

The Athens Township Zoning Commission
Regular Meeting December 18, 2019
6pm The Plains Public Library
Meeting Minutes

The Athens Township Zoning Commission met in regular session on December 18, 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, Rick Fernow, Ken Robinson, Michael Hornsby, and alternate Teena Thornton were in attendance. Consultant Bob Eichenberg was also present.

MOTION TO ACCEPT MINUTES FOR 12/11/2019

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. Ms. Thornton did not vote but a quorum was reached. Jones: Yes; Fernow: Yes; Hornsby: Yes; Robinson: Yes

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comment

DISCUSSION OF ATHENS HOUSING INSPECTION CODE; SUGGESTIONS FROM MR. EICHENBERG

Mr. Eichenberg stated he had not received a response from Athens County Assistant Prosecutor Zachary Saunders pertaining to the jurisdiction of housing inspections under zoning boards. Mr. Eichenberg also encouraged the Commission to think about density, drainage, crime and other problem areas that may impact our discussion when drawing the zoning map. For example: Are there adequate water and sewer possibilities where we are considering more density? He also cited Mr. Fernow's concentric example when developing zoning districts as useful guidance. Mr. Jones noted undeveloped areas may be best kept R3.

PRELIMINARY ZONING MAP

Discussion continued on the Commission's preliminary zoning map, with great progress made on the broad outline of the map, including placement of R1, R2, R3, business and special districts (parks and rural). B1 districts were agreed to go one block back, though only one side of the street would be made B1 to allow for business growth and development. Both Mr. Fernow and Mr. Robinson argued there was no harm going a block further than the Route 682 corridor, especially since B1 districts take into account and allow for residential use within the code. Moving further south on 682, the property lines demanded a more zigzag approach to the zoning areas. Mobile home parks were touched upon, and whether we should label them R1/R2 or make them a B1. Discussion continued toward creating a mix of R1, R2 and R3 districts throughout The Plains. The Commission strived not to divide lots into differently zoned areas. The Commission also took into account existing use in regard to historically residential areas and attempted to maintain that for zoning purposes. For example, the area between 682 and the high school was deemed best to maintain as an R1 to preserve the flavor of the community.

Agricultural/rural zoning around the river and the sewage treatment plant was preliminarily agreed upon. As a floodplain, it may make the most sense to designate for agricultural use. There was a suggestion that R3 districts made sense nearer to 682 because of the access to businesses, services, bus lines, and sidewalks for those in larger multi-family complexes. In regard to Connett Rd, Mr. Eichenberg recommended an R2 or R3 district to buffer the proposed R1 district surrounding the elementary school. The Connett area was seen as having a mixed-use reality and was divided into business and residential. Mr. Eichenberg encouraged the Commission to be restrictive if in doubt, altering the districts later if desired. Preservation of single family residences within the lower west side area of The Plains was advocated for by Mr. Robinson.

Throughout the discussion, the Commission attempted to keep its plan simple. 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 questions

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Chairman Jones made a motion to adjourn at 7:48pm. Mr. Fernow seconded. The next regular meeting was scheduled for January 8, 2020.

Jones: Yes; Fernow: Yes; Hornsby: Yes; Robinson: Yes; Thornton: Yes