



Members of the public made comments disputing some of those numbers.

Benton Benalcazar, three attorneys, and architect Todd Faris fielded questions from the trustees at the three-hour meeting, which featured a public hearing where people living near the site expressed their opinions. Most said they were in favor of reasonable development, but felt the Ravines at Hoover was too much.

“You will be dropping a nuclear bomb on this township,” one woman said. “You may as well annex into Westerville.”

Others were concerned with water drainage; retention ponds and safety; erosion and Hoover’s water quality; fences, trees and mounding; appearance and traffic; and the loss of wildlife.

Benalcazar said the land was and is being used for farming. Attorneys said some of the barns on the site were likely not salvageable. Signs had been put up saying the land was going to be used for a pig farm. Some residents saw this as a threat, and a few said they preferred to have people instead of pigs as their neighbors. One resident suggested a third option — having the township purchase the property and establish a nature preserve.

The main issue residents complained about was the housing density. The zoning commission said the Ravines at Hoover exceeded the up to 1.35 home per acre density as stated in the township’s Comprehensive Plan for Planning Area 4. However, the township’s zoning resolution said the maximum density is up to 2.2 homes.

“The net developable density shall be 1.89 dwelling units per (net developable) acre,” the application text reads. “This development incorporates conservation development standards and does not exceed maximum density.”

The attorneys made the argument that the zoning resolution trumped the Comprehensive Plan, and that they were being held to a higher standard than other nearby housing developments.

Trustee Chair Connie Goodman and Karl Gebhardt voted in favor, and Frank Dantonio was opposed. Each explained their vote.

“As an elected official and a Genoa trustee, it is my view to represent Genoa taxpayers in a manner that is consistent with the United States Constitution, the Ohio Constitution, the Ohio Revised Code, and equally important, the Genoa Zoning Resolution and Genoa Comprehensive Plan, and I believe the applicant is in direct violation of the zoning resolution and Comprehensive Plan,” Dantonio said. “It is unfortunate that my fellow trustees do not share my position, and I disagree with all of the findings of fact and conclusion.”

"I believe we have complied with the zoning resolution, which is the law," Goodman said. "I know there's disagreement with the findings of fact, but I want each person to understand ... I looked and looked, and there were no divergences on this application. It fits the letter of law as presented by our zoning code. Our own county prosecutor and Brosius Johnson and Griggs said the zoning code takes precedence over the Comprehensive Plan, and that's what we need to go by."

"For the most part, I agree with Mr. Dantonio and as such ... knowingly going against what I've been advised by counsel on two different occasions would be misfeasance," Gebhardt said. "So, in the interest of all of the residents, putting the township in jeopardy of another lawsuit ... is not what I was elected to do."

Residents openly questioned what was the point of having a zoning commission if their recommendations were not followed by the trustees. Gebhardt said the commission wasn't properly doing its job properly, which included having the zoning resolution and Comprehensive Plan language in agreement.

"I know this is not a popular decision," Gebhardt said. "This also shows that we have got to get the zoning resolution harmonized ... We cannot continue down this path."

"This meeting is a sham!," one person said as some residents angrily left while the vote was in progress. Another said, "I'm not surprised." Some of the people signed a petition for a referendum as they left the township hall.