

# ***ATHENS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION***

**Minutes of January 19, 2017**

**Athens Township Government Center**

*Note: Because of action taken by the Board of Supervisors at the Reorganization Meeting, Dave Beckstrom is now the Ex-official Board Member of the Planning Commission. Welcome Dave and thank you to Lyle Reynolds for his years of service.*

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 Dave Beckstrom. Members present were Marlys Balfany, Dave Beckstrom, Cindy Anderson, Ian Ebeling, Dan Woodfill and David Henderson. Absent was Jake Carpenter. Also present were Jim & Carolyn Braun. Guests included Lyle & Cindy Reynolds and Diane Bjorklund.
3. *Minutes of October 20, 2016:* Because of inability to hear the tape of the meeting three blanks were left in the minutes. Marlys had the time that was missing and Jack Krekelberg was the name missing. Dan Woodfill moved to approve the minutes with corrections, seconded by Marlys Balfany. Motion carried unanimously.
4. *Discussion and Update of Planning Commission By-Laws:* The Commissioners started working on some revisions to the by-laws and amendments of the Planning Commission. Possible changes include 3 year terms for Commissioners, the Planning Commission reverts to a five member board, and the chairman is not a voting member unless there is a tie vote.

Being that the Board of Supervisors want the Planning Commission to return to five voting members Dave asked if anyone on the Commission at this time would care to give up their seat. No one came forward to step down.

Chairman Beckstrom feels that more discussion may be needed with the Board on some changes. Carolyn Braun suggested that the Commissioners study the document for the next meeting to discuss changes they would like to see made. This item will be placed on the next agenda.

5. *Open Forum:* Ian Ebeling is still concerned about an incident that happened before a Planning Commission Meeting when the Chairman and Zoning Administrator asked him to come into the office for a short conference before a meeting. Ian seems to feel that he was singled was being reprimanded for something he feels he did not do.

Jim Braun explained that Ian was asked to come into the office with him and Lyle Reynolds because they had gotten word that Ian had been contacting Board Members about certain actions that were before the Planning Commission. Being that he is a new Planning Commission Member Jim and Lyle wanted Ian to know about Ex-parte Communication so that he did not get himself into a situation with having to disclose all that was said at a public hearing or disqualify himself from voting on the subject before the commission.

Ian asked for training at a prior Planning Commission Meeting, Jim Braun said that he would look around to see if any were available. Finding out what the cost of training is, Chairman Beckstrom said that they may consider having Carolyn Braun have a Saturday Session on training for the Commissioners. Carolyn will find some handbooks for the members.

6. *Public Hearings:* None

7. *Old Business:* None

8. *New Business:*

a. *Moratorium on Rural Tourism Businesses:* Lyle Reynolds and Jim Braun were under the impression that there was a number of changes that the Board of Supervisors wanted changed in this ordinance. The Planning Commission feels that it would be nice if the Board Members would meet with the Commission in a meeting to express their feelings on these changes. Jim Braun will try to set up a meeting between the Supervisors and the Planning Commission.

b. *Update Chapter 3 & 16 related to Dogs/Kennels:* Carolyn noted that Chapter 3 of the Zoning Ordinance was drafted some years ago when the Township first took over zoning powers. Over time it was added to Chapter 16 of the Ordinance to be compliant with the Isanti County Zoning Ordinance.

Mostly Chapter 16 does reflect most of what is in the County Ordinance except that the Township allows for private ownership of more than three dogs without the need of a commercial kennel license.

Others problem areas in Chapter 16 is that and the County Ordinance is that it is required that all kennels be licensed but they or the Township have never licensed a kennel. The Township has made the applicant get a "use permit" with conditions and that was the extent of it.

It was the feeling of the Commission that Carolyn work the rewrite the ordinance and bring it back in draft form for discussion.

c. *Discussion of farm animals in subdivisions:* Jim Braun told the Commissioners about some calls that he has had about having animals in small lots or subdivisions. Jim was

asked how many feeder pigs would be allowed on a 4 ½ acre lot in the Beaudry Addition. The applicant would like to have some pigs and were questioning how many they could have. With the way the Ordinance reads they could have about ten hogs (10) on that site. Knowing the problems that we are having in Maple Oaks Estates he feels it may be time to address this issue before it becomes a larger problem. Some commissioner question if the platted subdivisions should be considered residential and no farm animal units be allowed.

Some of the Commissioners feel that small parcel owners could be allowed to have some animals but they would have to subtract the area for the house, garage, septic system, driveway, accessory structure and wetlands from the total amount of acreage. Jim Braun said that maybe the small parcel owners should have apply for a “use permit” or a permit of some type to offset the cost of figuring out where the lot lines are and what available land there is for animals.

After some more discussion it was decided to place this item on the next agenda for more discussion.

- d. Discussion on lot frontages:* It was noted that the frontage requirement in the Zoning Ordinance is 150’ and the frontage requirement in the Subdivision Ordinance is 200’ Carolyn told the Commission that the change was made to the Zoning Ordinance and not to the Subdivision Ordinance. She will do a draft of the change and bring it back to a future meeting.
9. *Miscellaneous: Current 2016 Building Permit List:* Jim Braun included the final permit list for the 2016 building season for the Commission.
10. *Adjournment:* Being that there was no further business, a motion was made by Marlys Balfany to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Cindy Anderson. Motion carried unanimously at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Braun  
Recorder ProTem