

Un-Official

ATHENS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Minutes of February 18, 2016

Athens Township Government Center

1. *Pledge of Allegiance:* The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. *Roll Call:* The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Lyle Reynolds. Members present were Lyle Reynolds, Cindy Anderson, Dan Woodfill Dave Henderson and Ian Ebeling. (*Ian Ebeling was able to sit in on the discussions but not allowed to vote as he had not been sworn in at that time*). Absent were Marlys Balfany and Jake Carpenter. Also present were Jim & Carolyn Braun, Staff Members. Guests included Dave & Kathy Beckstrom, Diane Bjorklund, Steve Stranlund Jr. and Chase Hennesey.
3. *Approve Agenda:* Dave Henderson made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Cindy Anderson. Motion carried unanimously.
4. *Minutes of January 21, 2016:* Bottom of second page Lyle Reynolds seconded the motion to recommend approval of the Benolkin request. Dave Henderson felt there should be more on the public sentiment. Carolyn Braun responded that it would have been repetition of what was said earlier by others. It was noted that the sign in sheet for the quests was not included with the minutes. Motion made by Dave Henderson to approve the minutes with additions and sign in sheet, seconded by Dan Woodfill. 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:*
 - a. *Discussion on Rural Tourism Businesses Draft:* Carolyn said that the draft before the Commission has a lot of suggestions that were brought on by the approvals that were put on the Vigstol request last year. A lot of the conditions are missing in the Isanti County Ordinance and some clarification is needed and discussion is needed with County Staff.

Some of the questions on craft sales that need clarification from Isanti County Zoning are as follows:

- The reason Rural Tourism Businesses are not listed in the Commercial Section of the County Ordinance.
- Isanti County allows six craft sales per year. What months do this span?
- Who monitors the number of sales per year?
- Who monitors if the merchandise is made or manufactured on the property?
- How long can each sale last? Day, week or month?

Lyle Reynolds feels that there may be a hardship for the Zoning Administrator to monitor the sales as he will have no knowledge of when they will be or how many they have held during the year. Lyle feels that compliance would have to be on a complaint basis.

Dave Henderson asked if this ordinance covers venues such as Weddings Barns and etc. Dave feels that the Township should move slowly on this item and possibly put a moratorium on such requests until a proper ordinance is in place. Carolyn Braun replied that there are no requests for venues such as a Wedding Barn in the works and a moratorium could always be placed on that activity in the future if the Township Ordinances are not prepared for them.

On page two of the Isanti County Rural Tourism Ordinance it limits the number of people at an event to 300 people. Dan Woodfill questioned if that was 300 people for the entire event? Dave Henderson questioned if that meant 300 people on site at any one time. Again it was questioned who will be monitoring the number of people at the events.

Jim Braun suggested that the Township should require permits at a small fee for home based craft sales so we will know the number of sales a year that the individual is having. Lyle Reynolds asked if that would include “garage sales” Carolyn replied that only craft sales are regulated in the County Ordinance. Carolyn went on to say that the maximum amount of 300 people would be the same in the Town Code.

Carolyn Braun suggested that the “Bed and Breakfast” component of the ordinance be stricken as the Town Code is already more strict than Isanti County’s Ordinance.

There was some question in the County Ordinance about “Single Family Rental Properties” Carolyn feels that this component needs clarification and some major reworking for the Town Code. It should possibly read that the space is going to be used for rental for an event. Carolyn will rework this component.

The “Retreat Center” component of the County Ordinance was discussed. Jim Braun questioned if the cabins that would be used for the quests would be set up as dwellings that would not be allowed by the Town Code because they would be considered multiple livable dwelling on a single parcel. Jim went on to say that Isanti County had in the past allowed second dwellings for farm workers and such and they have since become rental units that have nothing to do with the farming operations. The same can be said for second dwelling for elderly people that need proximate care, after their death or they leave for a nursing home the second dwelling becomes a rental unit.

Jim Braun went on to say that in Stanford Township there is a retreat center called Pacem Terres. It has a multiple of cabins that have no septic facilities; the clients have to either hike to the main building or hike to outhouses that are set up throughout the facility. There are no cooking facilities in any of the cabins but a “chow hall” in the retreat center. Jim notes that the County Ordinance does not address these restrictions.

Dave Henderson said that he wanted to make sure that “music festivals” are not part of this ordinance. Carolyn replied that the Town Code already does not allow this activity. Carolyn also said that a cap of 300 people probably would not work for a music festival anyhow.

The County Ordinance does not have any standards for parking but will set them by each application as they come in. Even though the Township has some parking rules Carolyn feels that some general standards should be set for this ordinance.

The Township Ordinance that was approved prior to the County adopting theirs has stricter standards such as a minimum of 10 acres for the site and the site fronting on a nine ton road. Carolyn asked the Commission to comment on the standards and get back to her for possible changes.

Carolyn will Email a draft with changes to all the Commissioners and asked that they look for further changes and get them back to her so the draft can be ready for the next meeting.

b. *Discussion on Farm Wineries, Craft Breweries and Micro Distilleries Ordinance:*

Carolyn Braun opened the discussion by saying that this ordinance does not need much work as it follows State and Federal rules and regulations on what is allowed. Carolyn did add some more to the definition section. Some discussion was centered around value added, Carolyn will find out exactly what the County means by that statement.

Although the ordinance seems to be pretty straight forward, Carolyn noticed that signage differs between the County Ordinance and the Township Ordinance so some work will be needed on that segment.

Amplification of sound was discussed. Lyle stated that the County Planning Commission suggested that all music that is amplified has to be within a structure. Questions were asked about outdoor activities that have loudspeakers and sound systems how will that be regulated when you have large crowds? Carolyn will check into that for the draft to see what is reasonable.

Question what is constituting a threat to” living amenities” Carolyn will find out.

Carolyn Braun will Email this draft also to all Commissioners.

8. *New Business: Report on Subdivision Activity:* Jim Braun told the Commission that Brennan Cox has changed his mind on having a Wedding Barn venue and is going to finish his barn and board horses. He also is going to subdivide part of his acreage into lots for single family homes. Jim gave a rough draft of his subdivision to all of the Commission.

Jim Braun also gave the Commission a copy of the ordinance that allows “saddle clubs” which would allow overnight camping and special events. Carolyn said that some changes would have to be made to the existing ordinance to clarify the segment to saddle clubs. Because of some concern by the Planning commission on special events, Dave Henderson made a motion to recommend placing a moratorium on saddle clubs until such time as the Commission has time to clarify special events, seconded by Dan Woodfill. Motion carried unanimously.

Also, Jim received a Preliminary Plat for Emerald Estates 2 from Craig Bjorklund which shows 8 new lots on Lincoln Drive NE in the treed area and a 4 lot subdivision on Davenport Street in the treed area at the corner of 253rd Avenue. The Preliminary Plat will come before the Planning Commission at the next meeting.

9. *Miscellaneous: Schedule Comprehensive Plan Meetings:* The Commission feels that they will hold off on the comprehensive plan discussion until the ordinances that they are now working on are complete and more information is received from Isanti County Highways about future plans within Athens Township.
10. *Adjournment:* Being that there was no further business a motion was made by Dave Henderson, seconded by Cindy Anderson to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Braun, Recorder Pro-Tem

