

Geneva Township
Comprehensive Plan Public Meeting
August 21, 2025
6:00 PM

Public Meeting for the Comprehensive plan was opened at 6:08 pm. This is the final meeting for public input on comprehensive plans. Tiffany Miller led the comprehensive plan meeting.

Comprehensive Plan Overview

- The comprehensive plan is complete but still open to public input.
- The plan has been in development for at least 10 months.
- The comprehensive plan allows the township to be able to get grant funding.
- The plan can change and adjust, but this is where we are right now.

Committee Members

- The advisory committee included: Paul, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Raymond, Jesse Spurlock, Mr. Gala, Mr. Andrus, Mr. Glassy Woo, Mahalik, Amanda Briggs, Mr. Pruden Pauler, and Mr. K.

Plan Development

- Phase one involved assessment and meetings with stakeholders and business owners.
- The document is 68 pages long.
- Asheville County had a plan where they started it, their update in 2020, but they did their final adoption in 2022.

Key Considerations

- Existing conditions: population, housing stock, income, and employment.
- Maintaining rural character is a priority.
- Environment: wetlands, watersheds, lakefront, and groundwater resources.
- Mapping: updating and digitalizing maps for wetlands, FEMA zones, coastal management, and soil suitability for septic systems.
- Current land use: agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional.
- Current zoning is being updated.
- Facilities: fire station, township hall, cemeteries, and school.
- Police protection, fire, and EMS.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

- Strengths: library, Lake Erie open space, people, and community.
- Weaknesses: activities for kids, winter month activities, zoning enforcement, minimal tax revenue, and utilities.
- Opportunities: 534 corridor and metro parks.

- Threats: short-term rentals.

Vision and Goals

- Vision: "Geneva Township is a close knit community where our small town, nature and rural character are celebrated."
- Goals in land use: maintain or complement existing development patterns with an emphasis on large lot, residential and open space preservation.
- Goals in housing: focus on maintaining the existing high quality housing stock and address property maintenance issues. Promote new housing construction that matches the community's predominantly low density residential character.
- Goals in economic development: look at sustainable fostering a sustainable economy by exploring and pursuing development opportunities with an emphasis on tourism.
- Goals in transportation: expand more mobility opportunities, addressing transportation network concerns while fostering safe multimodal options with an emphasis on connectivity.
- Goals in services: providing high quality services to residents, leveraging our existing facilities and partnerships like with FIRE to provide Essential services.
- Goals in community character: maintain and preserve Geneva Township's unique community character and identity and the natural and historic resources and traditions that make us special here in the township.

Land Use Planning and Zoning

- Educating township and board members.
- Updating zoning tax to make it easier for people to use.
- Updating and digitizing zoning maps for public access.
- Looking at medium and higher density mixed use on the 534 corridor and Route 20.

Action Plan

- Includes time frame, cost, priority, and potential partnerships for township projects.
- Collaborative work is essential for getting things done.
- Transportation plan involves collaboration with the city of Geneva and Harpersfield.

Availability of Information

- The plan is available, possibly via email or on the website.
- A hard copy was offered to someone in attendance.

Zoning Enforcement Issues

- Current zoning enforcement is lacking due to the Ohio Revised Code.
 - "There's not a lot of teeth in a high revised code".
- The prosecutor's office prioritizes zoning violations low.
- Partnering with Geneva on the Lake is being explored to have their officer serve the township 30-40 hours a week.

- This officer could cite people into mayor's court.
- The goal is to have a dedicated officer who can address zoning issues and noise complaints.
- The sheriff's office only enforces the Ohio Revised Code, not local zoning.

Potential Agreement with Geneva on the Lake

- The agreement could provide income for Geneva on the Lake through fines.
- The officer's duties could include both code enforcement and patrolling.
- The officer could address issues like speeding and junk removal.
- The township is financially stable and can afford the cost.

Enforcement Issues and Solutions

- The speaker suggests a board displaying disorderly conduct, noise complaints, junk issues, and speeding incidents to increase awareness and encourage input.
- Enforcement has been a long-standing problem, with prosecutors not always making it easy to cite violations under zoning regulations.
- The process for addressing violations like building without a permit involves filing an affidavit with the county, which is a lengthy process that the courts often don't prioritize.
- Geneva-on-the-Lake's codes are more stringent and align better with the township's needs, and they are enthusiastic about having someone to help them.

Fines and Costs

- Fines could potentially offset the costs of township services, but the township is willing to absorb those costs.
- Geneva-on-the-Lake might be open to giving the township a percentage of the fines collected.
- The lack of enforcement has led to issues like junk cars, with one case involving a property owner who repeatedly transferred ownership to avoid responsibility.

Ordinance and Revised Code

- Cities and villages have ordinances that are easier to enforce, while the township must rely on the revised code, which can be inconsistent.
- Moving junk from one part of a property to another requires restarting the paperwork process.
- One family moves junk between the township and the city to avoid enforcement, staying one step ahead of authorities.

Zoning Map and Priorities

- The zoning map is being updated and will include various digital maps for road classifications and wetlands.
- The township's priorities include updating zoning and the transportation plan to secure grant money.
- The speaker wants to avoid the plan "just goes on the shelf."

Transportation Plan

- The transportation plan aims to secure grant funding and have a say in projects like the Maple and 534 intersection.
- The plan will address intersection safety, road paving, and maintenance.
- Ashtabula Township is the only township that helps with Ashtabula County Transportation System.

Axe Expansion

- Axe is willing to put a route in Geneva and has been trying to get money from Conneaut for years.
- The director of JFS is on board to potentially get a bus route.
- It costs between \$30,000 to \$40,000 to get a route.
- Axe is willing to expand if the township can find some money.

Bus Route Details

- The bus route system includes Main Avenue, the hospitals, Bridge Street, and the mall.
- Currently, only Ashfield Township contributes financially.
- ODOT pays for Axe, with county commissioners contributing a small percentage.
- There is a possibility of having a bus come somewhere every day, Monday through Friday, from 8 AM to 4 PM if additional funding can be secured.

Grant Writing Assistance

- CT is willing to write grants for the township for more complicated projects.
- Bob Russell, a former trustee, has also offered to assist with grant writing at a cost.
- The township does not have access to Grant Station, an online platform that could be obtained at a discount through Tech Soup.
- Grants.gov can also send emails about upcoming grants.

Grant Limitations and Opportunities

- The township is limited in what it can apply for, but the transportation plan could open up more opportunities.
- Road grants are difficult for the township to obtain because they don't score high enough.
- The comprehensive plan will take about a year, but it will give the township more points and make them eligible for more grants.
- Partnering with other entities, such as Geneva on the Lake, can also increase the chances of getting a grant.

OPWC Grants and Loan

- The township has experience with OPWC grants and loans, often working with the county and other entities.

- They have three OPWC loans, with two having been paid off this year.
- Grants can sometimes be extended beyond a year if needed.
- The township needs to start paving roads instead of just chip and sealing.

Road Projects and Funding

- The township wants to reconstruct Walter Rain Road due to damage from the city's project.
- They plan to apply for an OPWC grant for this project next year, with potential funding in 2027.
- The city is not willing to provide any funding for the road damage.
- The township is waiting for Route 20 to be completed before proceeding with certain road projects.

Comprehensive Plan and Public Input

- The comprehensive plan has not yet been submitted to the county entities.
- The current meeting serves as a public input day for the plan.

Comprehensive Plan Approval

- A motion was made to wait until the following meeting to approve the comprehensive plan, giving people more time to review it.
- The plan is to download the plan to the website for more public comments.
- The township needs to approve the plan before the final maps are made.

Zoning Issue

- A property reverted back to residential because it was closed for over a year.
 - To do business there, one would need to buy the property and apply for a conditional use permit, with no guarantee of approval.
- Trustees can request to change zoning for certain parcels to "commercial flex," allowing for residential or light industrial use.

Route 20 and 534

- The goal is to encourage business and economic growth along the 534 and Route 20 corridors.
- Along Route 20, properties have 500 feet of commercial zoning from the center of the road, then transition to residential.
- A 94-acre property for sale on Route 20 is currently zoned agriculture, but has commercial zoning 500 feet deep.
 - The comprehensive plan designates the property as "commercial flex," allowing for residential or commercial use.

Previous Owner

- The previous owner had a sign that said "94 acres for 360,000."
- It was like the game show *The Price is Right*.

534 Corridor

- Someone was trying to figure out the 534 corridor.
- The speaker is not concerned about it.

Maps

- There are some maps included in the packet.
- It's going to be hard to see without the color because it's small.
 - The township is small.
- If it's online, it will be easier to see on a computer.
- The speaker will give a colored map to Willie.

Auction

- The speaker saw one of Willie's best friends at the auction.
- The speaker joked that Willie doesn't need any more junk.

Conclusion

- The speaker thanked everyone for the questions.
- Hopefully, there will be no public meeting.
- At 7, they will...

Motion by Tiffany Miller second my David McGrath that there being no further business the special meeting adjourned at 4:16 PM.

Recorded and documented by Tammy Caya

Fiscal Officer