

ATHENS COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

ATHENS COUNTY, OHIO

MINUTES FROM JUNE 8, 2023 MEETING

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

ATHENS COUNTY: Gregg Andrews, Warren Jeffers, Neal Reynolds

ATHENS CITY/COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT – Jack Pepper

ATHENS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: Charlie Adkins, Chris Chmiel

ATHENS CITY: Solvieg Spjeldnes, Rob Delach

CITY OF NELSONVILLE – Devon Tolliver

VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVE: Gary Goosman

TOWNSHIP REPRESENTATIVE: Steve Pierson

ATHENS COUNTY ENGINEER – Jeff Maiden

NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Jason Pyles, Jeff Jenkins, Glen Crippen, Bryan Hinkle, Selena Cottrill (Proxy for Mollie Fitzgerald), Isla Skinner

CALL TO ORDER:

Upon determination that a quorum of at least nine (9) voting members was present, President Warren Jeffers called the June 8, 2023 meeting of the Athens County Regional Planning Commission to order at 8:00 AM. The meeting was held at the ACEMS Station #51, 21 Kenny Drive, Athens, OH 45701.

GUESTS PRESENT:

MINUTES:

Motion by Chris Chmiel seconded by Neal Reynolds to approve as presented the meeting minutes of the May 11, 2023 Athens County Regional Planning Commission. All voted yes, motion passed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

NEW BUSINESS:

- Runser Plat
 - One lot subdivision due to a new easement creation. The plat was shared among the group for review. Jack Pepper asked if Planner Laura Olbers had any hesitations, to which she had none. Commissioner Chmiel made a motion to approve the subdivision plat. Neal Reynolds seconded. Motion approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Breezeway Subdivision
 - A plat amendment to create a second lot on a one lot subdivision for Bruce Strickland. Neal Reynolds made a motion to approve. Mayor Goosman seconded. Motion approved.

CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS

- **City/County Sewer Expansion Project/Commissioner Adkins**
 - Project is moving along. Commissioner Adkins was out on Baker Rd this morning and that section will be hooked up.
 - \$1.9 million paving project was taken out of ARPA money.
- **Athens County Land Bank/ Commissioner Chmiel**
 - There will be another round of state funding for demolitions coming up. The land bank does not have to own those properties, they just need consent from the property owners. If anyone knows of any properties, reach out to the land bank to get it on the list. It is a “first come, first serve” situation. This is a great opportunity to clean up blighted properties.
 - The land bank is remodeling a house in Glouster on Maple Street. They are working with Sanborn Brothers as well as interns from Tri-County Vocational School
 - A small grant from the Economic Development Council was secured for structural analysis for the downtown Glouster buildings. The Village of Glouster is doing a historical district.
- **Broadband Expansion and Access/Jeff Jenkins**
 - There’s a little movement on the Amesville project. Jeff Jenkins is meeting with the Governor’s Office of Appalachia today. ARC has new guidance and met last week with the 13 states. An update is expected for next week.
- **Age Friendly Athens County (AFAC)/Jack Pepper**
 - Amy Lipka has been hired as the new Director for Age Friendly Athens County. She is getting settled in her role and has already started meeting with folks.
- **SR 682 Corridor**
 - Commissioner Adkins and Laura Olbers attended the ODOT Community Update meeting recently. Commissioner Adkins questioned ODOT about the incoming roundabouts at the 682/33 interchange about traffic flow with shut downs. ODOT assured them that traffic will not be shut down.
 - The Active Transportation group did a walk audit of the section between the service station to the River Road bikeway crossing. ODOT’s Eric Davis was in attendance. Participants provided comments that will be compiled and given to ODOT.
- **Appalachian Community Grants**
 - Isla Skinner shared that the Strouds Run State Park beach project was awarded \$14,000 for engineering technical assistance to plan the accessible beach access.
 - Commissioner Chmiel mentioned that some communities are meeting with a planning group called Design Local.
 - Neal Reynolds shared that plans are moving forward with the Armory Project.

PLANNER’S REPORT: Laura Olbers

- We are seeing a lot of one lot subdivisions coming through so expect more plats to come before this group
- The active transportation group is ramping up. They are starting to get out into the community and doing tabling events. Walk audits are being scheduled, members of the ACRPC are highly encouraged to attend. Tabling events will be scheduled soon. The Active Transportation Survey is up and ready to be distributed.

- The Planner’s Office submitted a Natureworks Grant to ODNR for improvements at Ferndale Park.

CITY, VILLAGE, TOWNSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:

- **Village of Amesville/Gary Goosman**
 - Mayor Goosman was asking members about ARPA claw backs. Mr. Pierson said that he was encourage to spend the money before that happens
- **City of Athens/ Solvieg Spjeldnes**
 - Athens City Council is going to vote on The Ridges Redevelopment plan next Thursday at 8:00am. They do not expect any opposition.
- **Athens Township/Steve Pierson**
 - Steve Pierson reiterated his concerns about traffic along Connett Rd with the new 911 building. Commissioner Adkins suggested that Mr. Pierson reach out to the 911 director to discuss those concerns. Mr. Pierson also reminded the group that HAPCAP will be opening their head start soon so that will also impact the level of traffic along that corridor.
 - Mr. Pierson mentioned that one issue with the zoning is that residents are complaining about conditions at the trailer park in The Plains. He emphasized that zoning does not cover this, mobile home parks are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Commerce Manufactured Homes Program.
 - Next Monday the Township and the County will be closing Hooper Road which goes back to the Richland Area Fire Department. The bridge is narrow and the guardrails keep falling off, but structurally the bridge doesn’t rank high on the County’s ranking. The township purchased a new box culvert to be installed. The big concerns are the traffic and the fire department.
- **Athens City-County Health Department/Jack Pepper**
 - COVID cases are way down, but the HD is still tracking them and paying attention. They are getting back to their regular programs they had offered before the pandemic.
 - Isla Skinner shared that later in the summer an outdoor accessibility survey will be launched.
 - Chauncey’s bus shelter is being installed but they are currently waiting on a bench.
- **Village of Albany/Council President Neal Reynolds**
 - Fields Excavating started on the Carpenter Road lift station. Expecting a little bit of a hold for the electrical equipment but it’s moving right along.
 - The Village was awarded \$400,000 from ODOT’s Transportation Alternatives Program for sidewalk replacements along Washington Road area.
 - The Village is working with Buckeye Hills on revamping the downtown area.
- **HAPCAP/Jeff Jenkins, Bryan Hinkle**
 - CBDG Allocation funds: This is Athens County and the City of Athens off-year to apply. This grant funds programs that other grants cannot.
 - The Ridges is in the design phase for the HVAC at the museum right now. Chauncey water expansion is in the design phase. New Leaf is also in design. New Marshfield/Waterloo area sewer project put a statement of qualifications for engineering.
 - Athens Public Transit is finally at capacity where they are running Monday through Saturday for their fixed lines. The route to Nelsonville has reached levels

of ridership to the point that a second bus has been added. It is now running every hour as opposed to every two hours.

- Athens Public Transit is working on securing local funds to build a new transportation garage. On Friday, a OTP grant application to ODOT was submitted, which can be used for local match if awarded. It would also include upgrades to the dispatching software, which needs to be done by the end of next year. The new garage would bring all the offices into one building, creating a transportation hub. It will also allow for future expansion.
- Athens On Demand, the door-to-door transportation has been awarded a non-emergency medical contract from Job and Family Services. This allows them to provide transportation at no cost. All Athens On Demand vehicles are wheelchair accessible.
- **City of Nelsonville/ Devon Tolliver**
 - City Sewer project is starting to wrap up. They finally got the control panels they've been waiting on. The sewer plant will be fully operational in September.
 - Downtown revitalization project includes new sidewalks and lighting on Washington Street, looking to start that in September/October timeline.
- **Athens County Engineer's Office/ Jeff Maiden**
 - Signed a bridge contract with Alan Stone Company to be completed by the end of the year.
 - Two bridge projects will go out to bid next week.
 - Joy Road Bridge was open May 31st.
 - The Engineers office had a preconstruction meeting with Shelly and Sands for a large project of paving 21-22 miles of asphalt
- **Athens County Commissioners/Commissioner Adkins, Commissioner Chmiel**
 - The Board of Commissioners entered into a contract with Elford Inc. for the new 911/EMA building. That will be an \$11.3 million dollar build. Hoping to start sometime in July with an anticipated 12-month turnaround. Mr. Jeffers asked how much of the land will be used for this project. Commissioner Adkins stated that, with parking, most of that parcel will be taken up. Commissioner Adkins said he would provide a map to the Planner to bring to next month's meeting
 - There is a Community Improvement team out of Hockingport. One of their ideas is to get a river access point with a dock. One of the buildings is going to be torn down by the Landbank
- **Ohio University/ Jason Pyles**
 - Ohio University will be having a meeting later this month to discuss their capital improvement plan and the plan for The Ridges. Mr. Pyles will be providing updates at the July Regional Planning meeting.
- **Athens County Economic Development Council/ Selena Cottrill**
 - EDC is continuing to work with the Village of Albany to build out the industrial park on Carpenter Road. They are also working on sites for the next round of brownfield funding. They are also beginning to break ground on the port authority spec building at the industrial park in The Plains at the end of July.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

Mr. Jeffers mentioned that The Plains is going to be celebrating 40 years of the Lions Club. The Lions Club has a MOU with Athens Township to oversee the community park.

There being no further business to come before the Commission and no additional comments for good of the order, on a motion by Neal Reynolds, seconded Charlie Adkins by adjourned the meeting at 9:00 AM.

The July 13th, 2022 meeting of the Athens County Regional Planning Commission is anticipated to be conducted at the Athens County EMS Station 51, 21 Kenny Drive, Athens, Ohio at 8:00 AM.

Respectfully Submitted by Laura Olbers, Director, Athens County Regional Planning Commission

Approved by: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____