



Geauga County Planning Commission

12611 Ravenwood Drive, Suite #380, Chardon, OH 44024

Phone: (440) 279-1740

www.co.geauga.oh.us/Departments/Planning-Commission

JANUARY 10, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Caterina Cocca-Fulton called the January 10, 2023 regular meeting of the Geauga County Planning Commission to order at 7:34 a.m. at 12611 Ravenwood Drive, Suite A334, Chardon, Ohio. A quorum was obtained. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the roll call was called by Ms. Irizarry, and the following members were present:

2. Roll Call

Members present: Caterina Cocca-Fulton, Nick Gorris, Gary Neola, Dan Miller, Dennis Bergansky, Walter Claypool, Jim McCaskey, Commissioner Lennon and John Oros.

Members absent: Commissioner Ralph Spidalieiri and Commissioner Dvorak

Staff present: Linda Crombie (Director,) Allyson Kobus (Planner II), and Pamela Irizarry (Administrative Assistant).

3. Election of Officers for 2023:

Chairman

Vice Chairman

Secretary/Treasurer

Ms. Cocca-Fulton started out by saying how she enjoyed serving as Chairman of the board, but she would like someone else to carry on the role. She said she wants to devote more time to helping Ms. Crombie with the Model Zoning Resolution. Ms. Cocca-Fulton opened the floor to nominations. Mr. McCaskey asked if anyone had spoken with Mr. Bergansky about the vice-chair position and the answer was no. Mr. McCaskey said he would like to nominate Mr. Gorris as Chairman.

Mr. Neola said he would like to nominate Mr. Oros and Mr. Oros replied he would like a little bit more time. Mr. Gorris said if Mr. Oros takes the Chairman position, he would take the Vice Chairman position.

Mr. Neola asked Ms. Cocca-Fulton how much involvement did she have with Ms. Crombie each month and Ms. Cocca-Fulton said about an hour.

Mr. Claypool made a motion to nominate Mr. Oros as Chairman of the Planning Commission Board. Commissioner Lennon seconded the motion. Mr. Oros abstained. Upon a call for the vote, the motion carried.

Mr. Oros made a motion to nominate Mr. Gorris as Vice Chairman of the Planning Commission Board. Mr. McCaskey seconded the motion. Mr. Gorris abstained. Upon a call for the vote, the motion carried.

Mr. McCaskey made a motion to nominate Mr. Neola as Secretary/Treasurer of the Planning Commission Board. Mr. Oros seconded the motion. Mr. Neola abstained. Upon a call for the vote, the motion carried.

Ms. Cocca- Fulton said the elections are now closed and she asked Mr. Oros if he would like to take over the meeting and Mr. Oros agreed.

4. Approval of Minutes for the December 13, 2022 Regular Meeting

Mr. Neola said he sent an email to Ms. Crombie to let her know there was a typo in December 13, 2022 minutes. The word said "about" when it should have been "above". Ms. Irizarry told Mr. Neola the typo has been corrected.

Mr. McCaskey made a motion to approve the December 13, 2022 regular meeting minutes and Ms. Cocca-Fulton seconded the motion, Mr. Gorris abstained, and upon a call for the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Financial Report and Approval of Expenses

Ms. Irizarry provided the financial report as of January 9, 2023 attached hereto and the expenses marked as Exhibit "A" totaling \$90.48. Commissioner Lennon made a motion to approve the financial report and the summary of expenses, marked exhibit "A" totaling \$90.48. Ms. Cocca-Fulton seconded the motion, and upon a call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

6. Director's Report

1. County Planning Director's Meeting: Ms. Crombie said she attended the County Planning Director's meeting that was part of the County Commissioner's Association of Ohio conference in Columbus. The following items were discussed and highlighted: The document "A Guide to Planning in Ohio" is being updated and will be available online in 2023; the Citizen Planner Training is still available; a Planning Webcast on YouTube has 5,000 webcasts; Cornell University is updating all zoning across all the states. Comprehensive Plans funding through the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) block grant is a potential. Medina County Commissioners has created a grant program to update local comprehensive plans or zoning resolutions.

Ms. Crombie said APA Ohio will try to focus more on rural communities; large solar facilities (over 50 megawatts) have been banned in some counties completely, but the county has a process to allow them to appeal. Commissioner Lennon asked does this supersede zoning. Ms. Crombie said the authority was given a couple years ago to county commissioners to determine where they can be permitted or ban them. Over a certain size zoning cannot regulate. Mr. Claypool said there was a court case of Jones v. Auburn Township where they wanted to put up a windmill, they sued and won. Ms. Crombie said that the Model already contains language as well as township zoning resolutions to regulate solar panels or a windmill as a residential accessory structure. A large solar facility is a utility-scale facility.

Ms. Crombie said as the current last term of the General Assembly ended at the end of last year there is no update on the status of HB 563, which limits local government authority over short-term rentals.

2. New Building Lots: Ms. Crombie said two (2) new building lot proposals were submitted in December, both located in Burton Township. Ms. Crombie said in the year end report, there were 16 minor lot splits, 21 large lot splits, and eight (8) lots over 20 acres.

3. Website Updates: Ms. Crombie said the Planning Commission website was modified so that it provides a link directly to the townships' websites to view their zoning resolution or map. The Commission will host Huntsburg and Troy township's zoning resolutions, as Huntsburg Township does not have a website and Troy Township does not have their zoning resolution available online yet as their website is relatively new.

4. Legislative Update: Ms. Crombie said HB 501 was amended to include township regulation of small solar facilities, less than 50 megawatts capacity, the Governor has now signed this and it will be effective in 90 days. She added this will be an amendment to the Model Zoning. Mr. Claypool questioned what this would mean for a solar panel on someone's house and Ms. Crombie said that is already covered in township zoning resolutions as an accessory use. Ms. Crombie said she recommends an info sheet on this can be done to clarify the differences between solar and wind regulations. Ms. Crombie said HB 698, eminent domain, has nothing new to report.

5. Conservation Easements: Ms. Crombie said a total of ten (10) conservation easements were received in December. Ms. Crombie presented maps, which were pulled from conservation easements, of Soltis' farm in Parkman Township, totaling 570 acres of conserved land. These all came in December in order to qualify for a tax income break. Ms. Crombie commented how the easement between Sisters of Notre Dame and the Ohio EPA, in Munson Township was for streambank stabilization, as the stream was in bad shape.

6. Work Summary, December 2022:

a. Planning/Zoning/Subdivision Administration: Ms. Crombie said during December there were 21 lot splits/consolidations, 49 different planning/zoning inquiries, lot inquiries, and 13 easements. Ms. Crombie briefly reviewed the various points of contact the Planning Commission had with Russell township. She pointed out, there was an average of 90 inquiries each month for the past 3 years.

b. Comprehensive Planning Efforts: Ms. Crombie mentioned she referred the Land Use Chapter of the General Plan to assist with agricultural easements.

c. Continuing Education: Ms. Crombie said she attended a webinar on farmland leases hosted by Nationwide Insurance and AGWEB. Leasing farmland can be verbal, which is not a good thing, and time frame is between one (1) and five (5) years. Leases can be negotiated and include items such as soil fertility, water management and conversation, and successor rights.

Ms. Crombie announced ODOT (Ohio Department of Transportation) is asking for community input on alternative ways to fund roads and bridges. She provided a link to participate in their survey, and encouraged everyone to participate and pass this information along. Mr. Claypool commented that he will definitely take part in this survey and tell them to stop wasting money. Mr. Neola asked if ODOT is looking for a way to increase the budget. Mr. Miller said at least they are asking for the community's input.

Ms. Crombie informed the Board regarding the NOACA Climate Action Plan meeting, scheduled tonight at various locations in Northeast Ohio. She can forward the link to the board if they would like and Mr. Oros asked Ms. Crombie if she could forward the link to the board members.

7. Other Business:

7A. 2022 Accomplishments and 2023 Goals: 2022 Accomplishments: Ms. Crombie said 13 out of the 14 goals were either commenced, ongoing, or completed except the Township Land Use Plan, but will work on that for 2023.

2023 Goals:

Ms. Crombie said the larger goals include the County Subdivision Regulations Update and the County Model Zoning Resolutions Update. Other 2023 Goals are the County Land Use Map Update, Housing Inventory, and the series of Information Sheets. Ms. Crombie provided a list of info sheet topics, but said the first ten or so will be for 2023 and that she added small solar facilities and agriculture at the last minute to the presentation. Ms. Crombie said conservation easement mapping would continue and that she would also like to perform an analysis using the easements approved in 2016 to track their property taxes and assessed value to see what changes occurred. Mr. Claypool said he could also do a presentation about conservation easements.

Ms. Crombie said that Ms. Irizarry had prepared various process sheets that will be used to create the Standard Operating Procedures. She also advised that interdepartmental collaboration will occur with the Department of Community and Economic Development on various projects and the Director of Department of Aging asked for assistance with updating their 2011 Senior Population study.

Mr. Bergansky arrived to at 8:19 a.m.

7B. 2023 Meeting Dates, Holidays and Other Housekeeping Items: Ms. Crombie presented the 2023 Meeting Dates and Holidays that will be posted to Planning Commission's website. As in the past, the day after Thanksgiving would require a motion to allow staff to have this day off as a paid holiday.

Ms. Cocco-Fulton said she knows in the past Planning Commission has had the day after Thanksgiving approved as a paid holiday, but she still feels that vacation time can be used. Commissioner Lennon said it has always been given off as a paid day. Mr. Miller asked if Juneteenth was observed as a paid holiday and Commissioner Lennon said yes, it has to be as it is federal. Mr. Neola asked are we required to make a motion to approve this day off as a paid holiday. Ms. Crombie said yes and explained this needs to be acted on in order to let the public know that our office will be closed that day. Mr. Gorris questioned if the Commissioner's Office is closed on the day after Thanksgiving, would the whole building then be closed. Mr. McCaskey said he feels obligated to follow suit with the County Commissioners. Commissioner Lennon said he knows the BOCC has always given this day off as paid.

Motion made by Mr. McCaskey to grant the day after Thanksgiving off as a paid day off, and seconded by Mr. Bergansky, and upon a call for the vote, the motion carried.

Ms. Crombie discussed potential changes to Agenda/Order of Business: The agenda for January 2023 was formatted to show all agenda items listed in the Order of Business, per Article 4 of the Commission's Bylaws, whether or not there is material to discuss. Ms. Crombie proposes this change as the agenda items are assigned a number one week prior to the board meeting. If something is received after this but before the meeting date it can easily be added to the agenda, without changing the original numbering. Ms. Crombie provided the order of Business, per the By-laws.

Ms. Crombie next discussed changing the order of where the Director's Report falls on the Order of Business, due to the detailed discussion of some items. She explained that Article 4 could be revised so that the Director's Report is heard later in board meetings so the Major Subdivisions/Plats and Township Zoning Amendments are heard first, since they require a vote.

Mr. McCaskey said anything with a vote should be on top and Mr. Bergansky agreed. Ms. Crombie replied she would have to for the February Planning Commission meeting, present the changes to Bylaws. Mr. Oros commented how the Park District moves items around on their agenda if it is a heavy agenda, they add or move things the day of the meeting. Ms. Crombie said the Commission can do that as well per the Bylaws. Mr. Claypool said he doesn't think the Bylaws need to be changed and that the Board can change the order of business the day of meeting depending on what is on the agenda.

Ms. Crombie asked the board members to email all of the Planning Commission staff and the Chair in advance if they are unable to attend a meeting, and, do the same should they need to arrive late or need to leave a meeting early. This will help ensure a quorum. She also asked if anyone is interested in assigning an alternate board member, please contact the staff and you will be guided on the process. Mr. Neola asked how does someone get appointed to become an alternate board member. Ms. Crombie replied they go through the BOCC.

Ms. Crombie asked the board members when it comes to making motions, typically they are made by stating "I make a motion to". This statement helps the staff know that an official motion is being made.

Ms. Crombie advised the preparation of the meeting minutes has changed over the years. As of now any materials submitted as part of an agenda item are labeled as an exhibit and attached to the meeting minutes. Per the Ohio Open Meetings Act, 8C, Content of the minutes, the meeting minutes must include enough facts and information to allow the public to understand the rationale behind the decisions as well as the voting that took place. She went on to say, since the exhibits are included with the minutes it has taken the County ADP Department longer to post the meeting minutes to the website due to the large volume. Staff will encounter the same challenges once we are responsible for uploading them. She suggested to only post the meeting minutes to the website and should someone want see the actual detailed application materials, a public records request can be made. The Board members agreed that only the meeting minutes need to be posted and starting in February, only the meeting minutes will be posted to the website, no exhibits. Mr. Gorris asked if Planning Commission staff will post the meeting minutes from now on and Ms. Crombie said they were trained and have been able to post them, although there have been some technical log-in issues that occasionally need to be worked through.

Ms. Crombie explained how for the past few years at each meeting, the previous months data on the number of inquiries has been reported. This included all the lot splits, consolidations, planning and zoning related inquiries. She proposed starting in February, which is for the January data, to report on lot splits, subdivisions, easements, and amendments. This allows staff more time to work on other projects. The Commission agreed that this was fine.

7C. Website Update: Ms. Kobus gave a breakdown of what the new Planning Commission's website will look like. She said the website is not up and running yet, but she highlighted information on the pages: There is a Home page, which provides a brief intro to Planning Commission, shows current Planning Commission board members, some pictures of members included; and tabs for Responsibilities of the Planning Commission. Also, there is Census information, links to township resolutions, info sheets, lot split and consolidation information, holiday closure schedule, reports/plans, community contacts, and County Water Community links.

Mr. Claypool thought the layout was big, he asked if it could be simplified to a list of members. Ms. Cocca-Fulton thought the tabs for the responsibilities of the Planning Commission color was hard to

read. Ms. Crombie said the new website does not have the 208 Maps but those can be obtained from the Department of Water Resources. Mr. Gorris asked if there was a link to go to Water Resources, and if not, maybe that could be added later.

Mr. Oros commented how he thought it was a good idea to have the board members pictures on the new website. Mr. McCaskey agreed, it is good to have a name with the face. Ms. Cocca-Fulton was not a fan of pictures of board members on website. Mr. Neola noted that it was not that important.

Commissioner Lennon asked if it cost extra money to have all this information on the new website. Ms. Crombie said ADP has provided the work at no charge and they have been good to work with. We will piggyback off the Board of County Commissioner's website, but we could submit a budget request for outside website changes, but that is more costly. Ms. Kobus is going to find out from ADP if there was a way to track all the times the website has been viewed. Mr. Neola asked if staff would be able to make changes to the website and Ms. Crombie replied only to add minutes and agendas.

11. Old Business:

11A. Pay Grade Update: Ms. Crombie reminded the board that at last month's meeting we discussed drafting pay grades to all the Planning Commission's staff job descriptions, since there have not been any in the past. She presented the current pay table with the pay grades for each position highlighted in red, and briefly showed the modified job descriptions. Mr. Claypool said he thought we agreed to do away with these pay grade charts. Ms. Crombie replied no and that position descriptions have never had any pay grades assigned to them even though the Policy Manual references grading and her initial goal was to increase the grade of Planner II. Mr. Claypool said putting a pay range in is better, not a pay grade. Mr. Oros commented the pay chart is too complicated and asked Ms. Crombie to change it to a pay range and re-present at the next meeting.

11B. Derchar Subdivision (No New Material): Mr. McCaskey asked why this was still on the agenda. Ms. Crombie explained it has been kept on because there has been no formal application for withdrawal or new material. We are waiting on the Health Department's approval. She explained that illness related to the contractor as to why this has been a lengthy process. She will follow up to see what can be done.

11C. County Subdivision Regulations Update: Easements: Ms. Crombie discussed how at the December 2022 meeting, the Planning Commission board agreed with removing the review of easements, except for agricultural and conservation easements. Ms. Crombie, however, is proposing an all or nothing approach to the review of easements. She feels reviewing the majority of easements is busy work for the Planning Commission staff. If the board agrees to remove review of all easements, Ms. Crombie can still keep the board informed on conservation or agricultural easements by staff checking the County Recorder's website each month, which can be presented in the Director's Report. She explained that an easement is an agreement between two parties, for a specific purpose, but the terms of the easement cannot violate any government regulations, whether it be local, state, or federal, this includes zoning and subdivision regulations.

Mr. Claypool asked if the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) still approves some types of easements; do we get a heads up on the easements from the home owners? He feels this is a negative impact to Geauga County and we should send a letter to the home owners. Mr. McCaskey said he thought a letter was sent to the home owners educating them about requesting an easement. Ms. Crombie said no, but that we talked about creating an info sheet on conservation easements. Mr. Claypool feels conservation easements are a devaluation of property as a property owner has to get permission for everything they do. Could there be a process for the county to intervene early in the

process? Mr. Claypool said it was worth asking the question. Mr. McCaskey commented that likely have to go back to the State of Ohio.

Commissioner Lennon thought it was a good idea to still know how many easements there are in Geauga County. Ms. Cocca-Fulton said why can't we take this a step further and provide educational sessions about conservation easements; to let the home owner know the risks of having one. Mr. Claypool feels there should be some alert process given to home owners about conservation easements. Mr. Bergansky agreed that this would fall under the Ohio Revised Code. Mr. Oros said the most recent conservation easement examples from this meeting can be used to brainstorm the community contacts. Ms. Crombie commented how establishing an easement is a long process; years even, and the staff is presented with easements after they have been negotiated and signed.

11D. Geauga County General Plan Annual Review (New Material): Ms. Crombie said as a follow up from the last meeting, five pages from the General Plan were corrected or modified and she presented them to the Board: in Land Use the urbanized area map was corrected to show the urban clusters, which are areas of 2,500 people or more but less than 50,000. The wording was also simplified on Page 50. The same change to the urbanized area map was made in the Economic Development chapter and language was added to Planning Commission initiatives under interdepartmental collaboration, the Commission could assist as needed with the county economic development department with the creation of a county CEDS. Lastly, wording was changed regarding the Amish; "biking" was change to "scooter" and minor format changes were made to the postal codes.

Ms. Crombie said the General Plan was adopted at the October 26, 2021 BOCC meeting, and any updates must be submitted for their adoption. The Planning Commission board will be required to make a motion to submit these updates to the BOCC.

Motion made by Mr. Claypool to submit the changes to the General Plan to the Board of County Commissioners and seconded by Commissioner Lennon, and upon a call for the vote, the motion carried.

11E. Credit Card Update: Ms. Crombie said per O.R.C. 301.27, webinars are an authorized work expense but O.R.C. does not authorize use of county credit card to pay for job postings. She proposes amending the Policy and Procedure Manual to allow webinars as an authorized work expense. She said staff will move forward with the credit card request through the Geauga Credit Union and the County Commissioners.

Commissioner Lennon left the meeting at 9:28 a.m.

11F. Model Zoning Section 401.0(A) (No New Material): Ms. Crombie said staff still working on this.

12. New Business:

12A. County Subdivision Regulations Update: Platting and other Procedures: Ms. Crombie said this is another proposed amendment to the Subdivision Regulations, Platting procedures established in Article III and Article VI.

Ms. Crombie discussed how lot splits and consolidations require a lot of information on the survey, such as all existing building, structures, ponds, etc. Surveyors have commented on these requirements, Ms. Crombie said it is a lot of information but is somewhat hesitant to take information out as zoning inspectors are used to it. The Zoning Inspector must also physically sign the survey and Ms. Crombie

feels this is archaic; the system should have an electronic means for the zoning inspector to sign and email back.

For the Preliminary Plan and Final Plats, instead of requiring 20 paper copies to be mailed out to the reviewing agencies, allow 5 copies to be mailed out and make the rest digital. By the time it is mailed to them, the reviewing agencies often have only a day or two to review and comment. Ms. Crombie said it could be increased to 30 days instead of the 20-day review period but if the review can be primarily electronic, it could stay at 20 days.

Ms. Crombie said Article VI: Section 606(C): Revision of Plan or Plat, R.C. 711.25 which allowed a property owner to “vacate” their subplot(s) from their platted subdivision as long as they posted a legal notice in the newspaper for two weeks and the County Auditor would prepare a certificate document stating the lots have been vacated. The County Recorder would write “vacated” and the date on the actual subdivision plat to indicate the sublots were vacated. This allowed the property owner to modify their sublots through the administrative lot split/consolidation process versus the platting process.

In 2019, R.C. 711.25 was repealed so owners no longer have the option to vacate their sublots from their platted subdivision, so anytime homeowners wish to make any change, it must go through the full platting procedure. Before creating the redlined document, the recommendation from Ms. Crombie is to add language to allow a property owner within a platted subdivision to consolidate their sublots or modify them as long as it does not result in a new building lot, modify subdivision open space, or impact a drainage maintenance district without having to go through the platting process. The Commission members did not object.

12B. Mileage Reimbursement for 2023: Ms. Crombie told the board that a motion will be needed to approve the gas mileage reimbursement rate set by the Internal Revenue Service, which is now \$0.655 cents per mile, effective January 1, 2023.

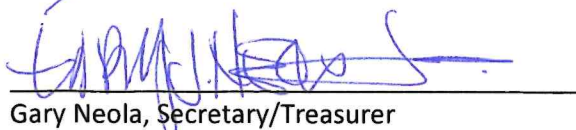
Motion made by Mr. McCaskey to approve mileage reimbursement of \$0.655 cents per mile effective January 1, 2023, and seconded by Mr. Bergansky, and upon a call for the vote, the motion carried.

13. Adjournment

Mr. Oros asked for a motion to Adjourn meeting. Motion made by Mr. Gorris to adjourn meeting, and seconded by Ms. Cocca-Fulton, and upon a call for the vote, the motion carried. Chairman Oros adjourned the meeting at 9:38 a.m.



John Oros, Chairman



Gary Neola, Secretary/Treasurer

COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION FINANCIAL REPORT
Summary

Budget – January 9, 2023



<u><i>Account</i></u>	<u><i>Appropriation</i></u>	<u><i>Expenditure</i></u>	<u><i>Balance</i></u>
Salaries	\$144,281.00	\$0.00	\$144,281.00
Supplies	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
Hosp.	\$25,604.00	\$0.00	\$25,604.00
Medicare	\$2,120.00	\$0.00	\$2,120.00
OPERS	\$20,220.00	\$0.00	\$20,220.00
Worker's Comp.	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
Other Expenses	\$2,300.00	\$0.00	2,300.00
Equipment	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contracted Services	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Covid -19 Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Copier Usage Services	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Travel	\$3,500.00	\$0.00	\$3,500.00
Advertising	\$325.00	\$0.00	\$325.00
Training	\$700.00	\$0.00	\$700.00
Member, Dues, Lic. Sub	\$1,300.00	\$0.00	\$1,300.00
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$203,950.00</i>	<i>\$0.00</i>	<i>\$203,950.00</i>

**SUMMARY RESOLUTION FOR EXPENSES
GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Commissioner Lennon MOVED THE ADOPTION OF THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION,
WHICH MOTION WAS SECONDED BY Ms. Cocca-Fulton

WHEREAS, THE EXPENSES LISTED HEREIN HAVE BEEN INCURRED BY THE GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION IN ORDER FOR THE COMMISSION TO PERFORM ITS DUTIES; AND

WHEREAS, THESE EXPENSES HAVE BEEN REVIEWED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION AT ITS JANUARY 10, 2023 MEETING;

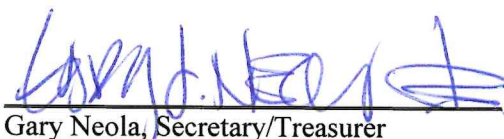
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE GEAUGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION HEREBY AUTHORIZES PAYMENT OF THE FOLLOWING BILLS OR CLAIMS:

<u>P.O.</u>	<u>ACCOUNT</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>VENDOR</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
2790	TRAVEL	12/13	PAMELA IRIZARRY (MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT)	53.38
3930	COPIER USAGE	12/13	DEX IMAGING (10/22 TO 11/22)	37.10

TOTAL \$ 90.48



Caterina Cocca-Fulton, Chairman



Gary Neola, Secretary/Treasurer