

Report 3 of Mar. 20,2008 OC/CIC meeting

Approximately 50 plus citizens were in attendance at the Thursday nite meeting in the Commissioners' room at the government annex with the meeting commencing promptly at 7 PM.

Chairman Dave White introduced Dave Neuman, director of Area Planning & zoning in Decatur county who spoke to the group about the positives and negatives of Decatur County's zoning ordinances.

Mr. Neuman told the group that since 1996 they have a "score sheet" they use for all landowners wishing to build houses that seems to put every one on the same level as far as qualifying to build. He recommended avoiding requiring large acreage tracts. Decatur Co. has come down to a requirement of just 1 & ½ to 2 acres for building sites. The score sheet they use has more than 15 items of requirements of which the landowner must qualify in order to receive approval. He and other zoning members go out to the site and "grade" the site per this score sheet. It is then brought back to the zoning board for evaluation & is either accepted or rejected. Mr. Neuman stated that he would send a copy of this score sheet to Chairman White in order for all to see it.

Other items discussed were pond issues, that someone from out of the area could purchase a 200 acre farm, decide to put in a pond in the middle of the acreage and by doing so cuts off the drainage lines from neighboring farms. They are now required to go thru the zoning process in order to protect the drain tiles of the neighboring farms.

Their pet ordinance is 3 adult dogs. This ordinance is enforced by use of common sense and level of neighbor nuisance. Kennels are required to have 660 feet distance from all neighbors.

There are no slope requirements as the score sheet will take care of any problem with septic requirements in relation to slope.

Road frontage requirement is 50 feet and an easement for a road or lane to get into land that would be locked behind the road frontage site which could go to 10 or so homes.

The Decatur Co. commissioners will not take on private roads. The developer or builder must include a covenant that will require homeowners

to contribute equally to the maintenance of their road. The road must be at least 20 feet wide and have a cul-de-sac that is at least 100 feet to allow for turning of emergency vehicles. If a road has 4-5 houses or more, the road must be built according to county highway standards.

Home businesses must go thru the zoning process and are usually given a 5 year permit. All equipment must be inside the house or garage and depending on the type of business must have parking space for 3-4 cars. There are no restrictions on the type of business.

Violations are handled by Mr. Neuman who goes out personally to first speak with the individual/s involved. If this does not solve the problem, a letter is sent, fines are levied at \$1.00 up to \$100.00 per day. Mr. Neuman stressed that taking the time to talk to most people is sufficient to solve most problems.

Trash ordinance in Decatur Co. mostly deals with cars that are inoperable/unlicensed. They must be covered or removed.

They have no code regarding the amount of land to give to children.

The primary aim in Decatur Co. for the zoning ordinances is to protect farm ground.

Chairman White asked what constitutes a subdivision. 8-10 houses if you dump the parent tract. They do not address cluster subdivisions.

Livestock: over 600 pigs is confinement feeding, over 50-60 cows is confinement feeding. They have no horse ordinance, this is a public health issue.

Mr. Neuman stated that the fewer laws you can make, the better for everyone. County zoning supersedes state ordinances except for utilities.

Signs: no color restrictions. Only business signs require permits. Political or realtor signs are allowed without permits and must be removed in a timely manner.

Fences: no regulations. Usage, not an issue in Decatur Co.

To promote your county to attract industry you must have 3 things: water, sewage, and easy access to a main road.

In asking Mr. Neuman what to avoid in our zoning process, he stated avoid parent tracts. This complicates.

Mobile homes: a double wide is treated the same as a house. Single width mobiles must be in a trailer park. Age requirement on a mobile home is against the law according to Neuman. If a mobile home has already been on a site, it can be replaced, but within 6 months.

Parking and storage of campers & boats, not an issue if reasonable. For example if you have 10 boats, you must be a business.

They have no "hardship" codes. The Decatur County code is online and the address is www.decaturocounty.in.gov.

This was a very fruitful meeting as far as information and guidelines from Mr. Neuman. The next meeting will be held Thursday Mar. 27 at 7PM. The agenda will be to hear Mike Hall from Dearborn County who is the president of the land commission and is a surveyor. The meeting was adjourned promptly at 9 PM.