**ATHENS COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

**ATHENS COUNTY, OHIO**

**MINUTES FROM march 14, 2024 MEETING**

**VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:**

ATHENS COUNTY: Neal Reynolds, Warren Jeffers

ATHENS COUNTY ENGINEER – Jeff Maiden

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

ATHENS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: Lenny Eliason, Chris Chmiel

ATHENS CITY: Steve Patterson, Solveig Spjeldnes, Meghan Jennins

CITY OF NELSONVILLE –

VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVE: -Gary Goosman

TOWNSHIP REPRESENTATIVE: - Steve Pierson

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT**: Amy Lipka, Ben Ziff, Drew Daniels, John Kotowski, Melissa Blank, Selena Cottrill (proxy for Mollie Fitzgerald) Scott Dunfee, Tim Kirkendall

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Upon determination that a quorum of at least nine (9) voting members was present, President Warren called the March 14, 2024 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**: Alan Craig, Jamie Hendershott, Erin Stevens

**MINUTES:**

Motion by Chris Chmiel second by Neal Reynolds to approve as presented the meeting minutes of the February 8, 2024 Athens County Regional Planning Commission. All approved

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

* ODOT Updates:
  + Alan Craig and Jamie Hendershott discussed the widening of US 33, which involves 22 miles of roadway in Athens and Meigs Counties. This project is funded for expansion to 4 lanes. Plan work is currently underway, schedule set to finish construction plans by the end of this year with a bid timeframe of next spring. The project divides the entire corridor into 4 construction projects, which will likely take 3 construction seasons. In Athens, the existing at grade intersections will be changed to interchanges.
  + SR 682 Roundabout at US 33 interchange: The current plan is to get that bid out late this year. Stream and permitting items are being worked through. Some work will start this fall. Earth work can take place through the winter depending on weather. Pedestrian infrastructure will be included. Sidewalk will be expanded down to Sunset Lane, curb ramps will be included, grading will be designed for future sidewalk construction. Anticipated end date is fall of 2025.
  + Future project in 2026 to do repairs of the sidewalks through The Plains and upgrades to ADA sidewalks.
  + US 50 at Coolville: Brimstone Rd intersection has a proposed restricted crossing U-Turn to separate the conflict points from the main intersection. 2025 project.
  + Project in the out years would be the replacement of the concrete pavement from US 33 to the roundabout on SR 682. It will be replaced with asphalt pavement.
  + Continuing project from last year, the concrete work from Dow lake to Guysville was in preparation for an asphalt overlay which will happen this spring.
  + Amesville: Traffic calming project coming up in 2026. Hoping to use that as a template for other villages in the county. Village of Albany received funding for sidewalks in 2026.
  + Columbus Rd Shared path and uptown sidewalks and signals are going to bid next week. Stimpson Ave bridge is getting a new deck. 682/56 roundabout project is coming up in late 25. Various city-wide curb ramp improvements will be coming up later this year.
  + County Projects: thin lay asphalt for county projects for the county: Alan Stone got that work and will be coming up later this year. Chauncey bike bridge out for bid April 4th. Jeff Maiden has various local bridges. Glouster Madison street bridge was funded for 2025. Nelsonville pavement repair project on canal street. Pedestrian and bus stop improvements. OU Project to fund pedestrian improvements on South Green Dr. will come up for bid this August.
  + Regional projects: In conjunction of US 33 widening, a study is undergoing for the Ravenswood Bridge. Coordinating with WV on that project and bringing in a consultant to do a study for a feasible alternative. In Hocking Co: ongoing study to look at at-grade intersections (9). Working with District 5 on Sugar Grove Traffic signal in Fairfield County. Looking at creating an interchange at Rockbridge and studying frontage roads.
  + FY25 construction guide is online on the ODOT website.
  + ODOT also wanted to highlight one regional project that will impact Athens but doesn’t connect. ODOT District 10 received funding for Washington County SR 7: Logistics Lane. Dealing with at-grade intersections issues as well as a maritime and rail component and an autonomous vehicle project. $8.7 million of the $14 million from US DOT.
  + A lot of opportunities for PROTECT funding to deal with environmental resiliency. On 56 at 1 mile marker there’s a continual flooding issue and funding was secured to address that.
  + Solveig Spjeldnes asked about EV Stations, each state gets funding to spread EV stations throughout corridors. Each state was funded a 50-mile radius. ODOT was the first state to install an NEVEE program. DriveOhio is ODOTs division that is deploying the Never program. First round started in fall of 2022 and the Feds had the states address the interstate corridors that were already established. The next round is for corridors on state routes and the round to be open later this year may be more flexible.
  + Erin Stevens said that Coolville, Glouster, Amesville will be impacted by the EV charging infrastructure
* April is the month in which the Regional Planning Commission appoints new officers. A committee needs to be formed for that nomination process. The three offices that are up are President, Vice President and Secretary. Warren Jeffers, Chris Chmiel and Gary Goosman volunteered to be on the nominating committee.

**CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS**

* **City/County Sewer Expansion Project- Lenny Eliason**
  + The project is on schedule
* **Athens County Land Bank-Chris Chmiel**
  + Another round of demolition is ongoing
  + Downtown Glouster renovations are underway
* **Broadband Expansion and Access-**
  + Amesville project is finally getting some movement with the ARC. RFPs will move ahead this summer.
* **Age Friendly Athens County (AFAC)- Amy Lipka**
  + Thanks to the Athens County Commissioners, the Athens County Healthy Aging Grants are underway. Five projects are funded: Village of Albany, Athens County Humane Society, Community Food Initiatives, Factory Street Studios, and Federal Valley Resource Center
  + The Athens City County Health Department is offering an immunization review at the upcoming Brain Camp event that is free and open to those who are 55 and over on April 6.
* **SR 682 Corridor-**
* **Appalachian Community Grants-**

**PLANNER’S REPORT: Laura Olbers**

* Athens County Together Team Registrations are live

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

* **Athens County Auditor’s Office**
  + GIS preliminary flight through Athens County is finished, now looking at the QAQC to compare to existing data
* **Village of Amesville-Mayor Goosman**
* **Ohio University-Jason Pyles**
* **Athens City County Health Department**
* **City of Athens-**
  + The City is engaging with the Economic Council and Intergovernmental affairs regarding OU Airport and work that’s going on in Albany, they are interested in learning more, and how that can be utilized to open up more economic development.
* **Athens Township- Steve Pierson**
  + Athens County Township Association quarterly meeting will be held at The Plains Community Park on Wednesday, March 20 at 6:00 PM. Guest speaker will be TL Warren, new legal counsel for all townships. He will be discussing open meetings and public records retention laws.
  + There are currently 3 proposed Ohio Finance Housing Agency projects in the Athens area. Major renovations to Beaumont Green on the east side of Athens –PLAT Communities, 40 units; Blackburn Landing – Spire Development, 50 new units, Cornerstone at Eclipse Run – Fairfield Homes, 58 units on Johnson Road
  + 2 projects working with Athens County Landbank and Athens City-County Health Department for demolition of burned-out structures, 5 Oak Street and 21 E. 1 Street.
  + Finishing up $70k worth of renovations at The Plains Community Park with no recreation tax levy or park commission.
  + $1.2 MM improvement on Johnson Road. Township has committed up to $75k in
  + local match if needed to be matched by the Athens County Commissioners. Shared use path, drainage/curb and gutter, lighting.
* **Village of Albany – Tim Kirkendall**
  + Still plugging along on the Carpenter Road business corridor. Met with OU regarding the airport. One thing that was brought up was that OU doesn’t have facilities for aircraft to park inside which inhibits winter use without deicing capabilities. RXQ is in the area with the largest vet medicine manufacturer in the US and they need to be able to ship those out, which could be a good development for the airport.
* **City of Nelsonville-**
* **SOPEC**
  + SOPEC was awarded a technical assistance grant. They have always been able to do small farms and business owners. The grant has gone up to 50% of installation. Now they are able to help you write the grant to get financial assistance to get the funds.
* **Athens County Engineer’s Office**- **Jeff Maiden**
  + Jeffers Road bridge is underway. Moore Road bridge field surveying is in the final stages and should be bid in June. Blackwood bridge is under development. Working with ODOT on various bridge projects.
  + Washington Road in Albany will be paved, North Longview Heights in Athens will be paved. 3000 feet of Baker Road to be paved. County Road 1 will be finished.
  + Met with Rumpke about installing a wheel washing in Haydenville to mitigate the mud coming from Rumpke, and there are tentative plans for that to be integrated next year.
  + Re-load rating all the bridges in Athens County happening in house. Deadline is end of next year, about 10% in house.
* **Athens County Commissioners-**
* **New Leaf Justice Enterprises-Jen Seifert**
* **Athens County Economic Development Council-** 
  + Mollie Fitzgerald will return to the office next week
* **Athens County 911**
  + EMA/911 is building a new facility, hopefully move in in October. State EMA is offering a generator for us to use until theirs comes in in December. The meeting room is twice the size of the current meeting room and could be a great alternative to EMS for future Planning Commission meetings.
* **Athens County Visitors Bureau- Boone Troyer**
* **Village of Chauncey-Drew Daniel**
  + Broke ground on the sewer project this week so there might be some traffic delays on SR 13. The hope is to keep one lane open but that is dependent on the soil.
* **Athens County EMA-Melissa Blank**
  + Melissa is going to Hocking Co for their first hazard mitigation meeting, which is the process Athens Co will be starting later this year. In talks with OU airport to start an exercise there this summer or this fall.
* **HAPCAP-**
  + HAPCAP received five buses for free from Youngstown, OH. They are awaiting inspection and will be launched when that is completed.
  + Lane 5 is aiming to be reopened by mid-April.
  + Saturday Service will be in operation throughout summer
  + Athens County TAC meeting is tomorrow at 2pm.
* **Athens County Soil and Water District- Cathy Bobo**
* **COAD-Megan Riddlebarger**

**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 Chris Chmiel, seconded Neal Reynolds adjourned the meeting at 8:59 AM.

The April 11, 2024 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: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_