

New committee to decide future of zoning ordinances

■ The township board has established a new committee made up of residents, officials and members of the business community to work on a compromise to the commercial development ordinances.

By **JOE NOVAK**
Bedford Now

A group of area residents, members of the business community and township officials will take another crack at putting together commercial development ordinances everyone in Bedford Township can live with.

After months of protest, the Bedford Township Board agreed to form a new committee and start the process over at its May 20 meeting.

Township Supervisor LaMar Frederick and Trustee Joyce Hagen will give up their seats on the committee to make room for others to join in the discussion. Township Trustee Med Barr and Bedford Township Treasurer Sherri Meyer will sit on the new committee. Members of the Bedford Industrial and Commercial Association (BICA), Bedford Business Association and two area residents also have been invited to participate.

Trustee Dennis Steinman sought to repeal the ordinances at the meeting, but his motion died when it didn't receive a second.

The three ordinances — passed in August — govern the way new and existing businesses landscape and light their property as well as build signs. Some members of the local business community, particularly those in BICA, have criticized the ordinances as too restrictive.

Trustee Arnold Jennings called for the process of setting up the ordinances to begin again.

"I think everybody in this room probably agrees that the ordinances, in their present form, need some work. We're a big enough community that we do need guidelines, we do need standards," Jennings said. "I would think that with the right group of people, that within 30 or 45 days, that select group of people would be able to come up with a compromise."

While others called for repealing or restructuring the ordinances, Bedford Planning Commission member Michael Minges defended the ordinances, saying it wasn't about them being too restrictive, it is about business owners not wanting to spend any money.

"It's about greed," Minges said. "They want to open Bedford to unbridled and unfettered construction. They want to exploit Bedford, our home."

The board and, in many regards, the community have been divided by this issue, Jennings said.

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"This whole thing is driving a wedge between people in Bedford Township, and that's not why people choose to live in Bedford Township," Jennings said. "There is no reason why we can't come up with something (that everyone can agree on)."

While Jennings called for a review of the ordinances, Hagen, who has worked on the ordinances nearly since their inception, said their failure was not the fault of the township government, but rather members of the business community who have protested so vehemently.

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township trustee

been under attack since the day they were adopted," Hagen said. "We would be willing to work with you, but you are not willing to work with us."