

Athens Conservation Advisory Council meeting minutes

May 21, 2026

Athens Community Center - Village Office

Members present: Moree, Braine, Reed, Brunner

Members absent: Sprague, Bradicich

Meeting guests present: Alyssa Bement, NYS DOH, Madeline Silecchia, NYS DOH

Ms. Moree stepped in for Mr. Bradicich and opened the meeting around 6:30pm for questions from the public on the tree project.

Approximately 30 minutes of questions, Ms. Moree collected names and contact information for potential bidders in attendance. Ms. Moree will send a summary of the questions to the CAC for review and addition to the minutes.

The members and guests in attendance worked on prepping Drinking Water Source Protection Project materials and filling envelopes for mailing to property owners in the Hollister Lake watershed.

After finishing up with envelopes the meeting guests left and then Ms. Moree started a discussion on tree grant RFP timeline. Concerns from the group over having the current tree inventory and removal list available for bidders. Discussion on what version Chris Sprague is working from and getting his updated list with removals. Ms. Moree will reach out to Mr. Sprague to see what list he has. Mr. Braine asked if there was a map of the trees. Ms. Reed talked about the work Friends of Athens did on the tree inventory, the same arborist was used for the first two versions of the tree inventory. It was believed that former CAC member Kyle Winslow created the GIS map of tree locations from the first or second version of the tree inventory. Continued discussion on inventory, the version sent with the grant application should be current version and needs updates from Mr. Sprague. Ms. Moree will reach out through email.

Discussion on questions asked during public part of the meeting. Mr. Brunner asked about request for trees slated for removal to be painted with an X. Trees may have been marked after the first inventory but has since worn off. The opinion of the group was that it was a good idea and maybe DPW could do it again. Mr. Braine asked if it was reasonable to drive around with DPW to look at the tree inventory. Ms. Moree agreed and brought up the question of who is managing the project, not just paperwork wise but who is verifying the work was completed. Group discussion on topic, expectation is that the certified arborist from education section of the RFP will serve as project manager and validator of tree pruning and removal. Ms. Reed was concerned about payments from the DEC if they are invoicing for that function. Ms. Moree gave an explanation on the process and invoicing to the village. Discussion on how the remaining funds are obtained from the DEC. Mr. Braine asked if potential bidder could subcontract arborist for part of RFP. Also followed up if a company could subcontract part of the removal if they were too busy with other work. Opinion of group was yes but there would only be one lead contractor.

Climate Smart Communities Complete Streets – Mr. Bradicich asked Ms. Moree to have a discussion on the topic. We are up for Climate Smart recertification in June, adopting this policy would unlock up to 30 points and help keep our bronze level status. Ms. Moree read some of the highlights of Mr. Bradicich's draft proposal. The goals are to preserve current inventory of bluestone sidewalks and bring

them into ADA compliance. Also a proposal to seek grant funds for repairs to lessen the burden on homeowners. There would be a stay of enforcement if a resident is on a waiting list for village sought grants like a CDBG. Discussion on DOT work on sidewalks during recent 385 project. Ms. Moree talked about damage to bluestone on Third St. near alley to the west of Washington St. and other concerns. Mr. Braine talked about the considerable cost of bluestone, upwards of \$50 a square foot. Ms. Moree talked about the June 30th deadline if we can make a recommendation to the Village Board to adopt a resolution. Ms. Reed thought it was not really enforceable right now as we don't have the means to pay for it. Ms. Moree asked if we want to take a vote on this, Mr. Braine believed there was no harm in making a recommendation to the Village Board. Mr. Brunner talked about his concerns that he made to Mr. Bradicich in an email on the arguments of who owns the sidewalks, who approved to put them in and that some deeds do not show ownership to the center of the street where the village would have a right of way. If the resident does not own the land under the sidewalk how can they be made responsible or obligated to repair it. Ms. Moree mentioned the current code and homeowner's responsibility. Mr. Brunner said the code says on owner's land parallel to the street which was verified by Ms. Moree. Mr. Brunner talked about a previous board meeting where residents raised concerns about owning to the center of the street as it applied to the ownership of trees in front of their property. Nancy Poylo in attendance spoke up about the issue as a neighbor was injured on a sidewalk on Second St. She asked the Village Board about damage to her sidewalk by a village tree and was told that it was her responsibility but when it was pointed out that it was a village owned tree doing the damage the DPW came and made repairs. Group discussion on damage to sidewalks from trees where the tree would be injured in order to make repairs.

Ms. Moree asked the group if we want Mr. Bradicich to present it to the board. Mr. Braine believed we should push it through as it made ourselves eligible for grants. Mr. Brunner raised concerns about applying it to the whole village and believed it should apply to the historic district. Also concerns with ADA compliance and offered N. Warren St. as an example where the sidewalks are inconsistent and different elevations. Mr. Braine also mentioned the trees in the sidewalks that may make it impossible to be ADA compliant. Ms. Moree mentioned the priority zones from the proposal, business district on Second St., Water St. and Washington St. Discussion on concrete ADA ramps recently made on 385, language of proposal and if there are historic preservation standards that should be included. Mr. Brunner mentioned sidewalks where there are telephone poles in the middle of the sidewalk that could never be ADA compliant. Ms. Reed questioned if this applied to new construction, what about areas that are already concrete and need to be repaired. Ms. Moree believes there should be some form of grandfathering for those areas so homeowners would not be required to use bluestone. She will make a recommendation to Mr. Bradicich to make changes to proposal for people who currently have concrete. Mr. Brunner would like to see certain areas designated ADA compliant like the north side of Second St. to the library or to the elementary school as well as the east side of North Franklin to Market St. as part of that sidewalk was already replaced. Discussion on sidewalks in other communities and styles that change from one property to the next. Discussion on upcoming DPW project to oil and stone alleys.

Ms. Moree will send an email to the CAC later this evening with a summary of questions from the public part of the meeting and an email with our concerns on the Complete Streets proposal.

Meeting ended around 8:30pm