

**Athens Township Planning Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**October 20, 2022**

**Opening**

The regular meeting of the Athens Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM on October 20, 2022 and the pledge of allegiance was recited.

**Planning Commissioners Present**

Dave Beckstrom (remote), Marlys Balfany, Dean Thompson, Jack Cole, Jason Ross, AJ Ondrey, Mike Jungbauer, Township Clerk Diane Carpenter

**Guests Present**

Many residents attended. See sign in sheet.

**Approval of Minutes**

M/S Jason Ross/AJ Ondrey to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2022 meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**Open Forum**

Lyle Pischke was present because he has put up a fence that violates a town ordinance and a complaint has been filed. It is made of pole barn steel and is 9 feet high. The ordinance states that a fence may be 6 ft high and made from fencing material. He stated that the fence was put up for safety reasons and noise issues from firearms being discharged next door. A discussion ensued about backstops, safety issues etc. Dean Diers stood up and stated that he was the neighbor who complained about the appearance of the fence. It is his sons that visit his home and discharge the weapons. This happens approximately five times

per year. There is little that the township can do about the gun fire as we do not have a gun ordinance. More checking will be done into the fence issue.

### **Old Business**

None.

### **New Business**

Mike Warring attended the meeting to moderate the public hearing regarding a zoning change for properties along highway 65. The moratorium attached to the zoning change will not apply to any permits received prior to approval of the zoning change.

Mike Jungbauer explained to residents how the township is subject to Isanti County ordinances if we do not have our own. He outlined a proposal previously discussed by P&Z regarding commercial zoning along highway 65. The south end would be light industrial, the center, a retail town center, and the north general commercial such as contractors. Several residents spoke in favor of the rezoning. No residents were against the rezoning although some did present as undecided, saying they did not as yet have enough information. Some concerns raised were traffic issues, adding on to existing homes, and why a moratorium was needed. Elisha Long from the Isanti County Assessor's office explained taxation of these properties, based on usage, not on how the property is zoned.

M/S Marlys Balfany/Jason Ross that the P&Z commission forwards its recommendation to the Town Board for rezoning the Highway 65 corridor as commercial/business zoning. Motion passed unanimously.

M/S Dean Thompson/Marlys Balfany to put in place a moratorium on development in the designated corridor until such a time as ordinances can be developed and put in place for the allowable

uses. Moratorium to initially be put in place for a period of 1 year. Motion passed unanimously.

Mike questioned if we want to see high density residential areas around the city center. He sees nothing in previous surveys that this is something that residents desire.

M/S Marlys Balfany/AJ Ondrey to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes submitted by Diane Carpenter