

# ***ATHENS TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION***

**Minutes of March 16, 2017**

**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 Dave Beckstrom. Members present were Marlys Balfany, Dave Beckstrom, Cindy Anderson, Jake Carpenter and Dave Henderson. Absent was Dan Woodfill. Also present were Jim and Carolyn Braun. Guests included Lyle, Cindy Reynolds and Diane Bjorklund.
3. *Minutes of January 19, 2017:* Under Open forum the sentence should read: Ian seems to feel that he was singled out, and was reprimanded .... Motion by Dave Henderson to approve the minutes as corrected, seconded by Cindy Anderson. Motion carried unanimously.
4. *Open Forum:* No one was on hand for the Open Forum portion of the meeting.
5. *Non Agenda Items:*

*Before discussion on Old Business, Dave Henderson asked for an update on the Brennan Cox matter. Carolyn Braun explained that it is not fair to have a discussion on the matter without the Cox's in attendance. Dave Beckstrom gave a brief summary on what is going on with their applications.*

6. *Old Business:*
  - a. *Discussion of farm animals in subdivisions:* Staff has been working on gathering information from what other jurisdictions allow for farm animals in subdivisions. Carolyn said that most jurisdictions that she checked did not allow farm animals in subdivisions of less than three acre lots. Animals allowed on small lots were domestic animals. Jim Braun checked with Isanti County Zoning which does not regulate at this time because the Subdivisions have covenants not allowing farm animals.

Carolyn Braun was directed to create the ordinance in draft form and bring it back to the Commission.
  - b. *Front lot width discussion:* Since four per forty was adopted we have had a problem with two front lot widths. Two hundred feet was always the frontage required since Athens took control of zoning. When the Township adopted the four-per-forty rule it was set up to work with Isanti County as much as possible. Isanti County uses 150 foot minimum frontages.

Jim Braun told the Commission that he did not feel it fair the change to 150' frontage as the Township just approved a preliminary plat a few months ago that was required to have 200 foot frontages. Jim went on to say that the County uses the 150' frontages because they allow one acre lots and to get depth they have narrower frontages. Because Athens requires two acre minimum for lots the narrow frontage is not needed.

After some discussion Carolyn was asked to make the changes and bring them back to the Commission for final approval before action is taken by the Board of Supervisors.

- c. *Changes needed in the P.C. By-Laws:* Carolyn Braun noted that the P.C. By-Laws needed work as they had not been changed in a number of years. The Commission had some discussion on changes and then told Carolyn to go through the by-laws and make the changes needed and red line the wording no longer needed. Carolyn will make the changes needed and bring them back to a future meeting.

7. *Miscellaneous:*

- a. *Current Building Permit List:* The list was made available but was only from January 2017 as the packet was a carry-over from then because of no meeting in February. The list will completely update at the April P.C. Meeting.
- b. *Changes to the Planning Commission by the Board of Supervisors:* Dave Beckstrom gave a rundown on the changes that were made to the planning commission at the Board of Reorganization. The Board of Supervisors wanted the Planning Commission to be more in line with the other boards thus being five member instead of seven. Because the Commission had one more person than five the sixth person would be asked to step down and that was the last one appointed, Ian Ebeling. The Board felt that removing the newest appointment kept the most experienced people.

Dave told the Commissioners that as a Board Member he would be the Chairman of the Planning Commission but not a voting member unless a tie had to be broken.

Dave Beckstrom has put into motion the following:

- Ordered updated copies of the Zoning Ordinance for the P.C. and Board.
  - Ordering a flat screen television for blowups of materials for the Commission
  - Working with Jim to get a sound system and recording system for the hall.
  - Is working with Carolyn for a training session with the Board and P.C. Possibly a three hour session on a Saturday to cover things a "use permits" and other areas of the ordinance that is not clear to either board members.
- c. *Solar Gardens and Solar Installations:* Jim Braun told the Commission that he had a party from the Township ask to apply for a "use permit" for a solar garden in the

Township. Being that the Township does not have any solar regulations Jim was unable to help this person. After some discussion on solar installations Jim was directed by the Commission to raise the question with the Board of Supervisors if the Planning Commission should study this for possible inclusion in the Zoning Ordinance.

8. *Adjournment:* Being that there was no further business, a motion was made by Marlys Balfany to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dave Henderson. Motion carried unanimously at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jim Braun  
Recorder ProTem