

Un-Official

ATHENS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of April 20, 2017

Athens Township Government Center

1. *Pledge of Allegiance:* The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. *Roll Call:* The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Chairman Dave Beckstrom. Members present were Cindy Anderson, Marlys Balfany, Dave Beckstrom, Dan Woodfill and Dave Henderson. Absent was Jake Carpenter. Also present was Jim Braun, Staff Member. Diane Bjorklund was the only guest on hand for the meeting.
3. *Minutes of March 16, 2017:* A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Dave Henderson, seconded by Marlys Balfany. Motion carried unanimously.

Note: Dan Woodfill asked for a clarification of item 6 (b) of the minutes where it discusses frontage requirements of two hundred feet and one hundred fifty feet per lot. Jim Braun explained that when the Township adopted the four-per-forty rules they used some of the language from the Isanti County Ordinance. The County Ordinance minimum frontage is 150' as they allow smaller lots. This measurement was missed and was added to the Township Ordinance by mistake. The problem was discovered during a survey and because it was adopted that way it was allowed for that particular parcel. It was discussed at a later meeting and it was decided to remain at the 200' frontages as the Township has required since taking over zoning authority.

4. Open Forum: No one was on hand for the Open Forum portion of the meeting.
5. *Public Hearings:* None
6. *Old Business:*
 - a. *Discussion of farm animals in subdivisions:* After careful study of surrounding jurisdictions it was found that the majority of the jurisdictions do not allow farm animals on small lots or in subdivisions. On small lots only domestic animals such as dogs and cats are allowed.

It was noted that chickens have become popular to have on small parcels for egg and meat production. Some of the jurisdictions studied allow up to six chickens (no

roosters) in a backyard coop. More than six chickens on a lot less than three acres will require an interim use permit. Note: To see more proposed requirements for chickens see Exhibit "A" enclosed.

Diane Bjorklund remarked that a lot of kids that are in 4-H live on small parcels and some show rabbits at the County and State Fairs. Diane feels that rabbits kept in a hutch in the backyard were no more of a problem than chickens. After some discussion it was decided to have Carolyn Braun add rabbits to the draft (a maximum of four).

- b. *Newly drafted Planning Commission By-laws:* Dave Henderson questioned the word ex-officio in the last sentence of the paragraph. Dave wants that removed and replaced with the word temporary. Jim Braun told the Commission that ex-officio means that the member is not permanent and has no voting right. After some discussion it was decided to leave the word ex-officio in the text.

Under Section VI: Election of Officers: Strike the following Sections VI.1,2,3,4 and replace them with the following:

Section VI.1 The Chairman and Vice Chairman shall be appointed at the annual Board of Reorganization.

Section VI.2 The Chairman and Vice Chairman shall only vote on tie breakers.

Under Section VII: Meetings:

Under Section VII.2: Change to read Voting shall be a voice vote or roll call.....

Under Section VII.3: There's a typo in the roman numeral and add Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson of the Planning Commission or the Town Board Chair.

Section VIII: Order of Business: (G) Reports of Officers and Committees: add the word Staff.

Section XII Removal from Office: Section 2 is the Roman Numeral missing?

Jim Braun will get this back to Carolyn for changes and have the final draft ready for the next meeting.

7. *Miscellaneous:*

- a. The current building permit list was made available to the Commission.
- b. Solar Information: Jim Braun told the Commission that he had planned to have the

solar information available at the meeting but with the unavailability of Carolyn it was not possible. Plans are to gather the information and get it out to the Commission mid-month so they can start studying it or looking it over.

- c. Dave Beckstrom gave an update on the Brennan Cox applications with the City of Isanti and Isanti County. Dave said that most of his information was on the parcel that he purchased directly north of his property from the Stoltz family. Brennan is trying to open that dwelling as a bed and breakfast and has applied to Isanti County for his permit. The Isanti County Ordinances allow for bed and breakfasts with a “use permit” only if the owner resides there. Brennan’s mother owns the property and has no plans on moving to the property. Brennan will have to try some other course of action.
8. *Adjournment:* Being that there was no further business, a motion was made by Marlys Balfany to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dave Henderson. Motion carried unanimously at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Braun
Recorder ProTem