

CORINNA TOWNSHIP  
MINUTES  
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT / PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

February 3, 2011

1. Call to Order: Chair Charlotte Quiggle called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
2. Roll Call

Board of Adjustment/Planning Commission Members Present: Charlotte Quiggle (Chair); Steve Huff (Vice-Chair); Dan Shay; Larry Smith; Lee Parks

Staff: Ben Oleson, Zoning Administrator; Mary Barkley Brown, Township Clerk/Treasurer;

Others in Attendance: Corinna Town Board Member Richard Naaktgeboren.

3. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda: None.

4. Public Hearings

- a. Zoning Ordinance amendment to Section IX (Zoning Amendments) and X (Permits and Fees)
  - i. Applicant: Corinna Township
  - ii. Purpose: To eliminate possible confusing language regarding the Township evaluation procedure for rezoning requests. To revise the Township Fee Schedule to match with the Wright County Fee Schedule.

Quiggle noted that the Commission had already discussed these proposed changes previously and asked if there were any questions. Oleson noted that the proposed change to the section about zoning amendments was intended to eliminate possible confusion – that the Township did want to provide input to the County during these reviews and the current language makes it appear that the Township may not necessarily want to comment.

A motion was made by Smith, seconded by Parks, to approve the IX, Zoning Ordinance Amendment and X, Permits and Fees. Motion carried unanimously.

- b. Zoning Ordinance amendment to Appendix A, section 716 (Sewage and Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Standards)
  - i. Applicant: Corinna Township
  - ii. Purpose: To adopt regulations affecting subsurface sewage treatment systems as required by the State of Minnesota and Wright County. The amended regulations would be the same as those adopted by Wright County in April, 2010.

The Commission noted that these proposed changes had also been discussed during previous meetings. Quiggle noted that Sean Riley from Wright County had explained previously where the County's SSTS ordinance differed from the state's.

A motion was made by Shay, seconded by Smith, to approve Zoning Ordinance amendment to Appendix A, section 716 (Sewage and Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Standards). Motion carried unanimously.

5. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes
  - a. January 6, 2010

A motion was made by Huff, seconded by Parks, to approve the January 6, 2011 Meeting Minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Zoning Administrator's Report

- a. Permits: One permit has been completed (Johnson basement finish) since last month.
- b. Correspondence: Jim Wurm lot line adjustment is complete. Lease Variance application was withdrawn and Lease's new application was received by Corinna today.
- c. Enforcement Actions: Oleson cited an example of a Variance that was approved 8 years ago for 3 season porch and deck. The question is that since the property owner built the deck, but not the porch, has the Variance expired, or, since the property owner had started to "act on it" is the Variance still valid? Issues like this are not black and white. Oleson asked if the Planning Commission would like to handle these on a case by case basis or just have CGI handle. Oleson feels that Planning Commission should look at these issues on a case by case basis. Planning commission agreed.

Oleson may add the expiration period date warning to the Variance application and the final letter. He may also put into tickler file to remind applicants of approaching deadlines.

7. New Business: None.

8. Old Business

- a. Continued Discussion of Conservation Overlay District Concept

Oleson asked if there were any initial questions the Commission may have about conservation subdivisions after reviewing the documents distributed last month. There were none.

Quiggle: I think conservation subdivisions are good plans, because you can preserve farmland, forest land, and wetland.

Oleson: Should these be mandatory or voluntary? This is a starting point for any community to think about this.

Quiggle: I like mandatory. Other areas have disincentives for “piano key developments”. They get incentives for using a Conservation Overlay. A disincentive may be that you get fewer buildable lots if you do not use a Conservation Subdivision. On the other side, with a Conservation Subdivision you would get more buildable lots, so it makes it more attractive to developers.

Oleson showed overhead photo examples of various developments.

Oleson: Douglas County example: Property owners clustered together and formed an association to care for large open space. This was a CUP. One home only on 60% of the land. They allowed the option of one home on the “open space” parcel as long as the overall density of homes was kept to the maximum. Protected open space is typical in a Conservation Overlay – Alex Township doesn’t require permanent open space. It is more of a “holding area” until development pressures come out that far and the property can be rezoned to allow for more homes. It is not “permanent” open space. Alex Township didn’t want all land tied up in permanent easements, etc.

Quiggle: Conservation Subdivision – open space set aside also considered – owned by an association – but it is also there for the community, especially in the lake area - like a park dedication fee.

Oleson: Usually, the open space owned by an association is not public land.

Quiggle: Trails going around lake - everyone can go through them.

Oleson showed an example of Douglas County Septic Planning that did not go through to completion. This involved a plan to pipe sewage around all the lakes. It would have been so costly to property owners that opposition groups formed and stopped the plan.

Oleson: One philosophy – cluster homes together and then have permanent large open space. Another philosophy prevents high road and service cost for now until they become necessary. Keep density down. Large (2-10 acre) lots make it hard to sewer. Keep low density now and move out in an orderly fashion - permanent open space. Township would have to change the zoning of the land to allow for higher density. Some argue that permanent open space is not very wise, we may regret that later.

Quiggle: I think for us, we would use this more likely around the lakes, rather than an expansion from Annandale

Parks: I don’t think anyone has a problem with clustering houses – it comes down to what are you going to do with open areas? You can’t have kids shooting, etc.

Quiggle: It is either a homeowners’ association or deeded to a conservation group.

Oleson: Or, as in Alexandria Township, it can be owned by an individual and it would just be made clear that no more homes/subdivisions were allowed until zoning was changed. In many cases, a conservation group would have to vote to take ownership – for example – MN Land Trust – they are charged with maintaining it. They may not take it if it does not meet their goals – they would use the money for other priorities. Homeowner’s association

– do they take good care of open space? It really just comes down to how organized and active they are in protecting and maintaining.

Quiggle: If open space was productive farmland – you could lease it to a farmer.

Planning Commission took no action on Conservation Overlay District concept. They directed Oleson to present to the Commission what is proposed in shoreland rules next month. If passed in form they are currently in – may as well get familiar with them.

b. Zoning Administration Update:

Oleson: CGI has made changes to our education courses: We are doing them online, but on demand, rather than having to take the classes at a certain time. E-mails will be coming with log in and password information. Once a month you can watch whenever you want. They are 45 minutes to an hour each.

Other Business:

Nominations were taken for election of Planning Commission Officers. Quiggle nominated Dan Shay for Chair. Nomination was seconded by Huff. Smith nominated Charlotte Quiggle for Chair. Nomination was seconded by Smith.

A motion was made by Huff to close nominations for Chair. Motion was seconded by Smith. Vote to close nominations for Chair carried unanimously. Nominations ceased.

Charlotte Quiggle received a majority of the votes and was named Chair for 2011

Parks nominated Dan Shay for Vice-Chair. Nomination was seconded by Quiggle.

A motion was made by Smith to close nominations for Vice-Chair. Motion was seconded by Huff. Vote to close nominations for Vice-Chair carried unanimously. Nominations ceased.

Dan Shay received a majority of the votes and was named Vice-Chair for 2011.

9. Adjournment

A motion was made by Huff, seconded by Smith, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Barkley Brown