

**Athens City Planning Commission
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Thursday, December 1, 2022 12:00 p.m.**

The regular meeting of the Athens City Planning Commission was held in City Council Chambers, third floor of City Hall, on December 1, 2022.

Attendees: Matt Gaiser, John Wharton, Robert Delach

1. Call to Order

Steve Patterson called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 12:02 p.m. and administered the oath to those in the audience planning to speak. Quorum was established with five members present.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Steve Patterson, Chair	Present
John Kotowski, Vice Chair	Present
Nancy Bain	Present
Austin Phillips	Present
Andy Stone, Service-Safety Director	Present

STAFF:

Paul Logue, City Planner	Absent
David Riggs, Code Enforcement Director	Present

2. Disposition of Minutes

John Kotowski moved to approve the October 20, 2022 minutes. Nancy Bain seconded. Motion passed 3:0 (two abstentions).

3. Cases

**Case #22-07 University Estates Blvd. Lot 80
Minor Lot Split Variance**

Austin Phillips recused himself from the discussion and voting on this case, as he is a University Estates (UE) property owner/resident.

David Riggs/Summary

- These types of minor lot splits are usually handled internally by staff, however, this requires a variance. A minor lot split is less than 5 lots created from one tract of land. This one has four tracts with a remainder, so 5 lots, however, city code requires that each created lot has a 3:1 width/depth ratio or less. These 4 created lots all exceed the 3:1 ratio, so that is why a variance is required.
- The 3:1 ratio requirement is to avoid long skinny lots. Larger lots like these are not impacted like the smaller lots found in the city.

Matt Gaiser/Property Owner

- Variance on the 3:1 ratio. Each lot is 2-3 acres, 150 feet wide for most of the lots, which is about three city lots wide combined.
- Lot C2 has a narrow road frontage of about 140 feet but then it widens out to about 400 feet wide.

Discussion

- John K. asked about the plat map of 10 lots that was provided to the commission for informational purposes about one month ago. Three parcels divided into 10 lots. Is this not the plan?
Matt G: This was something that he had provided David Riggs early on in the process, but this is not what he is looking to do in the near future.
- John K. asked if he was doing this to get around the major subdivision requirement.
Matt G: His understanding is that each parcel can be split into 5 or less to meet the minor lot split definition.
- John K. asked if he was seeking to change the zoning.
Matt G: No, this parcel today is residential, R3, and he has no plans to seek an R1.
- Steve P. asked if these lots were buildable.
Matt G: They are buildable up to about 300 feet back, beyond that they are not buildable, it gets pretty steep.
Matt G: He is not building on these but assumes that the builds will be in the front.
- Nancy B. asked about Lot 4 and what the plan was for it because of the high pressure gas line that runs through it.
Matt G: Doesn't know what would happen on Lot 4 but commented that a high pressure gas line runs throughout UE. There is a 25 foot ROW on either side of the gas line that prevents building on it, creates a 50 foot buffer.
- Nancy B. asked how these lots would be marketed and if he considered selling as open space.
Matt G: He would have to disclose the existence of the high pressure gas line, and they are very well marked. The lots would not be sellable as open space. There is green space all around UE. Lot 4 is a large lot with a lot of room to build without encroaching the high pressure gas line. Lots 1-3 are much steeper than Lot 4.
- Steve P. asked if a driveway over a high pressure gas line can be built.
Andy S: Building over high pressure gas lines occurs – the gas company will watch closely.
Matt G: UE Blvd. crosses over the high pressure gas line.

Andy Stone moved to approve Case #22-07. John Kotowski seconded.

- John Wharton (UE property owner, builder and realtor) commented that UE is zoned R3 which allows for multi-unit housing. This will be split and then single family houses will be built which is preferred by the current UE property owners, and will enhance the development. Having an apartment complex with 200-300 tenants with no vested interest is not what the UE residents want. There is a problem with speeding and littering in the neighborhood.
- Andy S. noted that the city has received complaints from UE residents about only one-way in/out access to UE. He asked John W. (as a member of the home-owners association) how much no more development needs to occur before another (2nd) access is necessary on the back end.

John W: Has not heard any complaints about one-way in/out, just complaints about speeding. Having a 2nd access point would be beneficial, especially considering the potential that emergency vehicles can be delayed by trains across 682.

Matt G: He has received many R3 multi-family offers but hasn't agreed to sell for the development of apartments. Doesn't think it fits the neighborhood.

- Nancy B. asked when the pipeline was put in.

Matt G/John W: The pipeline was there prior to UE being developed.

Picked up at the previous motion and 2nd. Three votes in favor, one vote (Nancy Bain) against. Motion passed 3:1.

4. **Communications**

None

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

David Riggs

- Marietta Memorial Hospital update: Approval was received from FEMA to allow them to begin work. They have additional permit work to submit. Spring 2023 opening is expected.

7. **Opportunity for Citizens to Speak**

None

8. **Announcements & Other Business**

- Next meeting December 15, 2022
- Athens County Regional Planning Commission Appointment
Steve Patterson nominated Solveig Spjeldnes to be the City Council Representative to the Athens County Regional Planning Commission. Andy Stone made a motion to appoint Solveig Spjeldnes to the Athens County Regional Planning Commission. Austin Phillips seconded the motion. All present voted aye. Motion passed 5:0.

9. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:32 p.m.