

Rutland Charter Township Planning Commission Meeting

Wednesday, March 5, 2025 at 7 pm

Roll Call Members Present:

Larry Haywood, Steve Pachulski, Dan King, Brenda Bellmore, Jennifer Hayes

Others Present:

Jason Watson, Stacey Graham, Kelli Case, Susan Bender, Stephanie Stanton, Lori Blain, Geneva Woodmansee, Kelly Lenz, Nickie Haight

Approval of Agenda:

Motion by Bellmore, seconded by Haywood to approve the March 5, 2025 meeting agenda. Roll Call Vote: Haywood - Yes, Bellmore - Yes, King - Yes, Hayes - Yes, Pachulski - Yes. Motion passes.

Meeting Minutes:

Pachulski would like to clarify from last month's minutes, that Planning Commission members did not ask if they could make a list of businesses they do not want to see in the township. That was just an example that Rebecca Harvey gave of something townships cannot do. Motion by Haywood, seconded by Bellmore to accept the February 5, 2025 Meeting Minutes with one clarification. Roll Call Vote: Haywood - Yes, Bellmore - Yes, King - Yes, Hayes - Yes, Pachulski - Yes. Motion passes.

General Public Comment:

Kelli Case and 3 others are here from Baltimore Township. They are working to start their own planning and zoning department and are here to listen and learn. King says that he will share emails with Kelli and can answer any questions they have. King says, if needed, Baltimore Township can be added to a future RCT PC meeting agenda. King gives Case a quick overview of what a Planning Commission does.

Guests: King asks the public to sign in.

Zoning Administrator's Report:

Graham has included her report in the PC packet. She reminds the PC of the joint meeting with the Rutland Township Board of Trustees on March 31, 2025.

New Business: None

Old Business:

Discussion of Noncommercial Livestock in Country Residential District

PC members discuss a possible ordinance change for allowing small animals and the temporary keeping of 4H animals in CR. They tabled this issue in the past to see how things would go in the City of Hastings. King says there have been a few small issues that were easily handled, but no major problems. He says that not everyone in the city qualifies, they must be far enough from neighbors and have enough land. He explains that city residents have city sewer and water and no drain fields.

The PC members do not want to charge 4H kids \$50 for a permit, they are thinking \$20 would be more appropriate. However, Pachulski wants to make sure Township costs are covered. He asks Graham about how much time her and Zoning Enforcement Officer Argo will have into each permit request. Graham says she will likely spend an hour or less per permit, but Argo may have more time into the enforcement.

Hayes shares that she has done a lot of research on this issue and has always been part of 4H. She is excited to promote some changes to benefit kids, but she feels there are too many questions and issues not addressed in the proposed text amendments. She says RCT must be prepared for problems that could arise from not properly adding needed details to the ordinance. An issue Hayes can see happening is upset neighbors of 4H kids, who cannot have animals even though the neighbor kids can. Often a home will also have multiple children showing 4H animals. The PC discusses lot size, residential zoning districts, animal units and animal welfare.

PC members would like Rebecca Harvey to review the proposed ordinance changes and add her input based on work she has done with other townships. The PC plans to discuss the issue further at the April PC meeting. Members agree it is too late for this year's 4H kids, but there is more than enough time to have an updated ordinance by the end of 2025.

Open Comments:

Dan Lipstraw would like to see the PC keep things simple.

Jason Watson shares that he is the board member that restarted the chicken conversation. But his intent was to discuss chickens for all districts, not just CR. He says the state could come in and tell the local governments that they no longer have a say.

Haywood tells the group from Baltimore Township that he is happy to assist them. He says the first step is to create a Master Plan. King says they should have a variety of residents on their commission.

Adjournment:

Motion by Pachulski, seconded by Bellmore, to adjourn at 8:34 pm

Meeting Adjourned. Submitted by Nickie Haight, Recording Secretary