

# Village of Morristown



## Frequently Asked Questions about Zoning

As the village continues to review the proposed zoning ordinance, we have compiled the most frequently asked questions for you. Residents who still have questions may write or call the village office at 740-782-1551. The proposed ordinance can be found on the village's website at [www.morristownohio.org](http://www.morristownohio.org)

### **What is Zoning?**

Zoning is a planning tool used by local governments. The primary purpose for zoning is to provide for economic development. The proposed ordinance for Morristown will guide and manage future growth and development and protect the property you have now. It only affects new development. *What currently exists will not change as a result of zoning.*

### **Why does Morristown need zoning?**

Village leaders have the responsibility and authority to put legislation in place to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Morristown needs zoning to encourage and manage growth and keep our small town identity. Belmont County is facing record growth as a result of the oil and gas industry and the development that comes with the industry will change things. This ordinance will help us plan for and manage that change. Studies in hundreds of other communities clearly show that *unmanaged growth* ultimately costs more as local governments struggle to pay the costs of delivering public services (water, police, fire protection).

### **Who will zoning help?**

Zoning can help everyone in Morristown. Zoning manages growth in a manner that maintains what we have and protects your property. Anyone wishing to locate to Morristown will clearly understand what they can and cannot do. In fact, most people and businesses prefer to build or locate where there is some certainty their investment will be accepted and protected.

### **Who will zoning hurt?**

Morristown's zoning ordinance cannot hurt anyone, because it cannot alter or change anything you currently own or are currently doing on your property. The proposed zoning ordinance is not intended to take anything away from existing property owners. How property is currently being used can continue for generations to come.

### **Will my property taxes increase with zoning?**

Not necessarily. Property values depend on many things like location, condition, and adjacent structures and property. Zoning protects property values, but does not necessarily increase them. The village has no control over the increase or decrease of your property taxes.

### **Will zoning help secure grants for historic buildings?**

No. There is no evidence that zoning increases chances for the village or any organization to receive grants.

### **Does zoning benefit people who live in or own "historic" houses more than others?**

Morristown's proposed zoning ordinance does not benefit any land or homeowner more than another. It also does not favor one type of building over another.

*Please turn over*

**Is the zoning inspector appointed or elected?**

The zoning inspector is appointed by the Mayor. The Mayor also appoints the five Planning Commission members and the five Appeals Board members. In Morristown, all would be volunteers at this time because the village does not have the funds to compensate them.

**Whose idea was this?**

Zoning has been a topic of discussion in Morristown off and on for decades. With Belmont County facing record growth as a result of the oil and gas industry, the mayor and council agreed that a plan was needed to protect property owners and residents from those who might take advantage of our lack of guidelines for property use.

**When did the public know about council’s plan to propose zoning?**

The mayor appointed a planning commission in 2010 that provided regular updates at village council meetings. These updates were reported in the newspaper and information shared in the village newsletter (*What is the Planning Commission?*, Spring 2011, and *Importance of Planning*, Fall 2012). Both newsletters were hand-delivered to residents and posted on the village’s website where they are located under the *Morristown Today* tab.

**DIRECTORY**  
Village Office  
782-1551

**Mayor**  
Gordon Price

**Fiscal Officer**  
Cheryl Borkoski

**Solicitor**  
Ed Sustersic

**Council Members**  
Lois Barr  
Judy Bonifield  
Vaughn Butler  
Doyle Groves  
Pamela McCort  
Robert Thomas

**Park Commission**  
Vicki Burghy  
Josh Nagy  
Don Hearn

**Council meetings  
are held on the  
second Monday of  
the month at 6 p.m. in  
the village office.**

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***We Heard You***

**Additions Made to Ordinance as Result of Public Hearing**

As a result of comments and concerns presented at the public hearing about the proposed zoning ordinance, the following additions and clarifications have been made to the proposed ordinance.

- **No grants for non-government owned properties** — Passage of this ordinance does not otherwise empower the village to obtain grants and/or loans for the improvement of non-government owned properties.
- **Continued Usage** — Any non-conforming land, building or structure that exists and is lawful when the zoning ordinance is enacted can continue forever, unless the owner voluntarily discontinues its current usage. If the owner voluntarily discontinues its usage for two years or more, the property owner must conform to the zoning regulations for that district.
- **Manufactured/Mobile Homes** — Any non-conforming manufactured or mobile home may continue forever unless voluntarily removed by the owner. If voluntarily removed, the owner may replace the manufactured or mobile home within 60 days. If not replaced within 60 days, future use of the land shall be in conformity with the zoning regulations for that district.
- **Zoning Inspector, Zoning Appeals and Zoning Review Boards** - The Mayor shall not appoint members to the Zoning Review Board and Zoning Appeals Board without first providing the citizens of Morristown the opportunity to make application for those positions. The Mayor shall also provide an opportunity for Morristown residents to make application to serve as Zoning Inspector.