

The Athens Township Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting January 15, 2020
6pm The Plains Public Library
Meeting Minutes

The Athens Township Zoning Commission met in regular session on January 15, 2020 at 6pm at The Plains Public Library, 14 S. Plains Rd. The Plains

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Vice-Chair Brian Dearing called the meeting to order in lieu of the absence of Chairman Sean Jones. Commission members Brian Dearing, Rick Fernow, Ken Robinson, Michael Hornsby, and alternate Teena Thornton were in attendance. Consultant Bob Eichenberg was also present.

MOTION TO ACCEPT MINUTES FOR 01/08/2020

Mr. Dearing motioned that the minutes for the previous meeting appeared to be in order, and for the Commission to accept the minutes as entered. Fernow seconded.

Dearing: Yes; Fernow: Yes; Hornsby: Yes; Robinson: Yes; Thornton: Yes

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public in attendance

NEED FOR FIRST DRAFT VERSION OF CODE IN FEBRUARY TO MAINTAIN SCHEDULE

To keep on schedule, Mr. Fernow offered to outline the needed parts of our proposed zoning code, following Mr. Jones's suggestion at the previous meeting to "merge" the best of both codes. Mr. Eichenberg said he would need a rough draft sometime next week to begin the process.

The Commission also discussed the need for a special meeting on January 29 to meet our set deadlines. Surveying the public to gauge their concerns about zoning was discussed; Mr. Dearing felt it was best to wait until we had a way to implement Google Forms on the website to introduce the survey.

ALBANY ZONING CODE

The majority of the meeting was concerned with going over the Albany zoning code section by section, pulling the best aspects from the code for our own. A hybrid code based on Devola and Albany was seen as the best example for zoning for The Plains. Mr. Eichenberg offered suggestions on many issues and concerns the commission had with the source material. Mr. Fernow mentioned that conditional zoning use would be effective tool. The appropriate separation of powers of the Zoning Commission vs. the eventual Board of Zoning Appeals was briefly discussed. The role of a zoning commission appears to diminish as the zoning code is in force and as action moves to a board of appeals and the variance process. Mr. Dearing wanted to make sure appeals were treated fairly and equitably, and not based on bias or "who one knows on the commission". Simplification of language for our code was seen as a continuing goal, which Mr. Eichenberg will strive for when writing the code.

Mr. Dearing wondered when the code would take effect after the election. How long it would take to set up a board of zoning appeals and hire a zoning inspector? This was seen as outside the scope of the Commission; a decision to be made by the Athens Township Trustees.

Minimal screening and fencing was discussed between business districts and residential neighborhoods. Unused motor vehicles storage, refuse, and dog breeders were also touched upon. The raising of both farm animals and exotic pets in residential neighborhood - and potential restrictions – was debated. Other topics brought to attention as the Commission analyzed the Albany code were: loudspeakers, neighborhood businesses, B1 and B2 differentiation, and how mobile homes would be treated in various zoning districts. Adult-oriented businesses were zoned into B2 with a required buffer around certain public services. Rural and agricultural use was brought up for discussion, though much of that will be dictated by the Ohio Revised Code. Trying to avoid vague and non-specific regulations was seen as an important goal. Mr. Eichenberg recommended not including anything in the code that's not in our purview.

Due to time constraints, a motion was made to table further discussion of the Albany zoning code by Mr. Hornsby. Ms. Thornton seconded.

Dearing: Yes; Fernow: Yes; Hornsby: Yes; Robinson: Yes; Thornton: Yes

APPROVAL OF PAYMENT TO ROUND RIVER PLANNING & DESIGN

Mr. Dearing motioned to accept Mr. Eichenberg's invoice dated January 8, 2020, to be submitted to the trustees for payment. Mr. Dearing noted that the Commission appreciated Mr. Eichenberg's insight and expertise. Robinson seconded.

Dearing: Yes; Fernow: Yes; Hornsby: Yes; Robinson: Yes; Thornton: Yes

MOTION TO HOLD ADDITIONAL MEETING ON JANUARY 29th

Mr. Dearing motioned to add an additional monthly meeting to the Commission's agenda on January 29, 2020. Robinson seconded. The trustees will be contacted for appropriate advertisement.

Dearing: Yes; Fernow: Yes; Hornsby: Yes; Robinson: Yes; Thornton: Yes

PUBLIC Q & A

No public present

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mr. Dearing made a motion to adjourn at 7:52pm. Mr. Hornsby seconded. The next regular meeting was scheduled for January 22, 2020.

Dearing: Yes; Fernow: Yes; Hornsby: Yes; Robinson: Yes; Thornton: Yes