

# Motion to repeal Bedford zoning ordinances fails

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BEDFORD TOWNSHIP – A motion by Trustee Dennis Steinman to repeal the township's new light, landscaping and architectural ordinances found no second and died before even coming to the floor for discussion.

But trustees and residents alike had plenty to say about the ordinances and the current state of conflict between the township officials and the business community.

Mr. Steinman made good on a promise he made at the board's April 15 meeting that he would attempt to repeal the ordinances if sufficient progress to amend those ordinances wasn't made.

Many businesses owners have been critical of the new ordinances, citing the restrictions in building size, lighting and landscaping requirements as being unfair and effectively suffocating commercial development in the township.

Mr. Frederick told the board in April that he and other township officials, including Trustee Joyce Hagen, had been meeting with business owners and had reached tentative compromises for amendments to the light and landscape ordinances, but that both sides were stuck on the aspects of the new architectural code.

"These ordinances have been under attack since the day they were adopted," said Mrs. Hagen, who spent time Tuesday recounting a timeline of events that took place during the 14-month process it took to create the ordinances before the board approved them on Aug. 20. "These ordinances were adopted in the proper way.

"If you did not come to the meetings it was not because it was not published...they were not done in secret. We would be willing to work with you, but you have not been willing to work with us," she said.

After more than an hour of discussion by township officials and the failed attempt to sack the ordinances, the board voted to create a new committee to discuss what changes might be made to the architectural design ordinance.

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— Arnold Jennings,  
Bedford Township trustee

Trustee Arnold Jennings suggested that a change of faces in a smaller setting might be beneficial to all.

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

Trustee Med Barr and township Treasurer Sherri Meyer were selected to represent the board on the new committee, which is set to include two representatives from Bedford Industrial and Commercial Association (BICA), two from the Bedford Business Association (BBA) and two at-large citizen representatives.

Phil Swy, a founding member of BICA who was asked by the board to sit on the committee, said the interests of both Bedford Township's residents and businesses need to be protected.

"I can tell you that in my business, we are working hard every day just to hang on and stay in business," he said. "I believe fully that Bedford has gotten way too big to operate without guidelines. We need guidelines and we understand that, but we need responsible, sensible guidelines put together by the community, not by a handful of people with their own agenda.

"We can have some results that are positive for everybody, but we need to get real serious real quick about what we are going to do with these ordinances. They are tearing this community apart."