**ATHENS COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

**ATHENS COUNTY, OHIO**

**MINUTES FROM july 13, 2023 MEETING**

**VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:**

ATHENS COUNTY: Warren Jeffers, Neal Reynolds, Boone Troyer, Jason Morosko

ATHENS CITY/COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT **–** Jack Pepper

ATHENS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: Charlie Adkins, Lenny Eliason

ATHENS CITY: Steve Patterson, Rob Delach

CITY OF NELSONVILLE – Devon Tolliver

VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVE: Gary Goosman

TOWNSHIP REPRESENTATIVE: Steve Pierson

ATHENS COUNTY ENGINEER – Jeff Maiden

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT**: Cathy Bobo, Scott Dunfee, Meredith Erlewine, Jason Pyles, Mollie Fitzgerald, Matt \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Upon determination that a quorum of at least nine (9) voting members was present, President Warren Jeffers called the July 13, 2023 meeting of the Athens County Regional Planning Commission to order at 8:03 AM. The meeting was held at the ACEMS Station #51, 21 Kenny Drive, Athens, OH 45701.

**GUESTS PRESENT**: Amy Lipka, Drew Daniels

**MINUTES:**

Motion by Neal Reynolds seconded by Rob Delach to approve as presented the meeting minutes of the June 8, 2023 Athens County Regional Planning Commission. All voted yes, motion passed.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** A moment of silence was had for former Regional Planning Commission President Paul Logue.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

* McClain Subdivision
  + This is phase two of a subdivision that was created out of a new easement. Property owners are re-subdividing this land, vacating the phase one plat and hoping to adopt the phase two plat. The Athens County Engineer’s Office has signed off on this plat. The Athens City County Health Department stated that they had given preliminary approval based around specific language earlier this year. Their approval is contingent upon the property owners providing that language on their final legal description. They have yet to receive that. President Jeffers asked if there was a motion from the group. Commissioner Adkins made a motion to approve the subdivision based upon the final approval from the Health Department. Mayor Goosman second. All approved.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS**

* **City/County Sewer Expansion Project/ Commissioner Eliason**
  + About 45% of people who are eligible to hook up have been. The rest of the phases are moving along. Paving has begun, $2 million has been allocated for paving.
  + Mayor Patterson stated that the Dairy Lane portion of the City’s responsibility will be completed by October
* **Athens County Land Bank**
  + The Land Bank is assessing the old Hollister School building with hopes of acquiring demolition funds
* **Broadband Expansion and Access/Mayor Goosman**
  + The Amesville project is still delayed, tied up in trying to get an agreement about the final ownership of the fiber. There is uncertainty how long this will be drawn out. The RFP is ready to go as soon as this dispute is figured out.
* **Age Friendly Athens County (AFAC)/Amy Lipka**
  + Amy Lipka is settling in her role and is figuring out how to shift the group from multiple ad hoc committees into a singular advisory committee. An advisory committee meeting is set up for July 25th.
  + If anyone is interested in meeting with Amy Lipka, please reach out.
* **SR 682 Corridor**
  + Surveying is continuing. No new updates since last month.
  + The Active Transportation group will be hosting a walk audit for the 682/56 intersection later in July.
* **Appalachian Community Grants**
  + Mayor Patterson shared information on the At Work Appalachia grant. The City of Athens is the lead applicant on that and will be pitching to Jobs Ohio this afternoon. To be invited to present to that group is a positive sign. They are hopeful that the project will do well.
  + Mollie Fitzgerald shared that ORCA also received funds to continue building out their trails, as well as SAOP though there has been some back and forth that may result in the clawing back of funding.

**PLANNER’S REPORT: Laura Olbers**

* As of this date, the Planner’s office has received 8 floodplain permits and 8 subdivision requests, which is down from where things were at this point last year.
* Athens County Together ended up with a total of five teams for this year: Hockingport, Chauncey, Glouster, Amesville, New Marshfield. Glouster has requested funding for new picnic tables to outfit the new shelter house installed by the Appalachian Color in the Hills Festival at the Glouster Park.
* The Planning Office needs to start updates to the County Comprehensive Plan. They were approached by SolSmart, SOPEC hopes to get Athens County to Gold Status and needs to be included in the Comprehensive Plan for that to happen.
* The Athens County Active Transportation Group survey is live. It is accessible online, as well as paper copies found at libraries. Planner Olbers requests that this group share that survey everywhere they can think of.
* The Active Transportation Plan has a walk audit planned for July 24th at the 682/56 intersection. Another walk audit is planned for Route 13 from the Trimble Kroger to the Glouster Park on August 14th from 5:00-6:30

**CITY, VILLAGE, TOWNSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:**

* **Athens County Auditor’s Office/Scott Dunfee**
  + Currently working with a new vendor for their website. They hope to have that launched within a couple of months.
  + Regarding the GIS, the Auditors Office is hoping to do a county co-op to help fund the GIS website. There are multiple options regarding resolution. Up to this point, the GIS has been funded singularly by the Auditor’s Office. Mr. Dunfee asked members if their respective organizations would be willing to join a co-op to help fund that.
  + Rob Delach mentioned that there was a precedent for this around five years ago where other organizations had chipped in funding.
  + Mayor Patterson mentioned that the City would be willing to join and base their contribution on their population. Athens County Engineer’s Office and Athens Township made tentative commitments, as well as the Athens County Commissioners
* **Village of Amesville/Gary Goosman**
  + Amesville was awarded ODOT funds to do work on 329/550. They are planning temporary solutions until the project is completed, anticipated for 2 years from now.
  + Mayor clarified that Design Local would be at the Mayors Partnership meeting this afternoon to discuss the Appalachian Community Grant.
* **City of Athens/ Mayor Patterson, Rob Delach**
  + The 32/50 Roundabout is live.
  + New AEP service rep. Her number is 740-594-1662. If anyone has issues with AEP, call her.
  + Ohio EPA has an emergency generation grant for emergency generators for water systems. It’s for communities with a population of 10,000 or below.
  + MPP is meeting today. They were able to keep the $1 mil in the state budget to help build capacity and more.
  + City of Athens is going through their final racial equity training today.
* **Athens Township/Steve Pierson**
  + The Township is coordinating with the Board of Commissioners regarding repaving roads affected by the sewer project.
  + Elliotsville Road was just repaved and they are working on Rolling Hills before moving to Hooper Road.
  + The township has worked with the Engineer’s Office to replace a culvert and fix a crumbling bridge. Mr. Pierson mentioned how this sets an example of how townships can fund projects in collaboration with the engineer’s office.
  + Athens Township is looking forward to the groundbreaking of the 911 center. Nothing has been heard recently on HAPCAPs head start.
  + The township is encouraging property owners to take advantage of the Land Banks upcoming demolition project.
* **Village of Albany/Council President Neal Reynolds**
  + Sewer installation partnership is going along smoothly. A consulting group has been identified for the downtown area.
* **City of Nelsonville/ Devon Tolliver**
  + City Manager interviews are set to start Monday.
  + Phase 2 water project will start next week along Woodlane Drive.
  + New sewer plant has first start ups for most systems.
* **Athens County Engineer’s Office/ Jeff Maiden**
  + Hooper Rd. bridge went from 14’ wide to 20’ wide and will be open tomorrow.
  + Blackwood covered bridge has been closed but is getting worked on now.
  + Alan Stone Company has signed contracts for design/build on two bridges which won’t be completed until next year.
  + CR 31/Oakdale Rd Bridge went out to bid and was awarded to DLZ and should be finished by Thanksgiving.
  + Two really nice paving projects are coming up. $2 million in federal funds have been awarded for a $3.1 million project. Overall, almost 30 miles of road will be paved.
  + Second round of mowing has begun.
* **Athens County Commissioners/Commissioner Adkins, Commissioner Eliason**
  + The election is underway. This is the first time that the Board of Commissioners has passed a resolution encouraging voters to Vote No.
  + Board of Commissioners is receiving applications for the new EMS Chief and will be holding interviews soon.
  + 911 Center will break ground within the next couple of weeks. There will be a live stream camera that the public will be able to access to view the progress of that.
  + The Courthouse repairs cost roughly one million dollars, Lady Justice will be put back soon and the scaffolding will be coming down.
* **Ohio University/ Jason Pyles**
  + Ohio University Planning will be discussing the University’s plan for The Ridges at the August RPC meeting.
* **Athens County Economic Development Council/ Mollie Fitzgerald**
  + The Village of Albany site feasibility studies can open the Village up to more funding opportunities
  + Village of Chauncey has 37 acres that is likely switching ownership and a phase one study will be completed as well as environmental studies. The Village is also working on annexation of another 140 acres to include the Village Park.
  + There is another $350 million for brownfield remediation coming available.
  + The Spec building at the Thieson Industrial park is set to start construction.
* **Athens County Visitors Bureau/Boone Troyer**
  + This year, $25,000 in grants was provided to local events
  + This is the busiest season for events. Brew Week is happening now, Nelsonville Music Fest is coming up.
  + We have had biker groups have been in town all season, with overlap between groups. There have been zero days over the last two months were biker groups were NOT in town.
  + ACVB has hooked up with Road Runner Magazine to do a full length video Ohio Windy 9, which will be streaming on TV as a commercial.
  + There are three hotels that are running on lower capacity. OU Inn is down to 50 rooms due to construction. Knights Inn is for sale. The Quality Inn is still low capacity due to staffing. With that, Athens is still up 13% in overnight visitors.
  + Boone is still hoping to talk to folks about increasing the county wide perspective and getting a mobile visitors center up and running. They have purchased a van for that initiative.
  + Boone needs help in figuring out what new businesses are coming to town so that the ACVB can help promote those as well as not spread misinformation.
* **Village of Chauncey**
  + Sewer expansions are happening, which includes the 30 acre parcel
  + There is talk of a motel coming in.
* **Village of Glouster**
  + Dirty Girl Coffee shop is open!

**GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

There being no further business to come before the Commission and no additional comments for good of the order, on a motion by Mayor Patterson, seconded Commissioner Eliason by adjourned the meeting at 9:10 AM.

The August 10, 2023 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: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_