

The Athens Township Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting November 13, 2019
6pm The Plains Public Library
Meeting Minutes

The Athens Township Zoning Commission met in regular session on November 13, 2019 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, Brian Dearing, Rick Fernow, Ken Robinson, and alternate Michael Hornsby were in attendance. Consultant Bob Eichenberg was also present.

MOTION TO ACCEPT MINUTES FOR 10/16/2019

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. Dearing seconded.

Jones: Yes; Dearing: Yes; Fernow: Yes; Hornsby: Yes; Robinson: Yes

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Jones opened the meeting to public comment. Teena Thornton from The Plains was the only member of the public in attendance. She had no comment, but volunteered to be an alternate for the Commission.

RESIGNATION OF THURLIN MAYNARD AND APPOINTMENT OF MICHAEL HORNSBY AND TINA THORTON

The Commission accepted the resignation of Thurlin Maynard, and asked Michael Hornsby to accept Mr. Maynard's position, pursuant to the approval by the Township Trustees. Mr. Hornsby accepted.

Mr. Jones made a motion to ask the Trustees to accept Ms. Thornton as an alternate. Mr. Robinson seconded.
Jones: Yes; Dearing: Yes; Fernow: Yes; Hornsby: Yes; Robinson: Yes

Mr. Jones will send a letter to the Trustees requesting formal action for both Mr. Hornsby and Ms. Thornton

FACEBOOK DISCUSSION

Mr. Dearing updated the Commission on the creation of a Facebook page. Mr. Dearing said it will be difficult to fully create a Facebook account - because of verification requirements - until the webpage is set up by Eden Marketing. You can also verify with official documents, although Mr. Jones wondered if the recent article about the Zoning Commission by Fred Kight would suffice. Mr. Dearing encouraged others to create Facebook accounts so that they can make comments on his progress so far. He noted that linking of official Commission documents as PDFs shouldn't be a problem. Athens Township Zoning Commission is the name of the Facebook page.

CONVERSATION WITH MUSKINGUM TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE PRESIDENT

Mr. Dearing had a phone conversation with Muskingum Township Trustee President Ken Schilling to get a better idea of how zoning in Devola has worked over the years. Mr. Dearing distributed Devola's fee schedule. Some of the fees seemed excessive; however, Mr. Schilling said that the fees are to pay a part-time employee of the township to enforce the zoning code (she gets 80% of each permit application, as an incentive). Mr. Schilling advised that working with local prosecutors often was burdensome, since they were busy with serious criminal matters, and his township had hired outside legal representation from Columbus that specialize in zoning. Mr. Schilling warned that the Devola code was anti-business, in many regards, because Devola wanted to separate itself from the construction happening across the river during the time the code was written in the 1950s. He also warned the Commission to beware of agricultural regulations and to attempt to utilize straight lines and natural boundaries as our zoning map was developed.

LAND USE MAP

A short discussion with Mr. Eichenberg about his land use map, previously emailed to the Commission, followed. A land parcel layer, using data from the Athens County Auditor, via GIS, was utilized. Mr. Eichenberg said the map "tells the story of how The Plains has been developed". He attempted to group similar uses by color coding. He said we could use the RGIS software to pull up various attributes of each land parcel, such as streets and natural landmarks. Mr. Eichenberg offered to bring in his computer to utilize the software and said that we could take whatever map we start with and recode the parcels as necessary. Mr. Jones suggested we could upload the Google map the Commission had created to RGIS, and upload each zone as they are created.

DEVOLA CODE

The Commission agreed to continue looking at the Devola code and then come back to the maps afterward, roughly following Mr. Eichenberg's suggested schedule. Extended discussion followed, wrapping up both R1 and R2 regulations. Subjects under discussion included: front yard footage setbacks; corner lot footage and how such lots would conform to the different setbacks on each block; and defining rear yards. Mr. Dearing raised the issue of open and closed alleyways. Mr. Eichenberg noted that he likes alleyways for access. For prime residential neighborhoods, a minimum of 15 feet from an alley was supported. R2s (multi-family residences) were discussed, which will include all of the R1 regulations, including desired setbacks. A small debate on wind turbines ensued; to allow flexibility of size and wing expanse, it was agreed that such structures would be allowed as long as they did not fall onto a neighboring property in the event of collapse. Poundage of commercial vehicles and parking requirements were also discussed. In regard to the former, a maximum weight of 14,000 pounds per vehicle was allowed; to the latter, a minimum of 2 parking spaces was agreed upon. Mr. Eichenberg noticed during his travels around The Plains that many duplexes and triplexes had parking right off the street, and suggested the need for a minimum buffer in order to preserve road frontage. A suggestion was also made for the need for a separate section dealing with parking regulations.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

With no public comment, Mr. Jones made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:41pm. Mr. Dearing seconded. Jones: Yes; Dearing: Yes; Fernow: Yes; Hornsby: Yes; Robinson: Yes