

**City of Bellefontaine Neighbors  
Planning & Zoning Commission Minutes  
July 8, 2019**

Chairman Wiese called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

Present: Chairman Wiese, Members Duhadway, Barrett, Lane, Alderwoman Dailes, Inspector Raben, City Engineer Klein, Mayor Pierson

Members were asked if there were any changes to the minutes of the P&Z meeting June 10, 2019. A number of clarifications were made:

- Florissant does not levy a \$200 registry fee for rental homes, only an annual \$50 rental fee (not a one-time permit).
- Alderperson Dailes stated Jennings levies a \$300 quarterly fee for vacant rental homes, not \$200. She also stated Jennings collected \$150,000 in the first month from this fee, not over the course of a year.
- For the list of new requirements to be recommended to the BOA by P&Z, including #5 “Attachment, Crime Free Addendum” was confirmed to be one of the requirements.

Motion was made by Barrett to accept the revised minutes, seconded by Lane. Motion passed unanimously.

Bob Russell presented boundary adjustment plans for the Hope Church property at 10636 & 10694 Bellefontaine Road. The reason for doing so is to include a parcel on the north containing a parking lot, making it contiguous with the main parcel. Lane asked about the sign on the property that states, “Future Home of Bellefontaine Acres”. Mr. Russell stated that sign is for a different, unrelated senior housing development adjacent to, but not part of, the parcels in question. He also stated the developer has not even purchased the property yet.

The parcels in the boundary adjustment plan are zoned R-1 Residential. No change in zoning was requested. This is only a change in property line. A motion to recommend approval of the boundary adjustment at 10636 & 10694 Bellefontaine per plans stamped 7-8-2019 was made by Dailes and seconded by Lane. Motion passed unanimously. Russell also stated the surveyors will record the mylar original plan with St. Louis County, per usual practice.

### **Comprehensive Plan Review**

Dailes recommended thinking 30 years down the road, rather than more short term (next 5-10 years).

Wiese stated that, if BJC expanded across I-270 into the 270/367 SW quadrant falling within BFN, healthcare would likely to remain a consistent source of investment for a very long time. It is largely recession-proof. Barrett pointed out that BJC still has about 43 undeveloped acres contiguous with Christian Hospital now. He also put forth suggestions that other businesses could be located in that quadrant including an Urgent Care, retail, a gas station to draw in Illinois drivers on their way home and other retail opportunities that could reduce the amount of travel BFN residents now have to do to purchase goods other than groceries and those not available in dollar stores.

Lane stated that two-bedroom homes could be marketed to seniors. Raben stated that some owners of rental homes prefer older renters over younger renters. Dailes stated that Jennings has a waiting list for seniors wanting to move in.

Opportunity Zones was brought up by a member of the audience to connect with developers to build villas.

A member of the audience was wanting to put one or more commercial businesses in 10236 Cabot Drive, a commercial building. She said she was directed by someone at the Rec Center to attend that evening’s P&Z meeting to request approval. P&Z members apologized to the member for misdirection, that she had to submit a letter of intent to the Building Department first. The letter would also include description of the business(es) intended, hours and number of staff. If the use conforms to its C-1 Commercial zoning, P&Z can approve but it can also go directly to (appropriate ward?) BOA member the next morning to bring the letter to the Building Department. **(Joe Raben – Please verify or correct statement)**

Dailes stated that allowed exceptions to out-of-compliance violations help degrade the surrounding community. She gave the example of allowing wood covering a broken window at the commercial building at Jennings & 367, encouraging others to flout the law.

Wiese discussed opportunity zones; he said he personally didn’t care for them, but they’ve become a fact of life for attracting investment. He gave the example of World Wide Technologies recent expansions in Edwardsville IL& West Port Plaza

Inspector Raben said some owners play the existing system. Owners who don’t pay property tax for a period of 3 years can lose their home. Some owners will pay 1 year’s taxes in December to stay under the 3-year rule.

Raben also stated townhomes or villas could be interspersed with single-family residences.

Engineer Klein stated enforcing building codes will only help - and not dissuade - developers who look at the condition of neighborhoods before investing.

Lane brought up the fact that some new residents may not know what others take for granted - stated "You don't know what you don't know". They've never lived in a single-family home before or may have come from a distressed area. She gave an example of 10541 Bellefontaine having clippings in their front yard. Raben attempted to contact the resident at the home, which had cars in the driveway. There was no answer and he left a notice of violation stating they had two weeks to address the issue. Two weeks passed and they were taken to court. He said in so many cases, the violator will get a continuance in court (a lengthy process) and essentially wait out authorities.

Concerning fines for vacant property, a member of the audience stated that a distinction should be made between **vacant and derelict properties**. Barrett agreed citing a well-maintained home on his street that appeared to be vacant for 1.5 years yet looked lived-in based on appearance.

Dailes said she attended a function where Jake Zimmerman, St. County Assessor, was speaking. He noted that some LLC's or REIT's will buy up every home in a block then use lawyers to negotiate down appraisals, over protracted periods, to reduce real estate taxes for their client. This was another example of gaming the system for personal gain.

Klein suggested possibility of requiring a security deposit for rental property.

Raben stated some owners can game system & outlast the City's enforcement efforts. Building Department has limited means of enforcement.

Lane stated that 10541 Bellefontaine still looks derelict, with 6 cars in the driveway.

Klein suggested **making Owner & Renter both responsible** for cutting grass & other infractions that are now only the responsibility of the Renter. In the end, the property owner is responsible (to the City) but Lease agreement may defer that task to their tenant.

Lane stated that some new owners may have never had grass to cut before. She suggested new owners be shown a video as part of obtaining an occupancy permit. Dailes said we can't do that legally. She suggested the Owner, not Manager, of rental property must sign occupancy permit requirements.

Klein stated Owners should be responsible, no matter what.

Dailes wanted to give Owners & Lessees a list or documents outlining residency Dos & Don'ts.

An audience member stated Ballwin has strong requirements for Owners. Any warning letters go to both Owners & Renters.

Another audience member stated she would like a coffee shop or other retail to move into the City but, more importantly, the City should be a place of safe & well-maintained property.

Dailes will list ordinances & nuisances for an information sheet to be given to new Owners/Occupants.

Member Duhadway made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Barrett. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35.

A post-meeting observation was made by Duhadway. He stated that property violations used to be delivered by a member of the Police. They would be tabulated by the Building department, including any observations by members of the Police department. This was a practice from 20 or more years ago that was stopped at some point. Duhadway said he would ask around to find out when and/or why the practice had changed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pat Barrett