

ATHENS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of August 18, 2011

Athens Township Government Center

1. *Pledge of Allegiance:* The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. *Roll Call:* The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Lyle Reynolds. Members Present were Jan Palmer, Craig Bjorklund, Russ Mann, Bonnie Torpe, Lyle Reynolds and Dan Woodfill. Marlys Balfany was absent. Also present were Jim & Carolyn Braun, Staff Members.

3. *Approve Agenda:* A motion was made by Russ Mann to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Jan Palmer. Motion carried unanimously.
4. *Minutes of June 16, 2011:* A motion was made by Jan Palmer to approve the minutes as submitted. Seconded by Russ Mann. Motion carried unanimously.
5. *Open Forum:* No one was on hand for the open forum portion of the meeting.
6. *Public Hearings:* None
7. *Old Business:* Carolyn provided the Commission a list of permitted uses that are allowed in the County Ordinance and not in the Town Code. Carolyn pointed out that the Township has two areas that are considered Business Districts. Carolyn wants the Commission to realize that the districts may expand in the future.

Jim Braun noted that Sexually Oriented Businesses are allowed in the County Ordinance but are only accessory by 10% to another business. The attorneys for the County thought this form is easier to defend. Carolyn explained that Adult Entertainment is covered by State Statute and cannot not be within a 50-mile radius of an existing establishment. There is one in Harris and Bock, Minnesota.

Retail Liquor Sales was discussed. Jim thinks that some years ago the Isanti County Commissioners passed a resolution or ordinance on the separation of off sale liquor stores within the County. It was generally thought that the distance is six or nine miles. Jim will check with the County Administrator about the separation, as it is the policy of the County Board not Planning & Zoning.
(Note: The County Administrator affirmed the separation is six (6) miles)

Discussion about the need for an industrial area so that retail is not mixed in the same zone. The Township has two areas: The south area is mainly industrial and the area around the Green Barn could possibly be retail in nature. It was decided to leave the permitted uses as they are with changes to the Off-Sale Liquor and Adult Businesses.

Other items of discussion were pawnshops, transmission lines, drive in theaters and billboards.

Carolyn Braun told the Commission that she has most of the information needed and can make the changes to the town code. She said that the only component that is left is the four-per-forty question. She can amend the code for now and add the four-per-forty at a later date if that is what the Commission and the Board of Supervisors want.

Chairman Reynolds asked the question of the Commission who was in favor of going on to the four-per-forty idea. Russ Mann who was a member of the County Planning Commission gave an over view of how the County came to the idea of making the density change.


The pros and cons of the density change possibility were discussed. Different binaries were looked at and it seems that the Commission may be evenly divided on the question.

Areas of concern are transfer of development rights, size of lots, community septic systems and community wells, extra building rights per four-per-forty, out lots and etc.

Further discussion on the possible density change will be discussed at the next meeting.

8. *New Business:* None
9. *Miscellaneous:* Jim informed the Commission that Great River Energy has filed against East Bethel in District Court after the City Council failed to give a conditional use permit for Route A. Staff will keep the Commission informed.
10. *Adjournment:* The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Jim Braun
Recorder Pro Tem