

Board Approves Rezoning Of Three Separate Parcels

The Bedford Township Board approved the rezoning of three township properties Tuesday night to change them from residential to commercial parcels.

Applications were submitted by the property owners to change the status of their grounds from R-3, single family home property, to C-3, general commercial zoning.

One of the properties, 8493 Secor Rd. in Lambertville, is approximately one acre in size, and is owned by Louis Gorr Jr. of Brooklyn, Mich. The east 241 feet of the property already is designated for C-3 use, while the remainder had been residential, as a result of a split zoning from a 1977 zoning ordinance. The application sought to make the entire property commercial zoning.

Another property, 6465 Lewis Ave., is co-owned by Temperance residents Jim and Alice Askins and Ron and Dianne Hubbard. It is 1.93 acres located at the southwest corner of Smith Rd. and Lewis Ave.

Each of the first two parcels was approved for rezoning with unanimous votes.

The third property also is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Askins and is approximately 14 acres on Lewis Ave. south of Smith Rd. Five acres of the land already were C-3 zoned before the vote. Roughly 1.5 acres, where a home is located, were asked to be excluded, as well as the 5 acres already zoned for C-3, leaving approximately eight acres with 550 feet of frontage to be considered for rezoning. The board approved the application 5-2, with Trustee Larry O'Dell and Clerk Trudy Hershberger voting against the rezoning.

"I don't have a problem with the zoning being commercial," Mr. O'Dell said. "It's the ability that we may lack ... to protect certain individuals in which we're limited. Somebody has to be there to protect those that cannot protect themselves."

No specific businesses were mentioned as being targeted or brought in because of the rezoning.

Several Bedford residents also addressed the board during the public comment time of the meeting. Steve Lennex of Lambertville, a commercial real estate broker, spoke in support of the zoning approvals.

Jim Duggan is a resident of a nearby property and spoke against the rezoning approval. "We have an abundance of C-3 development already in Bedford Township. The majority of it on Lewis Ave. remains unsold."

Mr. Duggan also addressed what he perceived as a lack of consideration for nearby residents on the part of the Bedford Township Planning Commission and the Monroe County Planning Commission. Both groups recommended the approval for rezoning to the board.

"The people who live on Smith Rd. have lived there for decades. They had (an) expectation of the quiet enjoyment of their parcels," Mr. Duggan said. "The pecuniary interests of the applicants are not a consideration in assessing zoning — it's the public health, welfare and safety, the impact on the community, and how these things affect the surrounding land owners."

Mr. and Mrs. Askins and Mr. Hubbard were in attendance during the meeting, and Mr. Hubbard spoke on behalf of himself and the Askinses before the votes.

"Lewis Ave. is five lanes from the state line for approximately 2 miles to the north," he said. "It was meant to be a commercial corridor coming into Bedford from Toledo. There are ordinances already in place that would prohibit less desirable businesses from occupying this property without the township's special approval."

Township Supervisor Greg Stewart echoed some of the supporting points for approving the rezoning.

"Quite frankly, it was a long time ago that Lewis Ave. was designated as a commercial corridor," Mr. Stewart said. "It was made for commerce. My concern ... is if there was a corruption of the master plan, that it was put in for residential without a buffer."

Trustee Paul Pirrone serves as the board's liaison to the township planning commission and spoke about the difficulty in making rezoning decisions.

"I want to thank all of the people who came out and spoke tonight about the zoning issue," he said. "Their voices don't go unheard. When, or if, commercial planning does come into effect for that property, we will keep them in consideration. We're out for the residents."