



July 29, 2021

REVISED August 10, 2021

Athens Township Zoning Commission
313 West Union Street
Athens, Ohio 45701-2327

Dear members of the Athens Township Zoning Commission,

Below is a letter we included alongside the Application for Zoning Certificate we submitted that was received on 8/9/21. All of the below information remains relevant, but I will add responses to the items needing a written statement, as required by the Application for Conditional Use Permit, which we are submitting here.

Please accept this letter and attached documents as formal application for a Zoning Certificate for 30 Connett Road The Plains, Ohio Parcel ID: A040240100200. The primary purpose of this request is to seek approval for the construction of a new facility for our Athens Head Start program. This is a federally-funded early childhood education program, licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, for children ages 3-5. This proposal is relatively time-sensitive as our offer to purchase the property is contingent upon approval by this commission to move forward as described. In full transparency, the attached drawing and layout for the proposed facility is in draft form only at this time, but the general footprint of the facility will remain the same. If we were able to move forward with the project, we would work collaboratively with the architects to design the final plan, which we would be happy to share with this Commission. As a note on this item, it is our intention to build an energy efficient, net zero Head Start Center that could serve as a model for other programs across the country.

We have been administering quality Head Start programming in Athens County for decades—in fact, one of our first centers was located in the Plains and we operated out of that facility for many years, until we faced a significant funding cut and were forced to consolidate our operations. We have been renting program space in Athens for many years and would love to be able to come home to the Plains, where it all started. Our Athens Head Start Center is 5-Star Rated in Ohio's Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) rating system and many of the children learning in our classrooms in Athens actually live in The Plains. We are currently serving 36 center-based children (the children come to the center for their school day), 6 home-based Head Start

3 Cardaras Drive • PO Box 220 • Glouster, Ohio 45732 • 740-767-4500 • 800-686-1093

hapcap.org
Opportunity in Action

children, and 24 Early Head Start children. Early Head Start is an evidence-based home visiting program from pregnant mothers and children from birth to age 3.

The construction of this potential facility is absolutely our primary objective with the purchase of this land. The parcel we are pursuing also has on it an existing structure, a home, measuring approximately 1,230 square feet and built in 1900, according to the Athens County Auditor's website. Our organization, Hocking Athens Perry Community Action (HAPCAP) operates an incredibly wide range of programs and services—see www.hapcap.org for more information. Included in the programs we operate outside of Head Start are the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), HAPCAP for Health, the Southeast Ohio Foodbank, and Emergency Rental Assistance for families. Again, our primary application is for the construction of the Head Start facility, but if the Commission were open to utilizing the existing house for office space, we would love to be able to provide services to families in Athens County from that location. Our main office is in Glouster, which is a great distance for families in some parts of the county. Additionally, Athens Public Transit, which we also operate, runs down 682 and being able to provide services from the Connett Road location would help make our services more accessible to families without reliable transportation.

We welcome the opportunity to speak with you more about this project and are available to speak at your next meeting, scheduled on August 11th. In the interim, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (740) 767-4500 or by email at kelly.hatas@hapcap.org. Thank you for your consideration.

****New information as of August 10, 2021:**

- **The application requires “3. A written statement addressing the following findings required by the Board of Appeals:”**
 - a. **How the establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, morals or general welfare.**

Response: As described in the letter above, there are two proposed uses being sought: **1)** The construction and operation of a Head Start center, a federally-funded early childhood education program, licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, for children ages 3-5. We are currently serving 36 center-based children (the children come to the center for their school day), 6 home-based Head Start children, and 24 Early Head Start children. Early Head Start is an evidence-based home visiting program from pregnant mothers and children from birth to age 3. Head Start is heavily researched program: the innumerable benefits appear immediately, last a lifetime, and even have an effect on other generations according

to the National Head Start Association (<https://www.nhsa.org/knowledge-center/center-for-policy-data-and-research/facts-and-impacts/>). Specifically:

By the end of the program:

- Head Start children make progress towards norms in language, literacy, and math. Head Start children also score at the norm on letter-word knowledge by the end of the year. (Aikens et al., 2013; Bloom and Weiland, 2015)
- Early Head Start children show significantly better social-emotional, language, and cognitive development. Children who attend Early Head Start and transition to Head Start are more ready for kindergarten than children who do not attend Head Start. (Love et al., 2002)
- The Head Start Impact Study found Head Start children scored better than a control group of children in all measured domains of cognitive and social-emotional development. (U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, 2010)
- Head Start children in foster care or other non-parental care are more ready for school. (Lipscomb et al., 2013)
- Head Start children have better social skills, impulse control, and approaches to learning. Head Start children also decrease their problem behaviors, such as aggression and hyperactivity. (Aikens et al., 2013)
- Obese, overweight, or underweight children who participate in Head Start have a significantly healthier BMI by kindergarten entry. (Lumeng et al., 2015)
- Children in Early Head Start are more likely to be immunized and have services for children with disabilities (Love et al., 2002).
- Head Start children are more likely to receive dental checkups and have healthy eating patterns than non-participants. They have lower body mass index (BMI) scores and are less likely to be overweight compared to children in other non-parental care. (Lee et al., 2013)
- When families participate in Head Start (as opposed to no ECE), children are 93% less likely to end up in foster care, a correlation not found by participating in any other types of ECE. (Klein et. al., 2017)
- Children show additional gains in social-emotional development as a result of participating in Head Start at both 3 and 4 years old. (Aikens et al., 2013)

Throughout K-12:

- Compared with children in parental care, Head Start children performed considerably better on cognitive and social-emotional measures in kindergarten and had fewer attention problems and exhibited fewer negative behaviors. (Zhai et al., 2011)
- Head Start graduates in the Baltimore City Schools enter kindergarten with higher attendance levels than their peers and maintain those levels through third grade. (Connolly and Olson, 2012)
- Full-day Head Start children in the Montgomery County Public Schools were more likely to meet reading benchmarks by the end of kindergarten, compared to students who had

3 Cardaras Dr. • P.O. Box 220 • Glouster, Ohio 45732 • 740-767-4500 • 800-686-1093

hapcap.org

half-day preschool or no preschool. The students also required half as many special education services per week as their peers without the MCPS preschool experience. (Zhao and Modarresi, 2010)

- Mortality rates for 5- to 9-year-old children who had attended Head Start are 33 to 50 percent lower than the rates for comparable children who were not enrolled in Head Start. (Ludwig and Miller, 2007)
- Children who attend Early Head Start have significantly fewer child welfare encounters during their elementary years. (Green et al., 2014)
- Head Start children in Harrisburg had higher mean scores in the fifth grade than a control group on all academic and executive functioning outcomes. (Greenberg and Domitrovich, 2011)
- Early Head Start shows positive impacts on participants' social-emotional functioning that last through fifth grade. (Vogel et al., 2010)
- Head Start children in Tulsa, OK, have higher math test scores in 8th grade, are less likely to be chronically absent, and less likely to be held back a year by 8th grade. (Phillips et al., 2016)

As adults:

- Head Start children have a higher likelihood of graduating high school, attending college, and receiving a post-secondary degree, license, or certification. (Bauer and Schanzenbach, 2016)
- Head Start students are more likely to graduate high school, more likely to go to at least one year of college, less likely to be out of school and unemployed, and less likely to be in poor health. (Deming, 2009)
- Among children who attended Head Start in the 1960s-70s, white children were 28.3% more likely than their siblings to complete high school and 27.6% more likely to attend college. (Garces et al., 2002)
- Head Start improves adult health status for graduates; they are 7% less likely to be in poor health as adults than their siblings who did not attend. (Johnson, 2010; Deming, 2009)
- As adults, Head Start graduates are 19% less likely to smoke than their siblings who did not attend. The savings from these reduced health costs are equal to 36%-141% of the program costs. (Anderson et al., 2010)
- Among children who attended Head Start in the 1960s-70s, African American children who attended Head Start were 12% less likely to be arrested or charged with a crime compared to their siblings. (Garces et al., 2002)
- Compared to siblings who did not attend, Head Start graduates demonstrated improved educational attainment, adult health status, and wages, and decreased grade repetition and incarceration rates for black males. (Johnson, 2011)
- Exploring the evidence on lasting effects of Head Start for children and society both from and beyond the Head Start Impact Study shows the long-term effects and benefit-cost ratio of Head Start. (Karoly and Auger, 2016)

Other generations:

- Early Head Start parents offer more stimulating home environments, read more with children, use less physical punishment, and have higher levels of self-sufficiency. (Love et al., 2002)
- Head Start parents are more likely to increase their educational levels during their children's early years than other at-risk parents. (Sabol and Chase-Lansdale, 2014)
- Head Start parents invest more time in learning activities with their children, and non-resident fathers spend more days per month with their children. (Gelber and Isen, 2011)
- Head Start graduates report investing more in their own children; their children benefited from more positive parenting practices. Head Start graduates spent more teaching their own children numbers, letters, colors, and shapes, more time praising their children, showed their children more physical affection, spent more time doing the child's favorite activities, and reported spanking their children less. (Bauer and Schanzenbach, 2016)
- The children of Head Start graduates are significantly more likely to finish high school and enroll in college and they are significantly less likely to become teen parents or to be involved in the criminal justice system. (Barr and Gibbs, 2017)

This research points to the amazing benefits of Head Start; the approval of this application will be a benefit to the community at large. The second part of this proposal is as follows: **2)** Convert the existing home located on the property into office space for HAPCAP programming in general. The home measures approximately 1,230 square feet and was built in 1900, according to the Athens County Auditor's website. Our organization, Hocking Athens Perry Community Action (HAPCAP) operates an incredibly wide range of programs and services—see www.hapcap.org for more information. Included in the programs we operate outside of Head Start are the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) which helps folks pay their utility bills, HAPCAP for Health, the Southeast Ohio Foodbank, Emergency Rental Assistance for families, and soon a water bill payment assistance program among many others. Again, our primary application is for the construction of the Head Start facility, but if the Commission were open to utilizing the existing house for office space, we would love to be able to provide services to families in Athens County from that location. Our main office is in Glouster, which is a great distance for families in some parts of the county. Additionally, Athens Public Transit, which we also operate, runs down 682 and being able to provide services from the Connett Road location would help make our services more accessible to families without reliable transportation. ***Our mission is to mobilize resources to empower individuals and communities through advocacy and quality services that promote self-sufficiency and improved quality of life.***

- b. How the conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, or will not substantially diminish and impair property value within the neighborhood.**

Response: The valuation for the parcel as of 2020 was \$116,820, comprised of \$47,380 valuation on the land and \$69,440 on the house. If approved, we intend to make improvements to the property as detailed above: the construction of a net zero Head Start facility and we would also make improvements as needed to the existing structure should the plan be approved to convert the house to office space. For both project plans, it is our intent to keep those open during normal business hours (Monday through Friday 8:00-4:00 at this time). We may hold special events at the facility and also have staff arriving early or staying late at times, but we do not anticipate this to be disruptive to the neighborhood.

c. How the establishment of the conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding property uses permitted in the district.

Response: We do not anticipate this impeding neighboring property in any way. While there may be some increased traffic, especially during drop off and pick up times, as referenced in the drawing, we have planned for a flow of traffic around the proposed structure, along with ample parking. It is also fully our intention to be a part of the community—we are already serving many families from the Plains area at our existing leased facility in Athens. We would continue to do so at the proposed location. Further, if approved for the conversion of the existing structure to general HAPCAP office space, we would be open to the public to provide help and resources.

d. Have adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and other necessary facilities have been or are being provided?

Response: The existing structure is currently connected to all necessary utilities. The construction of the new Head Start structure would need to access those as well. Our actual plans shall be developed by RVC and shall account for all other items required here including access and drainage.

e. Have adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets?

Response: As mentioned in item c, traffic will flow around the proposed structure. The proposed location of 30 Connett Road does not seem to be heavily travelled, but there is a traffic light at the intersection of Connett and SR 682, which should certainly help to mitigate any potential congestion/flow challenges. We also recognize and respect that the Plains Volunteer Fire Department is located across the street. We would be happy to be their neighbor and also see great opportunities for field trips to the Fire Station, should they be willing to host our children and teachers!

f. Is the conditional use located in a district where such use is permitted and all requirements set forth in this Zoning Code applicable to such conditional use being met?

Response: The proposed property, 30 Connett Road, is in an R-2 multifamily zone. We believe that the conditional use is in a district where such use is indeed permitted. Page 74, Table 1 identifies “Public or Private School” a Conditional Use in an R-2. While there is also a footnote constricting that definition of school as K-12, I believe the spirit of the code is to include all schools, of which Head Start is one, as defined on page 61: “**School.** Any public or private educational facility including, but not limited to, child day care facilities, nursery schools, preschools, kindergartens, elementary schools, primary schools, intermediate schools, junior high schools, middle schools, high schools, vocational schools, secondary schools, and special education schools”. The second proposed use is to convert the existing home into office space for the delivery of social services to the public. While all of this is certainly up to the interpretation of the Zoning Commission, it is reasonable that this could fall into the defined zoning code category on page 60: “**Quasi-public use.** Churches, Sunday schools, parochial schools, private colleges/universities, hospitals, and other facilities of an educational, religious, *charitable, philanthropic, or nonprofit nature*”. HAPCAP is a charitable 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Quasi-public use is notably not referenced again in the code aside from that definition, but again, I think the spirit of “Utility and Public service buildings and uses” listed in Table 1 on page 74 could well include HAPCAP providing critical social services to the public from the proposed location.

In reviewing your mission statement, ‘*To preserve the character of the Plains and guide its development for the benefit of its citizens, the Athens Township Zoning Commission is dedicated to the long-term development of The Plains, Ohio, with an eye toward neighborhood preservation and economic sustainability*’, I cannot help but think that this proposal checks many of your goal boxes—programs that benefit citizens of The Plains, jobs in the community, and quality early childhood education. Thank you all for your consideration of this project; we welcome Commission and community feedback and are available at any time to provide any more information you might need to inform your decision.

Sincerely,



Kelly Hatas, MPA
Executive Director
HAPCAP

