**ATHENS COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

**ATHENS COUNTY, OHIO**

**MINUTES FROM APRIL 11, 2024 MEETING**

**VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:**

ATHENS COUNTY: Neal Reynolds, Warren Jeffers, Megan Riddlebarger, Jen Seifert, Boone Troyer

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 Jennings, Rob Delach

CITY OF NELSONVILLE –

VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVE: -Gary Goosman

TOWNSHIP REPRESENTATIVE: - Steve Pierson

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT**: Amy Lipka, Ben Ziff, Drew Daniels, Jeff Jenkins, Jason Pyles, Melissa Blank, Mollie Fitzgerald, Scott Dunfee, Tim Kirkendall, Paige Gates

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Upon determination that a quorum of at least nine (9) voting members was present, President Warren called the April 11, 2024 meeting of the Athens County Regional Planning Commission to order at 8:01 AM. The meeting was held at the ACEMS Station #51, 21 Kenny Drive, Athens, OH 45701.

**GUESTS PRESENT**: Erin Stevens

**MINUTES:**

Motion by Neal Reynolds, seconded by Megan Riddlebarger to approve as presented the meeting minutes of the March 14, 2024 Athens County Regional Planning Commission. Jen Seifert abstained, all others approved

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

* The officer nomination committee proposed the same officer slate as the previous year: Warren Jeffers as President, Jack Pepper as Vice President, Laura Olbers as Secretary. Chris Chmiel made a motion to approve the slate as presented. Lenny Eliason second. All in favor. Warren Jeffers stated this will be his last year serving in office and will be a regular voting member for the remainder of his term after this year.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

* Subdivision Regulations Review and Updates
  + The Health Department, County Engineer’s Office and Planning Department have all raised a desire to review the Athens County Subdivision Regulations. The Regional Planning Commission needs to form a committee to do so. Chris Chmiel made a motion, Neal Reynolds second, all approved. The Committee will include individuals from the Health Department, the County Engineer, County Planner and Jen Siefert.

**CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS**

* **City/County Sewer Expansion Project- Lenny Eliason**
  + The project is on schedule. The contractor stated they should be completed with Phases 6&7 by the end of May.
  + New Marshfield sewer project is progressing. A funding meeting will take place tomorrow on that project.
  + The County is in discussions with Brent Hayes to take over his plant in Canaanville, with hopes for expansion to the Canaanville area in the future.
  + Steve Pierson inquired about lift stations and grinder pumps. Specifically, how would a resident know for certain if they needed those installed. Lenny Eliason stated that individuals can reach out to the County Commissioners’ Office.
* **Athens County Land Bank-Chris Chmiel**
  + More applications for demolitions are in.
  + Acquisitions and dispositions are ongoing.
  + In Glouster, the old bank building has been transferred from the Land Bank to an Engineer with hopes of restoration.
* **Broadband Expansion and Access-**
  + Federal funding for real estate has been pushed back until Fall at the earliest.
  + ARDOF has two more years. Spectrum is still survey Athens County.
* **Age Friendly Athens County (AFAC)- Amy Lipka**
  + Senior Day, previously Senior Safety Day, will take place on May 2nd, 2024. Registration is open for those wishing to have a table at the event. There is no fee for a table.
* **SR 682 Corridor-** 
  + Athens Township Trustees sent a letter to the Ohio Housing and Finance Agency regarding a 58-unit housing development. There are concerns about the traffic impacts this project will have on The Plains community.
  + When Kershaw Green apartments were built, there was little planning to address transit issues. This has led to individuals crossing a high traffic area to access transit flag stops. The City of Athens is in discussion with HAPCAP and Kershaw Green on how to mitigate this.
* **Appalachian Community Grants-** 
  + New Leaf Justice RFPs are rolling out and projects are going out to bid, including two buildings in Glouster and a renovation project in Athens. RFQs have been received for Albany. For more information regarding New Leaf’s projects, visit [www.newleafacgp.org](http://www.newleafacgp.org)

**PLANNER’S REPORT: Laura Olbers**

* Athens County Together Team Registrations are live
* The Active Transportation Plan draft is being finalized and will be shared for public comment in late Spring/early Summer.
* The Bikeway Resurfacing project is anticipated to start this Summer. The project will start at the Currier Street section and go towards Hocking College. This $418,449 project will be completed by Alan Stone Company.
* The Bikeway Extension project bid was awarded to Alan Stone Company. The bid came in at $3,012,094. The County Commissioners added an additional $21,303 to meet the 5% match required.
* The Athens Marathon will take place this Sunday from 8:00am -2:00pm. The route will run from West State Street in Athens to Hocking College and back. Anticipate extra bodies on the bikeway during that time.

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

* **Athens County Auditor’s Office**
  + Still awaiting preliminary files for imagery
* **Village of Amesville-Mayor Goosman**
* **Ohio University-Jason Pyles**
* **Athens City County Health Department**
* **City of Athens-**
  + The Hockhocking Adena Bikeway will be closed between Stimpson Avenue and the new Fire Station for the construction of a new boat ramp. Closures will take place from April 19 through mid-July.
* **Athens Township- Steve Pierson, Warren Jeffers**
  + The Plains Community Park has bene renovated and is now open for rentals.
  + Lions Club received two Bengals footballs signed by Joe Burrow to raffle off to raise funds. One has already been raffled off, one is set to be raffled this Saturday at the American Legion. Doors open at 12:00 and the event will run until 2:00pm
  + Athens Hocking Solid Waste District will hold a recycling day at the Fairgrounds on April 20th. Tires that are off the rim will be accepted for fifty cents.
  + On May 11th, Athens Township will have a spring clean up event where dumpsters will be provided to the public at the Hopewell Health Facility in The Plains and the Richland Area Fire Department.
  + Columbia Gas will be conducting pressure tests on their main gas lines through The Plains from June 2nd-June 8th.
* **Village of Albany – Tim Kirkendall, Neal Reynolds**
  + Last month, Mayor Kirkendall and Neal Reynolds met with Alan Craig from ODOT. A meeting was scheduled to discuss Pembrook Road in Albany.
  + Albany officials will be meeting with Kanawha Railroad regarding Carpenter Rd.
  + Improvements are underway for the traffic light at SR32/Washington Road intersection.
* **City of Nelsonville-**
* **SOPEC**
  + SOPEC was informed that they are now able to prepare applications for project planning tools for development. This will hopefully assist residents with the burden of accessing planning tools.
* **Athens County Engineer’s Office**- **Jeff Maiden**
  + County Rd 25 project has been impacted by the recent rains. The road has slipped another estimated three feet, making it difficult to perform the work needed. That project will go out to bid
  + The Athens County Engineer’s Annual Report is underway, it will be due by June 1st.
  + The Engineer’s Office is updating their handbook, which hasn’t been updated in ten years.
  + 2-3 bridge projects are happening in house this year.
* **Athens County Commissioners-**
* **New Leaf Justice Enterprises-Jen Seifert**
  + A lot of renovation projects through the ACGP will be coming out soon.
  + The New Leaf Justice Enterprises Board has formed a subsidiary LLC called Appalachia AHEAD. That governing body has been formed.
* **Athens County Economic Development Council-** 
  + Spec building walls are going up
  + Awaiting brownfield funding decision on four projects. There is just under $1,000,000 set aside so EDC is confident that those will be funded.
  + The Innovation Hub is still awaiting a funding decision.
  + EDC is continuing to submit for funding support for the access road in Albany
* **Athens County 911**

* **Athens County Visitors Bureau- Boone Troyer**
  + Visit Athens County has instituted a quarterly meeting for all partners. Any City, County, or Township representative is encouraged to attend. Over 800 people have been invited thus far. The goal of the meetings is to provide an opportunity for feedback as well as suggestions for improvement. The first meeting is scheduled for April 18th from 1:00-3:00 at the Athens Community Center.
* **Village of Chauncey-Drew Daniel**
  + The sewer and water expansion project finished in the past week. Work on SR 682 may cause traffic closures or delays.
* **Athens County EMA-Melissa Blank**
  + 911 Director Teresa Imler and EMA’s Melissa Blank traveled to Logan County, Ohio to assist with disaster recovery from the recent tornadoes. Teresa assisted in running the Emergency Operations while Logan Co. Director met with FEMA. Melissa worked on debris management.
  + Athens County 911 and EMA are looking at instating a full time, long-term recovery committee.
* **HAPCAP-**
  + There has been a delay in the re-opening of Line 5. That has been pushed back to the beginning of May.
  + Over 300 responses were collected for the Transit Survey. Another survey will be live soon which will collect responses on various suggestions of service methodologies for residents to review and rate.
  + There are a lot of community development projects underway.
  + The Ridges HVAC project went out to bid but no bids were submitted. Discussions are taking place to understand why.
  + Waterloo drainage improvements are underway.
  + The latest round of CBDG applications for the City of Athens and City of Nelsonville are beginning.
* **Athens County Soil and Water District- Cathy Bobo**
* **COAD-Megan Riddlebarger**
  + COAD continues to celebrate the Emergency Housing Committee and their efforts. Currently, and ask for $1,000,000 in funding is in play with Senator Brown’s office for community funding. The request is for congregate housing. HAPCAP has taken the lead on those efforts but requires support.
  + HUD is in the process of moving away from congregate housing in support of non-congregate housing. Funding from HUD for those efforts will be released soon.
  + One Ohio released their funding. COAD may be the lead on the four regions in their network, specifically focusing on harm reduction. One effort will be harm reduction vending machines.
  + COAD launched an LLC for lead abatement.
  + Polar Solar application is in

**GOOD OF THE ORDER:**

* Buckeye Hills Regional Council SWOT survey is still open. Just Google Buckeye Hills Forward for more information.

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 8:57 AM.

The May 9th, 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: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_