



Town of North Judson Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes

October 17, 2024 – 8:15 AM

The North Judson Town Planning Commission met at the North Judson Town Hall, 310 Lane Street, North Judson, IN on the above date and time with the following present: Planning Commission Members Nick Radtke, Josh Brown, Ken Dolezal, Andrew Rowe; Town Manager Joe Leszek was also able to attend.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Commissioner Brown asked for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Radtke moved to approve the agenda. Clerk-Treasurer Rowe seconded the motion, and all Councilmembers present concurred.

Business:

Semi-Trailers & Containers on Residential Property

Town Manager Leszek stated that they had recently had some complaints about a shipping container over on Bradley Street. He explained that Harry Tolson had attended a Town Council meeting a few months prior in order to ask permission to place the container on his residential property. The Town Attorney informed Mr. Tolson that the containers would not be allowed in Town due to the ordinances in place, but if he was asking for a variance then Mr. Tolson would need to come before the Planning Commission to start that process. Leszek stated that neither himself nor Rowe had heard from him again after the council meeting. They have been receiving several phone calls regarding the shipping container being put on his residential property. Leszek stated that they had reached out to Tolson again to inform him that the container must be moved off the property. Tolson has requested a planning commission hearing to potentially get a variance to keep the container. However, Tolson was not present at the current meeting. Radtke explained that the only way Tolson would be allowed to keep the container is if the commission were to change the zoning of the property to commercial, general business or industrial. Radtke also stated that he did not believe that rezoning the property would be a good idea. Leszek mentioned that Tolson threatened to move the shipping container to Ernie Banks property next to the Irish Pub which is zoned as commercial. He also voiced his opinion about potentially updating the Town's zoning map. Leszek explained that there are several residential properties that are zoned as commercial which will need to be fixed in order to avoid any loopholes.

Patty Collins was present to discuss Tolson's shipping container near her property. Collins stated that Tolson has had several kinds of trailers on his property that are rubbish. She was worried about what this rubbish would do to the value of her own property. Collins explained that several of her neighbors have had junk cars sitting in their yards for well over a year. She stated that it saddens her to see how hard she works

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on the upkeep of her own property. She also brought up the issue of rodents living in the old junk cars which does not help the abundance of cats within the Town. Collins stated that she would like to sell her house and downsize but she was concerned about the value of her property since her neighbors are placing shipping containers in their yards. Rowe stated that Tolson has not taken any steps to convince the council to allow him to place a shipping container on his property. Leszek continued to say that Tolson did ask for the current planning commission meeting, but he happened to not show up. Leszek stated that Tolson could have brought in pictures or letters from his neighbors agreeing to the container to help his cause but so far, he has done nothing. Collins stated that Tolson owns property in the trailer park outside of town limits which made her wonder why he wouldn't have taken the container out there. She also mentioned that he could have bought a few acres outside of town in order to have a place for his shipping container. The Planning Commission agreed to not change the ordinance regarding not allowing shipping containers on residential property, but they agreed that ordinance 54.211 A regarding parking semi-trailer parking would need to be updated. Rowe explained that shipping containers must be in an enclosed building unless there is a special use permit issued. Then he went to explain that the only part of that code that would need to be removed was the part about "without current license plates". Rowe stated that they could potentially add a second part to this code stating that the only thing that can be parked overnight is the semi cab. Leszek stated that they are not too concerned if once in a while truckers had to bring their trailers home overnight as long as the trailer was plated and gone in the morning. He confirmed that they were mostly concerned about people plating these containers and using them for storage indefinitely. He stated that they understood that people sometimes do need semi-trailers for jobs or to temporarily house their belongings then they would be able to request a temporary 6-month permit from the Building Inspector.

Town Manager Leszek stated that there are several residential properties that are currently zoned as commercial. He asked if there was a possibility of getting these properties rezoned to avoid any loopholes with the trailers. Rowe stated that they would need to contact Attorney Schramm to see how other communities handle this kind of curve between residential property near commercial business properties. He recommended taking some time to email other Clerk-Treasurers to see what their policies are for vehicles on certain zoned properties. Rowe also stated that they would look at ordinances from other towns on American Legal Publishing. He stated that the best solution would do their research and have Attorney Schramm draft up a new ordinance. He stated that they would probably need to have a public hearing before any ordinance is passed.

Additional Business Deemed Necessary by the Commissioners:

Radtke wanted to confirm that they would be sending a letter to Tolson stating that the shipping container was to be removed. Leszek confirmed that they are sending a letter out to Tolson. He stated that Tolson was informed about how to correctly go about the contain but he failed to listen to the advice of the Town Council. Rowe mentioned that the commercial properties need to make sure that they even have enough square footage to accommodate for these shipping containers. Rowe explained that they should also include a square footage rule if commercial or industrial properties are wanting to have these containers for storage.

Adjournment

Commissioner Radtke made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Rowe seconded the motion, and all members present concurred.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 A.M.

Attest:


~~John Rowe, Council President~~
~~Josh Brown, Commission President~~


Andrew J. Rowe, Clerk-Treasurer

Next regular scheduled meeting – Tuesday, October 29, 2024, at 8:10 A.M.