



This brief history and description of zoning in the United States and Ohio has been adapted from the Ohio Department of Development, Office of Local Government Services: Ohio Rural Zoning Handbook, Fourth Edition 1991.

## The Beginning of Zoning

Zoning, as we know it today, first emerged in New York City with the enactment of a comprehensive zoning ordinance in 1916. It was enacted to prevent the random building of garment factories within residential districts.

In 1919 Ohio enacted enabling legislation allowing municipalities to adopt zoning ordinances, becoming one of only 10 states to do so. By 1924, 12 Ohio municipalities had zoning laws in effect. Also in 1924 the federal government passed the "Standard State Zoning Enabling Act. This act gave every state in the union the federal sanction to put into effect zoning regulations. In late 1926, Ohio played a key role in the formation of modern zoning regulation when the Village of Euclid Ohio was sued by Amber Realty Company for infringing upon its right to do business because of Euclid's zoning regulations. The US Supreme Court found in favor of the Village of Euclid by stating that comprehensive zoning regulations were a legitimate police power regulation.

It was not until 1947 that the Ohio General Assembly passed legislation permitting unincorporated rural townships the right to enact zoning regulations. The regulations passed by townships for the next decade are substantially unchanged to this today. Bristol Township enacted its first zoning regulations on November 8th, 1955.

## What Is Zoning?

In general, all zoning are locally enacted laws that regulate and control the use of private property. Zoning involves dividing the countryside into districts or zones for agriculture, residential, commercial, industrial, and public purposes. The zoning law then states which specific uses are permitted in each district. Zoning also regulates the size of lots, the distance, which buildings must be set back from roads or property lines, the maximum height of buildings, the population density, and other land use considerations.

## The Zoning Commission

The zoning commission members are appointed by the Township Trustees. The zoning commission is composed of five township residents who are appointed for a five year term. The commission has three principle duties.

1. Preparation of zoning resolutions.
2. Initiation of Amendments
3. Make formal recommendations on all amendments.

## The Zoning Inspector

The zoning inspector is the individual that administers the day-to-day operations of the zoning resolution. The zoning inspector is charged with the literal enforcement of the Township zoning resolution. Duties include:

1. Review applications for zoning certificates
2. On-site inspections
3. Investigations of violations
4. Maintain a record of non-conforming uses
5. Maintain up-to-date zoning text and maps

## Board of Zoning Appeals

The Board of Appeals is composed of five Township residents who are appointed by the Board of Trustees for five year terms. The Board of Appeals serves as the Judicial Branch of the zoning resolution. The Board of Appeals may exercise three functions:

1. Action on appeals
2. Action on request for variances
3. Action on conditional uses