

**VILLAGE OF BANNOCKBURN
PLAN COMMISSION/ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
AUGUST 1, 2016
MEETING MINUTES**

1. 01-08/01: **Call To Order.** Chairman James McShane called the meeting of the Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals to order at 7:00PM.

Chairman: James McShane

Commissioners Present: David Elston, Louise Feeney, Gerald Laures, Glenn Morris, John Ryan, Richard Peters

Commissioners Absent: None

Also Present: Village Counsel Betsy Gates, Village Manager Maria Lasday, Assistant to Village Manager Ryan Mentkowski, Village Forester Todd Sinn

Visitors: None

2. 02-08/01: **Pledge of Allegiance.** Chairman McShane led everyone in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. 03-08/01: **Visitor's Business.**
No visitors spoke.

4. 04-08/01: **Approval of the July 11, 2016 Plan Commission & Zoning Board of Appeals Regular Meeting Minutes.**

Commissioner Pedersen moved, seconded by Commissioner Laures, to approve the July 11, 2016 Plan Commission & Zoning Board of Appeals Regular Meeting Minutes, contingent on the amendments to lines 18, 34, 44, 52-54, 64-65, 97-98, 127-128, 134-138 and 146-147. On a voice vote, the motion was approved. Ayes: Seven (Elston, Feeney, Laures, McShane, Morris, Ryan, Peters); Nays: None; Abstain: None; Absent: None.

5. 05-08/01: **Discuss a Referral by the Village Board of Trustees of Modifications to the Village's Tree Regulations.**

Chairman McShane started the discussion related to the opacity requirements following the referral by the Village Board of Trustees regarding modifications to the Village's tree regulations.

One or more of the PCZBA Commissioners, the Village Forester and Staff noted the following discussions related to this subject:

- Why is there an opacity requirement at all within the Village. It was noted that the opacity has been in place for at least 25 years. It was also noted that the opacity regulation is consistent with the bufferyard language as discussed in the Village's Comprehensive Master Plan. It was asked whether the Comprehensive Master Plan went

to referendum. It was noted that it did not go to referendum, but it did go through the required statutory legal processes for approval.

- Regarding the buckthorn regulation, when new residents remove invasive buckthorn, they have to replace it with a large amount landscaping per the opacity requirements.
- They noted that the opacity rules are confusing and that the opacity rules are not in good forestry practice. They also noted that they don't want to make people spend money needlessly (in regards to the fact that the landscape plantings will start to over crowd each other and eventually die).
- It was noted that perhaps the opacity requirement was not excessive because the last review of the issue was the first time they had heard about it.
- They noted a main issue that this Commission needs to figure out is how opacity is achieved. They noted the issue with the multiplier and should be simplified and codified to include good landscape practice, or to reduce the number of plantings.
- They noted that if we water down the regulations, some people will be angry because they had to plant a lot of landscaping.
- Staff has heard from many landscapers that the plants they are planting are going to kill off existing landscaping due to crowding.
- Staff noted that in regards to the opacity chart recommendations in the staff report, the total plant numbers are the main problem. The problem could be the multiplier required by the opacity chart.
- They discussed that most of the time communities require you to post a bond following the planting of trees as part of a landscape plan. It was noted that the Village does require the trees to be alive for 2 years after the trees are planted, however, we do not require a bond.
- They discussed when the minimum opacity requirement has to be met per the current code. It was noted that it is currently 50 percent at planting and will reach 100 percent in 5 years.
- They asked that if the buffer yard were wider, could people reach more opacity sooner. They reiterated the question as to whether or not there are too many plants within the required chart/bufferyard. They discussed the buffer yard requirements which require a certain number of plants per 100 lineal feet.
- They discussed whether anyone has ever come in with a plan that met the opacity requirement. They noted that following the ordinance by the book, may not allow the landscaping to fit the site.
- They asked what the definition is that would best meet "50% opacity". Once they know what that looks like, then you need to take that and go backwards to figure out what those numbers would be quantified as.
- They noted that they want a spreadsheet/chart for the next meeting which compares the current requirements to the proposed requirements.
- They asked if the Commission should bring in Lane Kendig, Inc. to help take a look at this situation to figure how/why they did this opacity. They also asked if it was possible to get a landscape company in to work with the Village and present information as to what the proposed standards may look like.
- They noted that going forward we have to think about what opacity is defined as, when opacity is triggered, and also define what the goal is for the ordinance. It was noted to keep in mind that the Comprehensive Master Plan language discussed the character of

Bannockburn in relation to the landscape provided so it is important to think about Bannockburn's character when doing this.

- They discussed that we should first look at the opacity percentage to help figure out what it is going to look like. After that is determined, discuss the buffer yard width and plant units, keeping in mind we need good forestry practice.
- There was a note that there should be an exception process created. Staff added there is a process to this and people could always apply for a variance.
- They inquired whether we want to impose strict standards because it will make it more difficult on new residents.
- They noted again that we are trying to simplify the ordinance.
- They were concerned with the Tree Commission recommendation of no landscaping in the front yard.
- Should we ask people who do business in the community to come in and speak to Commission? They can explain the effect of the requirements and make recommendations which would result in a healthy number.
- The Commission asked staff to provide a list of opacity "triggers" at the next meeting so they can easily examine whether full opacity should be provided.

No further discussion took place and the general consensus of the PCZBA was to continue the discussion regarding opacity and bufferyard requirements to the October PCZBA meeting.

Adjournment.

Commissioner Elston moved, seconded by Commissioner Morris, to adjourn the meeting. On a voice vote, the motion was approved. Seven (Elston, Feeney, Laures, McShane, Morris, Ryan, Peters); Nays: None; Abstain: None; Absent: None.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11PM.