

Builder questions Walnut Township zoning decisions

Editor:

This letter is about a recent decision by the Walnut Township Board of Zoning Appeals, where by a 2 to 2 vote the board rejected a lot split for the infamous judge's lot on North Bank Road. The lot has 98 feet of lake frontage and 100 feet of road frontage.

The new owners wanted to split the lot into two, each having 49 feet of lake frontage and 50 feet of road frontage. Their contention was that if you go 20 or so lots on either side of their's, the lots are all about this size. Some lots are slightly, some slightly bigger. No precedent would have been set because it is the only lot in the area that is approximately double in size and many of the other lots have less than 50 feet of frontage. They were, in effect, asking to be treated the same as everyone else in the neighborhood, not differently.

The neighbors on both sides of this lot, in their words, vehemently opposed the split, claiming their property values would go down. I suppose it's possible...they say there is a first time for everything. The neighbors also claimed that when they bought their properties in 1983, one of the things that enticed them to buy was that there was a large lot next to them that couldn't be split. If that is true, then they showed some uncanny foresight in 1983 to inquire as to where 24 years later if their neighbor's lot could be split if the house on it was torn down or (burned down).

The reason given for the two "no" votes was that they didn't think they should go below the 50 foot standard. What is curious about this decision is

that a few months ago this same board allowed Dyanni Homes to build a staircase on a new house in the five foot side yard setback. In this case, the homeowner and builder were told twice by the zoning inspector to halt construction of the staircase and to apply for a variance. When they ignored the order twice, inexplicably he zoning inspector reversed his ruling to allow the stairs to be built. The Board of Zoning Appeals backed up this new ruling stating that North Bank is a unique place and some leeway should be given because of the special circumstances there. In this case a precedent was set that will adversely affect dozens of new homes and their neighbors in the future.

Also, curiously, this decision was rendered shortly after Morgan Builders, your's truly, was specifically told by the same zoning inspector that he could not build an outside staircase in the five foot setback. Is it special circumstances on North Bank or just special treatment?

So, there is a solution for the people trying to split their lot. Hire Dyanni Homes to do our work. I'm sure the zoning inspector and Board of Appeals will reverse their decision in an effort to be consistent. However, I offer a word of caution with this advice. When you begin construction, your contractor might need to be reminded that the bank along one side of the property is actually a dam with a big lake on the other side.

If anyone would care to dispute my account of what happened, be my guest. Most of it is a matter of public record.

Jim Morgan
North Bank

It's about common sense and integrity, not college degrees

Editor:

It's called musical chairs! In Buckeye Lake, if you don't want to do the right thing and actually run for re-election, all you have to do is jump into another unexpired term. Council President Charlene Hayden and the majority of council should be ashamed of themselves. At this week's meeting, Jim Bartoe, Drew Bourne, Hilde Hildebrandt and Shelly Schwartz all voted to appoint Hayden to John Cortez's vacated council seat. Hayden's two-year term would have expired at the end of the year. Jeryne Peterson was the ONLY council member to vote "no."

Both Schwartz and Peterson told council they received numerous phone calls opposing the move, including calls from council members from other municipalities. Schwartz said, "I got a lot of calls and they said it wasn't illegal, but it was immoral." The correct term would be "undemocratic" and probably bordering on "unethical". Apparently, Schwartz isn't persuaded by public opinion, even when she gets personal calls. Unfortunately, most of these jokesters will be re-elected because not enough candidates stepped forward to run against them. I can understand why. Who wants to serve with this group?

Council member Hildebrandt's Sept. 8 letter in the *Beacon* claims, "We are all business people with very good credentials and college degrees." Hilde, what good is that? As much as I value my OSU degree, I appreciate much more the old

fashioned COMMON SENSE and integrity my parents instilled in me! Where is the common sense and integrity on village council? That's what most people value! They could care less if you're a college graduate! And you certainly don't need a college degree to have common sense and integrity.

With all your "financial expertise" and since you're so much better educated than the rest of us, why is the village currently suffering such a financial crisis? As Chair of the Finance Committee for the last several years, where's your leadership and ideas for alternative revenue and cost-cutting measures? I haven't seen anything of value. In fact, you have contributed to the deficit.

When I was still on council, I sat through months of your special finance meetings to discuss how we could cut costs. The department heads offered suggestions and we identified how to reduce costs in the police department. Instead of following through with the recommendations, you delayed any changes until the following year which only compounded the problem. In addition, you supported the expansion of the police department which reduced the village's rental income! And just this year, you second-guessed that decision, questioning if it was the right thing to do after remodeling was already completed and the revenue was long gone! How did your college degree and your "very good credentials" help us there?

Once again, I'm sure you're "sad-



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Letters to the Editor

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dened ... to see another scathing letter." Not as sad as I am that our council can't seem to get their act together and do the right thing.

Here's what council members don't get: How do you expect us to have faith in your leadership to bring us water when you can't even conduct a council appointment with due diligence and dignity!!! God help this village because we're certainly not getting any leadership at the local level!

Your biggest problem is your unwillingness to accept responsibility for your

own decisions. Instead, you'd rather blame the *Beacon* or those of us who choose to exercise our freedom of speech. You want "credit for trying to make this a better community," but your methods are overshadowing your intentions. Stop playing musical chairs; find some strength of character and get down to business!!! Only then, will we "appreciate" your efforts.

Peggy Wells
Buckeye Lake

Writer says council needs to get something done

Editor:

Last week's letter from Buckeye Lake Council member Hildi Hildebrandt was a joke. Now I know we live in Mayberry RFD.

I'm sure all the bobbleheads agreed to let Charlene Hayden extend her term without a vote by taking over the rest of John Cortez's term. I would like to know why she fears letting voters decide whether she continues on council or not.

Charlene has been on council about four years already and has faced voters only once, two years ago. She was appointed to take Jack Fisk's position when he became too sick to serve. So now she'll have about six years on council, but only had to run once.

Hildi asks that we give council credit for trying to make this a better community. What have you done? The yellow house on Union Avenue that is literally falling down is still there. I still see tall grass, weeds and shacks all over the village. And we still don't have water.

So now I read that council is talking to Millersport about water. Is that because elections are coming up? Could be.

I know who I'm voting for in November - Gomer Pyle. Oh yeah, he's not running. So I guess, I won't be voting for anyone for council. But I know I will vote "no" on any village levies.

Brenda Hileman
Buckeye Lake

Your Letters are welcome!