

**Athens Township Planning Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 21, 2024**

**Opening**

The regular meeting of the Athens Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM on March 21, 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 Jason Ross/ AJ Ondrey to approve the minutes of the February 15, 2024 meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**Open Forum**

Casper Services (Josh Casper) and Northside Septic (Josh and Kyle Carpenter) both wish to spread septage in Athens Township. Our ordinance currently states that septage spread in Athens must come from Athens Township. They wish to change our ordinance to match Isanti County, which has one of the most stringent ordinances in the state. Human waste is a good fertilizer. They explained how that garbage is filtered out before spreading it. Marlys would like more information about this.

M/S Jason Ross/AJ Ondrey to move the issue forward to a public hearing. Motion passed three to one, with Marlys voting nay.

Mike explained that they would need to apply for an ordinance change before a public hearing would be scheduled.

Megan and Dennis Sharp presented development ideas for the east 40 acres of their property. They would like to put residential homes on that piece of property. They show three different plans that feature 12 homes. This would exceed the current amount of houses permitted on the 40 acres as the ordinance states a minimum 5 acre lot. They thought that they had 8 building rights and could acquire more from neighboring farmers. Dave Henderson stated that there are only four remaining on that piece of land. Mike will check this out at the courthouse. If allowed, this would be a PUD (Planned Unit Development), and this again brought up the subject of tiered zoning. The question was raised about the storage units on the front side of the property. Nothing can be done until building rights are determined.

Erika and Josh Rhoades -Bill Bune Enterprises

They would like to relocate their small machine shop from Anoka. It is mainly EBAY based and has less than 10 people per day as walk in traffic. They are looking at the property for sale on Hwy 65 near the Green Barn. The general consensus was that this is the kind of business we are looking for in that location.

M/S AJ Ondrey/Jack Cole to move this plan forward to a public hearing. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Public Hearing**

PH regarding an IUP for Jose Pesina for a roofing/siding company. He is a new resident and has three trailers and is working from his home.

-Residents who spoke:

Marge Massa – Traffic is already a problem on 253<sup>rd</sup> and she is concerned about additional noise.

Brooke Schommer – She was concerned about noise and environmental disruption for the cedar creek preserve. Also concern was expressed about waste going into the creek. It was mentioned that the resident has a dog that occasionally chases cars.

It was determined that the resident does has access to Highway 56 and need not use the township road for his trailers to keep down the dust. Mike explained that an IUP gives the township more control and that his expansion would be limited by the size of his buildings. Many of the issues raised by the residents were just general complaints that had nothing to do with the proposed business.

The decision was made to keep the PH open until Jose could attend and elaborate on some of the issues.

### **Old Business**

None.

### **New Business**

- Two public hearings are on the schedule so far for April.
- Jason Ross presented his plans for phase two of his mining project. It was discussed that he has done a great job with phase one and his plans for phase two look good.
- M/S Jack Cole/Marlys Balfany to move the new CUP to the board with recommendation for approval. Motion passed unanimously with Jason Ross abstaining from the vote.
- Mike showed a photo of a proposed apartment building with commercial on the ground floor and apartments above. This again raised the issued of tiered zoning. The legislature is considering bills to override zoning laws to provide more housing.

It is important for us to be prepared for these changes that could come down the road.

M/S Marlys Balfany/Jack Cole to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM.  
Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes submitted by Diane Carpenter