

The Athens Township Zoning Commission  
Regular Meeting January 8, 2020  
6pm The Plains Public Library  
Meeting Minutes

The Athens Township Zoning Commission met in regular session on January 8, 2020 at 6pm at The Plains Public Library, 14 S. Plains Rd. The Plains

### **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Chairperson Sean Jones called the Commission to order at 6pm. Commission members Sean Jones, Rick Fernow, Brian Dearing, Ken Robinson, and alternate Teena Thornton were in attendance. Consultant Bob Eichenberg was also present.

### **MOTION TO ACCEPT MINUTES FOR 12/18/2019**

Mr. Jones 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.

Jones: Yes; Fernow: Yes; Thornton: Yes; Robinson: Yes; Dearing: Abstained

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public in attendance

### **WEBSITE**

Mr. Jones led a short discussion concerning the website. Mr. Robinson said he hoped to meet with Mr. Warmke from Eden Marketing sometime next week. The Athens Township Trustees paid the entire bill for the website upgrade, leaving the Commission budget untouched. Mr. Dearing said he was having problems syncing emails, with no response from Eden Marketing. It was informally decided that a Q&A section will be the initial focus of the website. Mr. Dearing has FAQs from the original petition which could be the basis of the Q&A section. It was deemed wise to get as much information out to the public as possible. Mr. Eichenberg said misinformation is what killed zoning in Nelsonville. Mr. Jones thought we should have section where public could ask us questions. "What zoning does and does not do" could be the overall theme. Mr. Eichenberg noted, for example, that zoning doesn't take care of trash, fire hazards, or dilapidated buildings; those are jobs for health and fire department officials. Mr. Robinson asked if we were ready to do a survey. Mr. Jones thought we should wait for public input until we had gone over the code some more and had a structure set.

### **REVIEW OF PRELIMINARY MAP**

Discussion continued on the rough outline of the proposed zoning map. Moving left to right on the map, each section was once again discussed. The merits of placing an R2 next to R1 for a buffer against the business districts – b1 (business light) and B2 (larger business) – were once again agreed upon. The Commission discussed mobile homes and placement in the community. Mr. Dearing reminded us that Trustee Steve Pierson said that you couldn't ban mobile home parks. Mr. Dearing made note that he doesn't want to ban trailers in The Plains. A question arose that since low income housing should be near services, should placement of mobile home parks be

closer to 682? Mr. Eichenberg said that mobile home parks are a legal entity, requiring licensure; zoning regulations, like setbacks and lot lines, would help reduce the potential for unofficial mobile home parks and the sharing of sewage/water lines. Mr. Jones saw no problem with mobile home parks as long as they are separate entities. Mr. Fernow suggested a special T1 designation for trailer parks.

Making the Slater/Gamertsfelder area into an R1 district appeared to be unofficially settled. The mapping continued to follow the lot lines instead of dividing them. Squaring off the area to be zoned was fundamental, going south as far as the Zion Church. The Commission continued outlining business districts further south on 682, since many already exist. Mr. Eichenberg noted that what utilities are available may determine use. Next up was a discussion of rural and farm districts. Mr. Jones proposed that we have separate zoning designations for rural and farming. Questions about backdooring an R1 into a farm district arose. Mr. Jones felt a farm district would help prevent such a backdoor entry to residential use. Both Mr. Dearing and Mr. Robinson made remarks intimating that only having two areas as a farm/rural district could be seen as targeting (or even giving preference to) specific owners. Ms. Thornton said we couldn't look at current property owners when making decisions, and we should be focused on land use. Mr. Eichenberg said that the Commission must have a rationale for any zoned designation; R1, farm or otherwise. Open space areas were discussed, as preserving green space was seen as essential to the overall zoning plan.

It should continue to be noted that no final zoning map has been set and is subject to further discussion and review.

#### **PUBLIC Q & A**

No public in attendance

#### **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Chairman Jones made a motion to adjourn at 7:37pm. Mr. Fernow seconded. The next regular meeting was scheduled for January 15, 2020.

Jones: Yes; Fernow: Yes; Dearing: Yes; Robinson: Yes; Thornton: Yes