

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE OWOSSO PLANNING COMMISSION
VIRTUAL MEETING
Monday, August 24, 2020 – 6:30 P.M.

City Manager Nathan Henne announced the meeting would be held as a Virtual Meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic, under the authority of Executive Order No. 2020-15 of the Office of the Governor of the State of Michigan.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Wascher called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Recited

ROLL CALL: Recording Secretary Tanya Buckelew

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Wascher, Vice-Chair Livingston, Secretary Fear, Commissioners Jenkins, Law, Morris, Robertson, Taylor and Yerian

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Justin Sprague, CIB Planning, City Manager Nathan Henne

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:
MOTION BY VICE-CHAIR LIVINGSTON, SUPPORTED BY SECRETARY FEAR TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR August 24, 2020.

YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
MOTION BY VICE-CHAIR LIVINGSTON, SUPPORTED BY SECRETARY FEAR TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE July 27, 2020 MEETING.

YEAS ALL. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion of animal ordinance regarding chickens

The following commented:

- City Manager Nathan Henne explained the various communities that had responded and the comparison spreadsheet included in the packet
- Vice-Chair Livingston stated he is familiar with the chicken process. He would recommend 4 hens, no roosters, enclosure required, fenced yard required with additional restrictions as to permits/fees and setbacks

- Commissioner Morris asked if this was about chickens for egg laying purposes – yes. Has concerns regarding noise and agrees with restrictions
- Commissioner Robertson spoke of the negatives – smell, feces, hens make noise, enforcing vaccines otherwise leads to disease and agrees to a lot of restrictions
- Commissioner Taylor agrees with restrictions and concerns regarding the negative issues with chickens
- Secretary Fear stated she has had several constituents express a want for chickens being allowed in the city. She doesn't believe this would be widespread as there would be permits/fees involved.
- Justin Sprague, CIB Planning, stated the city of Fenton adopted the ordinance to allow chickens 7 years ago. Currently 12 permits had been issued, the annual fee is \$45 and inspections are required.
- Commissioner Robertson stated chickens are not currently allowed but people still have them in the city
- Secretary Fear stated nobody would be grandfathered in and would have to get a permit
- Commissioner Yerian stated he is against it and asked what the violation numbers are in other communities
- Commissioner Law stated the issues with the noise, mess and having a dog within his own fenced in yard and chickens next door would be an issue.
- Chairman Wascher stated he is against it
- Commissioner Jenkins asked about Fenton and a way to enforce vaccines and fences
- Justin Sprague, CIB Planning, stated an issue with code enforcement is that they can't always see what is in the backyard and they need a lawful reason to enter yards.
- Laura VanHyte, 524 Corunna Ave, she is in favor of allowing chickens. They are not smelly and don't get loose. A fenced yard is not required as a 9' X 18' coop is reasonably priced
- Tom Kurtz, 721 Lee St, has concerns and the city is not being able to keep up code enforcement, can't meet demands. At his previous residence, he was at least 50' from the neighbors coop and it still wasn't adequate. Raccoons and possums are attracted to chickens and can be destructive.
- Levi Perry, 720 Pine St, grew up with chickens and enjoys fresh eggs. The concerns could be overcome by standards and inspections
- Mark Draden, 1116 N Ball St, asked if property values went down in Fenton for homes next to chickens
- Laura VanHyte, 524 Corunna Ave, encourage the Planning Commission to look at the feedback on Facebook and proceed with this
- Justin Sprague, CIB Planning asked if city council was wanting this and looking for recommendations for an ordinance or to put an end to the discussion
- Commissioner Law stated to put it on the ballot
- City Manager Nathan Henne does not think it is legal to put on a ballot as it is a policy
- Commissioner Morris asked if code enforcement falls under the control of the Planning Commission – no. He is now on the fence and would need more discussions

- Secretary Fear would like more information. Poll other cities – how many allow chickens, how many permits are issued, how many complaints they have had

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER TAYLOR SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER LAW THAT THIS NOT BE DISCUSSED FURTHER AND TO NOT MOVE FORWARD ON A CHICKEN ORDINANCE.

YEAS: COMMISSIONER LAW, ROBERTSON, TAYLOR, YERIAN AND CHAIRMAN WASCHER

NAYS: SECRETARY FEAR, COMMISSIONERS JENKINS, MORRIS AND VICE-CHAIR LIVINGSTON

RCV 5-4 MOTION CARRIED

OTHER BOARD BUSINESS: NONE

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Justin Sprague, CIB Planning, stated that he still needs the Planning Commissioner's comments on the Master Plan so he can present a clean draft at the September meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER TAYLOR, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER ROBERTSON TO ADJOURN AT 7:44 P.M. UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING ON September 28, 2020. YEAS ALL, MOTION CARRIED.

Janae L. Fear, Secretary