

ATHENS COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

ATHENS COUNTY, OHIO

MINUTES FROM JANUARY 11, 2024 MEETING

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

ATHENS COUNTY: Neal Reynolds, Boone Troyer, Jen Seifert, Megan Riddlebarger

ATHENS COUNTY ENGINEER – Jeff Maiden

ATHENS CITY/COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT – Jack Pepper

ATHENS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: Lenny Eliason, Chris Chmiel

ATHENS CITY: Rob Delach, Steve Patterson

CITY OF NELSONVILLE –

VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVE: -Gary Goosman

TOWNSHIP REPRESENTATIVE: - Steve Pierson

NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Drew Daniels, Selena Cottrill, Amy Lipka, Ben Ziff, Meredith Erlewine, John Kotowski

CALL TO ORDER:

Upon determination that a quorum of at least nine (9) voting members was present, Vice President Pepper called the January 11, 2024 meeting of the Athens County Regional Planning Commission to order at 8:03 AM. The meeting was held at the ACEMS Station #51, 21 Kenny Drive, Athens, OH 45701.

GUESTS PRESENT: Adam Fowler, Joe Anderson, Jane Forrest Redfern

MINUTES:

Motion Steve Pierson by seconded by Neal Reynolds to approve as presented the meeting minutes of the December 14, 2023 Athens County Regional Planning Commission. All approved

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Jane Forrest Redfern, Athens Hocking Solid Waste District Director, shared the following:
 - AHSWD received comments back from the EPA on their solid waste district draft plan. They are requesting public comments. Both counties in the district do have to approve it.
 - Recycling days are (1200 people in Athens last year) April 20 at Fairgrounds. Tires might be at that date but another date. The household hazardous collection at Fairgrounds in June. October 19th recycling day. Recycling center in Logan can take any materials anytime of the year just call Jane.
 - Recycling trail has maps and online maps. If you visit 10 sites you can get a bag, walking stick or patch.
 - Workshops are coming out for fix it for bikes, lawn mower repairs, hemming and such.
 - AHSWD voted on Monday morning to form a council of governments to deal with all aspects for solid waste in the area. It is open to all government entities. If you are interested in being part of the discussions, reach out to Jane or Lenny. This would be a council of governments that provides a “menu” of services. This

is an asset that both the city, the district, the health department and more have built up that they don't want to lose.

- Mayor Patterson stated that there is a lot of misinformation around this COG and asked whether this is a true COG or an “exploratory” COG. Jane said that in order to form a COG, you have to have two political entities. The board voted to elect to be a founding member and it was charged that Commissioner Eliason and Jane will explore what that looks like. The agreement for the forming of and bylaws of the COG would need to be written by the people of the COG. Patterson asked if other entities could join under the exploratory version of the COG. Jane stated that yes, they could. Commissioner Eliason stated that one more government needs to join to make it a true COG.
- Pierson asked if a political subdivision was interested in the discussion but not necessarily joining in, they just need to ask Jane or Lenny? Jane said yes.
- AHSWD just got a grant last week to deal with tires in the area. They have to reach out to tire sellers in the district.
- Rob Delach commented on Athens City Council’s last meeting and AHSWD’s conversation. You can find that meeting online and learn a lot more details about the COG and more.
- Ben Ziff is the new mobility coordinator for HAPCAP, replacing Bryan Hinkle
- Chris Knisley has agreed to serve on the Athens County Regional Planning Commission for the City of Athens.

NEW BUSINESS:

CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS

- **City/County Sewer Expansion Project- Lenny Eliason**
 - Phase six and seven are a little ahead. They are awaiting AEP to get Elliotsville lift station power hooked up. A meeting will be held Tuesday night for New Marshfield for sewer. It is estimated to be a \$9.5 million project. There's optimism that that project will move forward but no official decision has been made.
- **Athens County Land Bank-Chris Chmiel**
 - The Athens County Land Bank has more funding for demolition. Please reach out to the land bank if you know of properties. A CBDG flexible grant is going to assist with the downtown Gloucester area. They are in need of a surveyor for one of the buildings. There's some funding through “Welcome Home Ohio”. Megan Riddlebarger mentioned that Athens is one of 13 land banks in all of Ohio that is eligible for that funding.
- **Broadband Expansion and Access-**
- **Age Friendly Athens County (AFAC)- Amy Lipka**
 - Amy Lipka shared that there are large updates, they are still working on a lot of planning based on the feedback from the community outreach in 2023. The Board for Commissioners received a grant from the Ohio Department of Aging. The Athens City County Health Department is getting a portion of those funds to create community grants for organizations to do healthy aging work in their communities. More information will be coming out on that very soon. They are looking for shovel ready/quick, action projects because the turnaround on these funds are for projects to be completed in September 2024.

- **SR 682 Corridor-**
 - Johnson Road: There are discussions about taking the high school terminus of the bike path and creating a shared use path to connecting to 682. That project would include improvements to the storm water in that area as well. Jeff Maiden is working on two grants for that project through ODOT: TAP and Systemic Safety Grant.
 - Megan Riddlebarger asked about the anticipated roundabout on the north end of 682 of The Plains. She has a resident whose driveway will be impacted and asked how that individual can advocate for themselves. Jeff Maiden said he will pass that information along to ODOT and to stay tuned for future opportunities for public comments.
- **Appalachian Community Grants-**
 - Mayor Patterson shared that the Mayors Partnership for Progress is still flowing along on their project. Grant writers have been identified. Noone has heard any updates on any other projects.
 - Rob Delach heard a rumor that ORCA has an ACG grant in process and asked if anyone had any updates. Drew mentioned that Chauncey is partnering but had no updates. Mayor Patterson mentioned that Baileys received around 4 million in the first round.
 - SOAP/New Leaf have a fully executed grant agreement. They are building their infrastructure internally and starting to move forward. A press release will be coming out soon.

PLANNER'S REPORT: Laura Olbers

- Property acquisition for the bikeway bridge project has wrapped up. There are a few more steps before we can move to the bidding process.
- The Planners office, with Commissioner Chmiel, has been working with the Hockingport Improvement Group to pursue funding for sidewalks or a multi-use path in Hockingport.

CITY, VILLAGE, TOWNSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:

- **Athens County Auditor's Office**
- **Village of Amesville-Mayor Goosman**
- **Athens City County Health Department**
- **City of Athens-Mayor Patterson, Rob Delach**
 - 682/56 preliminary designs are in.
 - MPP this afternoon at noon, Attorney General Yost is speaking.
 - A 211megawatt solar ray will be going completely live soon.
 - It was announced The State of Ohio dot is awarding funding for 250 EV charging stations all the way from Dayton to Athens.
 - On Monday night, Council discussed building a shared use path down Columbus Road from Devil's Kettle spur to city limits. That is funded for the next year and is in the design phase.
- **Athens Township- Steve Pierson**
 - In regard to the proposed Council of Governments for solid waste, recycling and composting services, the Athens Twp. Trustees in past years have discussed selecting a township wide exclusive franchise service provider according to

procedures enumerated in Ohio Revised Code §505.27. This statute allows for townships to enter into written contracts with the proper municipal or county authorities or with independent contractors for such services for the township or for a waste disposal district as provided in §505.28 of the Revised Code.

- The township has been contacted by Fairfield Homes regarding the possibility of developing a 58-unit apartment complex off Johnson Road in the vicinity of Athens High School and The Wolf Plains Cemetery.
- Chairman Linscott has met with County Commissioners, County Engineer and County Planner regarding application to ODOT for grant funding for non-vehicular improvements to Johnson Road, a project in consider for over a decade.
- The township has finalized review of its road inventory for annual submittal to ODOT. The system includes ± 52 miles of roadway, much of it now paved with the county sanitary sewer improvements. The inventory also reflects 56 Dead End/No Outlet streets.
- Required documentation is being finalized in accordance with §4511.21 (K) of the Revised Code to reduce by resolution speed limits in subdivisions, declaring them twenty-five miles per hour where otherwise by statute they would be fifty-five miles per hour.
- **Village of Albany – Neal Reynolds**
- **City of Nelsonville-**
- **Athens County Engineer’s Office- Jeff Maiden**
- **Athens County Commissioners-**
- **New Leaf Justice Enterprises-Jen Seifert**
 - AMLR Funding was awarded for Glouster. SOAP has been working to restore the child advocacy center services in partnership with Nationwide Children’s Hospital.
- **Athens County Economic Development Council- Mollie Fitzgerald**
- **Athens County Visitors Bureau- Boone Troyer**
 - Looking into 2024, June and July there are groups of significant people every single weekend. On Monday, a national group was secured to bring over 300,000 people in town. Looking at this summer, we are anticipating groups of over 300+ every single weekend. We are starting to see a significant amount of weekday stays from May-September. Capacity is important. The 3 back-to-back entities this year is the Waylon Wayne weekend, National Valley, and the Flat Track race, followed by the Athena weekend. Because of the increase of visitor events, it’s time that we as a group start being mindful and planning together on events and thinking of capacity moving forward.
- **Village of Chauncey-Drew Daniels**
 - The Village of Chauncey is dealing with the preliminary FEMA flood maps that are expanding the floodway extensively within the village.
- **Athens County EMA**
- **HAPCAP-Jeff Jenkins**
- **COAD-Megan Riddlebarger**
 - Athens Housing Coalition had a successful meeting at the Athens foundation and were able to activate a new advocate position between the two.

GOOD OF THE ORDER:

There being no further business to come before the Commission and no additional comments for good of the order, on a motion by Gary Goosman, seconded Jack Pepper adjourned the meeting at 9:13 AM.

The February 8, 2024 meeting of the Athens County Regional Planning Commission is anticipated to be conducted at the Athens County EMS Station 51, 21 Kenny Drive, Athens, Ohio at 8:00 AM.

Respectfully Submitted by Laura Olbers, Director, Athens County Regional Planning Commission

Approved by: Laura Jaffer Title: President Date: February 8, 2024