

Planning and Zoning

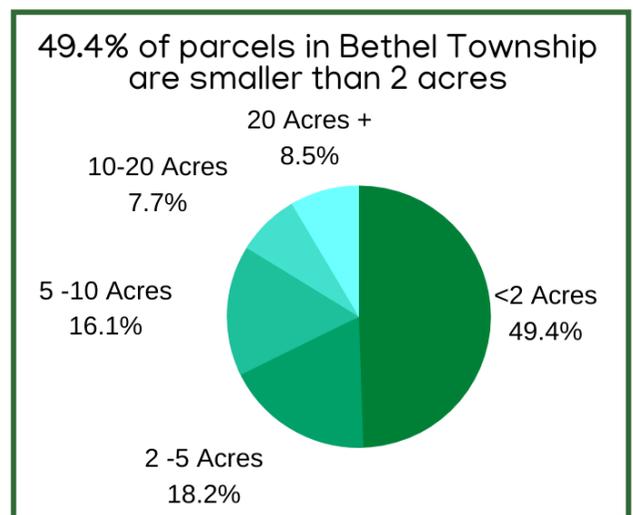
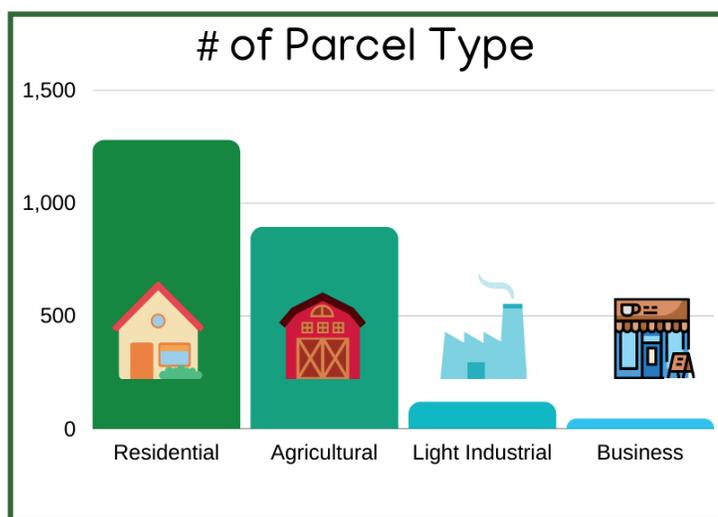
Zoning in Bethel Township started in the 1950's. As you can see from the almost page and a half of zoning certificates, variances and rezoning cases in this newsletter, the planning and zoning department is busy. The earliest zoning code we have a complete record of is from 1973. Contrary to popular opinion, only the land owner can initiate a change to their current zoning.

A common misconception among many residents is that Bethel Township has had a 5 acre minimum lot size. This is simply not true. What is true is that in 1981, the trustees changed the A1 (domestic agriculture) minimum lot size from 2 acres to 5 acres. This may be the source of the 5 acre myth. The trustees have steadily increased the R1AAA minimum lot size from 0.717 acres and 150 minimum feet of road frontage in 1973 to the current 2 acres (or 1 acre if sewer and water are available) and a minimum 175 minimum road frontage. If you have any additional questions, please contact a trustee or the township offices. Our current zoning code is available online at the link below.

Bethel Township Zoning Code Updates since 1973

	Residence District		Domestic Agriculture		General Agriculture	
	Min Size	Min Width	Min Size	Min Width	Min Size	Min Width
1973	0.717 acres	150 feet	2 acres	175 feet	N/A	N/A
1981-1998	0.717 acres	125 feet	5 acres	175 feet	10 acres	175 feet
1998-2007	0.717 acres	125 feet	5 acres	175 feet	20 acres	175 feet
2007-2009	2 acres	175 feet	5 acres	175 feet	20 acres	175 feet
	1 acre w/ central sewer 0.717 acre w/ sewer					
2009-current	2 acres	175 feet	5 acres	175 feet	20 acres	175 feet
	1 acre w/ sewer					

You can find the entire Bethel Zoning Code at www.betheltownship.org/zoning. The Township has two separate zoning boards, each made up of 5 members and 2 alternates, that make decisions on zoning cases in the township. The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) hears cases that are asking for a variance to the zoning code—such as an additional out building, or a smaller setback. The Zoning Commission hears cases about rezoning a parcel. The Trustees do not vote on BZA cases, but they do vote on ZC cases.



Source: Miami County Auditor, January 2019

Fire Department COVID-19 Response

From day one the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic were felt within the Bethel Township Fire Department. The immediate challenge was to keep our citizens and our first responders safe while still dealing with our normal calls for service. Special measures were put in place to help with this. There was an enormous amount of information flowing in from the local hospitals, health districts, local and state government, and many others. The command staff of the fire department held a meeting to sift through the information and form a strategy. It was decided that we would go with the highest levels of recommendations, in an effort to protect our citizens and our staff. For our strategy, N-95 masks, gloves, and eye protection are to be worn by our staff on all EMS calls as well surgical masks on the patients. The township had a sufficient supply on N-95 masks but we were in need of surgical masks. We contacted Amazon, became an essential provider and ordered additional surgical masks through them.

In addition to the precautions taken on calls, extra attention was given to the firehouse and medic units. Our fire and EMS operations are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week with on station crews. All our firefighters work at other fire stations as well, thus there is no way to completely isolate our crews. Once a week, all areas in the firehouse/ administration building and the medic units are commercially “fogged” with a solution that is extremely effective in eliminating the corona virus. We also spray the medic units with a disinfectant similar to the fogging solution after a call with a suspected exposure.

We would also like to thank Indian Creek Distillery and Midwest Commercial Services from supplying us with hand sanitizer, as we experienced the same shortages that everyone else did.



Fire & EMS YTD:

EMS: YTD: 391 July—September: 120

Fire: YTD: 79 July—September: 20

\$3,000

The cost of one set of turnout gear. A fire department needs one for each firefighter. The NFPA requires this gear be replaced every 10 years.

Water Safety

Bethel Township has some tremendous natural features. One of the biggest is the Great Miami River which is the western border of our Township. This river is generally a peaceful and enjoyable resource that flows gently through the Township. However, during periods of high water this quiet resource can become a raging and dangerous place. Recently a tragedy occurred on the river that resulted in the death due a boating accident. Poor river conditions were a direct cause of the incident. Before you decide to venture out onto the river please take the following safety measures.



Wear appropriate life jackets: This is the number one suggestion. No matter how good a swimmer you may be; currents, obstructions and debris can overcome you quickly. “LIFE” jackets are aptly named because they can be your only defense in a water related life or death situation.



Know the conditions and your capabilities: Heavy rains north of us can drastically affect the conditions locally even with fair weather here. During the recent rescue attempt, the river rose and crested at seven and a half (7 ½) feet above normal within about a 12 hour period. The rescue boats that were used during the events had a difficult time navigating the current. Small boats with trolling motors have little chance of navigating properly in this environment.



Have a plan: Know the various take out and put in areas in the area. Have a plan in place if things go wrong. Know where bridges and access points are along the route. Most of the river is heavily wooded or have steep banks that are virtually inaccessible. Let someone know that you are on the river, before you start.