

Athens Township Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
February 15, 2024

Opening

The regular meeting of the Athens Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM on February 15, 2024 and the pledge of allegiance was recited.

Planning Commissioners Present

Todd Christensen, Marlys Balfany(online), Jack Cole, Jason Ross, AJ Ondrey, Township Clerk Diane Carpenter and Mike Jungbauer

Guests Present

A few residents attended.

Approval of Minutes

M/S AJ Ondrey/Jason Ross to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2024 meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Open Forum

None.

Public Hearing

PH regarding the Hwy 65 commercial area and the proposed frontage road near the Green Barn. Residents living near the property were invited for input as to the kinds of business they would like to see in that area.

-Residents who spoke:

Jason Gehrke – owns the property where George’s greenhouse is located. George is his father-in-law. He wants no part of giving his land to the township to build the proposed frontage road. He had heard that residents have no say and the township was just

going to take the land. Mike explained about eminent domain in which the township could take the land and pay landowners for it but then charge assessments for the road. He stated that the township does not want to go that direction.

Craig Bjorklund – He was against building the road. By the time the road is built, there would only be 100 feet left to build on. There are buildings all over now that can't be rented. He also pointed out that MNDOT cannot take away the existing driveway. He also stated that the township has no idea how expensive building this road from the ground up would be as it has been an extremely long time since a road has been built from scratch.

Kevin Lyzhof – stated that no business big enough to afford the road would want to build in Athens as there is no infrastructure of water, sewer, or natural gas.

Chris Olson – 90% of people he spoke to want things the same so they can pass land and homes down to the next generation.

Ron Oliver Sr – His property backs up to the property being discussed that is currently for sale. 264th and Baltimore – he doesn't want more traffic or a road across his land.

Jon Anderson – what if the business fails and we are stuck with paying for the road we don't want. You can't require a business not to fail.

Chris Olson read a list of previous suggestions for what kind of business could be allowed there. Most residents were ok with the businesses brought forward but not with building the road.

M/S Jason Ross/Jack Cole to close the PH on the road/commercial district. Motion passed unanimously.

PH for Brian Hogie – Brian is proposing a tool rental- Red Barn Tool Rental – at 26516 Vickers St NE. He has 5.14 acres.

Equipment kept inside and the customers will not be entering the building until it is up to code. He is looking at having a walk-up window. Mike will work on a resolution for board approval.

M/S Jason Ross/Jack Cole to move forward to the board after seeing the final resolution with changes. Motion passed unanimously with Marlys abstaining as she had no copy of the current proposed resolution.

M/S Jack Cole/Jason Ross to close the PH for Brian Hogie. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

None.

New Business

- A discussion was held and it was decided following the PH that 261st to 265th will be allowed very limited types of business in the new zoning.

M/S Jack Cole/AJ Ondrey to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 PM.

Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes submitted by Diane Carpenter