

ATHENS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of September 15, 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 Dan Woodfill, Marlys Balfany, Russ Mann, Lyle Reynolds, Craig Bjorklund and Jan Palmer. Bonnie Torpe was absent. Also present were Jim & Carolyn Braun, Staff Members. Guests included Cynthia Reynolds and Roy Palmer.
3. *Approve Agenda:* Russ Mann made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Jan Palmer. Motion carried unanimously.
4. *Minutes of August 18, 2011:* Because of a mistake while compiling the minutes, the minutes will no be available until the next meeting.
5. *Open Forum:* Roy Palmer had questions on restrictive covenants as they pertain to the subdivision that he lives in. Roy was told that the Township does not enforce the covenants. Covenants are either enforced by the Developer of the subdivision or the residents signally or as an association.
6. *Public Hearings:* none
7. *Old Business:* Carolyn Braun is at the point that she can start drafting the ordinance unless the Planning Commission feels it necessary to discuss and draft the ordinance to include the “four per forty” component. The cost to draft the ordinance will add time to the ordinance that would not be needed if the Board and Commission were to stat at “two per forty”.

Carolyn is looking for direction from the Commission. Chairman Reynolds polled the Commission on the question. Although some on the Commission are not in favor of the change but feel that the possibility of a change should be looked and studied. All Commissioners polled were in favor of looking at a possible change.

8. *New Business:*

- a. Jim Braun introduced a draft of an ordinance that covers what types of mailbox posts that the Township would like to see used in the future. In the past there have been a number of mailbox posts used that could hazard equipment or harm the operators of equipment in grading and plowing of the roads.

Some of the Commissioners questioned if the residents could have decorative posts instead of swing away posts. After some discussion Staff was directed to include decorative post that meet the standards of the Postal Service. The decorative posts and mailboxes would not be the responsibility of the Township or there subcontractors if hit during plowing and grading operations.

After the changes are made a draft copy of the ordinance will be sent to the Board of Supervisors and then set for public hearing.

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- b. Carolyn Braun briefly reviewed the proposed draft language for variances the change is based on a change in the state statutes where 'undue hardship' is being replaced with the term "practical difficulties." She explained that a variance request must be consistent with the town's comprehensive plan and the purpose and intent of the zoning ordinance as it relates to that particular request. If those two items are met, then the variance is analyzed to determine if there are practical difficulties that warrant the granting of a variance. The changes for variances will likely occur at the same time we update the zoning ordinance and incorporate changes due to changes in the Isanti County zoning ordinance.

9. *Miscellaneous:* Jim Braun told the Commissioners about a telephone call that he received this month. A resident has asked about starting a microbrewery business in his accessory building. Staff has researched this request and found that it could be done as a home occupation. There was some discussion on the request; Jim will have a full report on the request as soon as he receives an application.

10. *Adjournment:* A motion was made by Jan Palmer, seconded by Russ Mann to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jim Braun,
Recorder Pro Tem