it will be in the paper and probably on the public access channel too. Mr. Eden was dismissed.

Ms. Gaugh introduced having a secretary for the board and mentioned that she was hoping to get a volunteer. Ms. Simpson asked if this was the only thing the secretary would be responsible for. And Ms. Gaugh said yes, Ms. Turnes will continue to do the agenda and minutes. Ms. Turnes said the secretary will basically only do roll call and make sure the decision sheet is filled out and the minutes are signed. Ms. Notte recommended using an app called Otter to help transcribe the meeting minutes. Ms. Simpson volunteered to serve as the board secretary. Ms. Gaugh asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Notte made the motion to adjourn and Ms. Simpson seconded.

Time Meeting adjourned. 6:37 PM

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Rebecca Gaugh – Chair

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Jennifer Simpson - Secretary