Athens City Planning Commission
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Thursday, July 20, 2017, 12:00 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Athens City Planning Commission was held in the Council Chambers, third floor, at City Hall on July 20, 2017.

Attendees: Sarah Conley Ballew, Members of Boy Scout Troop #77

1. **Call to Order**

RJ Sumney called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 12:05 p.m. and administered the oath to all who intended to speak before the commission. Quorum was established.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS:
RJ Sumney, Chair ……. Present
Christy Zempter ……. Present
Nancy Bain, Vice Chair……..…… ……... Present
Steve Patterson, Mayor …….…….... Present
Paula Horan Moseley, Service-Safety Director……..……... Present
STAFF:
Paul Logue, City Planner ……..Present
Rick Sirois, Code Enforcement Director……... Present

2. **Disposition of Minutes**

Steve Patterson moved to accept the June 8, 2017 minutes. Christy Zempter seconded. Motion passes 3:0 with two abstentions.

3. **Cases**

Case #17-14 Title 43 Wireless Telecommunications Review
39 Water Tower Drive
Modification

Rick Sirois/Synopsis
Verizon Wireless is planning to upgrade and add equipment and new antennas on an existing tower; a 150 ft. self-supporting structure. The modifications are similar to Case #16-03, dated May 19, 2016 with modifications to the platform at the 149 ft. level. This new request involves modifying the platform again at the 149 ft. level. No changes to the height or footprint of the tower will be made.

Verizon Wireless is proposing to modify the platform as follows: 1. Removing and replacing 9 panel antennas and replacing them with 9 similar in size antennas. 2. Adding 6 new Remote Radio Heads. 3. Adding 1 new OVP (Over Voltage Power) Distribution Box. 4. Adding 1 Hybrid Cable 5. Removing and replacing mounting hardware.

Proper supporting documents were provided for the structural analysis of wind and foundation requirements. After a review of the documents it was determined that it met with Code requirements under Title 43.

Applicant: Verizon Wireless, Debbie Butzer, Agent, 9477 Whalers Cove Drive, Mentor, OH 44060. Property Owner: State Of Ohio / Ohio University. Tower Owner: American Tower Corporation, 10 Presidential Way, Woburn, MA 01801. Site Location: 39 Water Tower Drive, Athens, OH. Architect: N/A. Zoning: E1. Estimated value of Improvement: $55,000.

Discussion

Paula Moseley: She sent this request on to OU (as the property owner) and they have no issues with it.

Steve Patterson moved to accept Case #17-14. RJ Sumney seconded. All present voted aye. Motion passes.

Case #17-15 Minor Subdivision/Lotsplit
Madison Heights
Diversified Properties

Rick Sirois: Received an email from Diversified Properties which he read to the commissioners. They are requesting that the case be tabled at this time.

Paula Moseley: The refusal was based on it being submitted as a subdivision, and the variety of issues that resulted from that.

Steve Patterson moved to table Case #17-15. RJ Sumney seconded. All present voted aye. Motion passes.

4. **Communications**

SolSmart/Sarah Conley Ballew

She is the Executive Director of Upgrade Ohio and is the SolSmart advisor.

Introduction: The SolSmart Program is a Department of Energy funded program. It is a designation program for communities to identify improvements to reduce the soft cost of solar development. SolSmart is working with 300 communities nationwide and Athens is the only rural community that applied and accepted to participate. The program designates at the bronze, silver, and gold levels. It is a step by step program using best practices so that solar development can happen seamlessly in a community. It is a six month program and she will be serving four communities.

Goals: She is seeking a silver designation for the city, which can be reached if the city works through certain steps. Her goal is at the very least to achieve a bronze level designation, however, silver won‘t take much additional effort. The first step to achieve a bronze status is to complete a solar statement, then a permitting checklist, to look at zoning barriers, and to also look at special focus goals like community engagement or solar rights. Her goal is to assist the city in any way she can, identify options and opportunities and provide resources.

Points verification: She will take the progress the city is making to a panel of reviewers for points verification; the goal is 225 points.

Benefits: Recognition on their website, press opportunities, plaques, achievement awards, no cost technical support from the SolSmart network.

She will be working with four communities: Athens & Amesville (Standard Pathway), Athens County & Village of Somerset (Modified Pathway). The standard pathway for Athens is: Permitting, Planning, Zoning & Development, Community Engagement, Inspection and Construction Codes.

Athens has accomplished 30 points so far (based on current activities so far). Her strategy is to begin with the pre-requisite categories and then dig in to the special focus categories; to achieve a bronze status in October and then silver in December. There is a need for a city appointee to work directly with her. Her code review will be ready early August.

Discussion

Paula Moseley: Achieving the silver (with some of the requirements) may be difficult. In particular the solar by-right requirement (the city retaining our rights to the public right of way) and the three day permitting requirement is restrictive as well.

Sarah Conley Ballew: She will work with the city and take the city wherever they want to go. The three day permitting time is a national standard. We can determine what makes sense for us.

Steve Patterson: Inquired if her report will have best practices for other Ohio cities and nationally.

Sarah Conley Ballew: Yes, she will bring together the models.

Paula Moseley: Asked Sarah if she could share the solar statement with the commissioners.

Steve Patterson: The statement was a collaborative effort that included his input. It was an online checklist that most of SOPEC, Gary Goosman and Commissioner Schmiel filled out as well.

Sarah Conley Ballew: The process was for the city to gauge their own progress, where we are and where we want to be. It is an initiative that identifies hard costs and soft costs. The soft costs can be slimmed down.

Steve Patterson: We are the only rural community in this national program. We have an opportunity to streamline and establish a benchmark for rural communities.

Paula Moseley: It is important that she is looking at BZA. Accessory structures language has to go through the BZA.
Nancy Bain: Has tried to install solar panels but there isn't enough capacity on the pole.
Sarah Conley Ballew: They are working on utility engagement as well.
Steve Patterson: The community as a collective can leverage.
Paula Moseley: There is a franchise agreement with AEP.
Sarah Conley Ballew: AEP recognizes that times are changing.
Christy Zempter: Is her most immediate need to identify a point person to work with?
Paul Logue: They are working on that with Sarah.

Bylaws and Rules of Order

Paul Logue: Provided his bylaws draft document to the commissioners. His thought is to begin with a basic draft to review and then tweak. Much of the substance was borrowed from Oxford, Ohio. Planning Commission responsibilities are the same regardless of whether a city is a Charter or Statutory city; they both fall under ORC 713.
Steve Patterson: The group should review and then discuss at the next meeting.
Paul Logue: A lot of the cities that he looked at, their Planning Commissions meets once a month. For Oxford the requirement is that documents need to be submitted 45 days prior to a meeting (staff would receive documents on day 1, the commissioners receive the documents from the staff on day 15, and then on day 45 they go before the commission). Athens has historically moved more quickly in this process.
RJ Sumney: There is an order, for example with the Shade Tree Commission they would have to take care of that prior to the Planning Commission.
Rick Sirois: An example would be the upcoming communication with Oakview Dermatology: They are coming as a Communication at the next Planning Commission meeting, after that they will go to Shade Tree and then they will return as a case to the Planning Commission. We process things pretty quickly here compared to other cities in an effort to work with the applicants.
Steve Patterson: Shade Tree meets once a month and the BZA meets once a month. The misalignment is that they meet monthly whereas the Planning Commission meets twice a month, however, he is also sensitive to the fact the all the boards and commissions are volunteer based. The Shade Tree Commission and the BZA do hold special meetings if need be.
Paul Logue: He will send the draft bylaws as a word document to the commissioners as well for them to review prior to the next meeting.

5. **Report from City Planner and Director of Code Enforcement**

<u>Paul Logue</u>

- He and his intern Richard Linscott are starting an uptown parking study. Next week he is coordinating meetings with uptown businesses to get a better understanding about the issues they have and how the employees and customers use the parking. An email announcement went out yesterday via the Chamber of Commerce. The study will go through the fall. They also are planning to operate drone flights uptown to see

how parking rotates uptown during the day. Will get counts to understand about vehicles using the parking garage. This is part of the comprehensive planning process.

- He will be attending the Ohio Town Gown Summit next week in Oxford, Ohio.

Steve Patterson: The recent AUBA meeting attendees were receptive to Paul's parking study and willing to take part the interviews.
Paula Moseley: Received the Active Transportation Grant with the Health Department; will efforts be coordinated?
Paul Logue: Will hope that they can line up.

Rick Sirois

- Oakview Dermatology will be a Communication at the next meeting.
- Will be attending the Ohio Town Gown Summit next week in Oxford, Ohio.

6. **Opportunity for Citizens to Speak**
None

7. **Announcements & Other Business**
Next meeting will be August 3, 2017.

8. **Adjournment**
The meeting was adjourned at 12:46 p.m.

_____ _____

RJ Sumney, Planning Commission Patricia Witmer, City of Athens