

**Affordable Housing Commission Meeting**  
**April 16, 2024**  
**12-1 p.m.**

**City Administration Building Conference Room “Edward and Martha Berry Room”**

Attendees:

Solveig Spjeldnes (Chair, City Council Rep)

Meghan Jennings (City Planner)

Maria Modayil (representing renters)

Mary Abel (representing community/neighborhoods, three times state representative)

Amy Lipka (representing older adult population)

Zach Dye (Athens Metro Housing Authority)

Mollie Fitzgerald (ACEDC)

Polly Sumney (representing banking)

Visitors: Ryan Schwartzhoff (for tech help, with the Government Channel), Michelle Papai (former member and historian)

Absent: Kimberlee Francis, OU representative identified but hasn't been told yet, Shay Myers (representing architecture)

**1. Confirm attendance/quorum - Quorum met.**

Joe Recchi will be joining us at the next meeting and will request input from those interested in living at the Ridges development. Concern for lack of adequate transportation around new housing developments (bike paths, sidewalks, bus stops, etc.). Solveig is also concerned that Kershaw Green does not share a sliding scale. Zach shared Woda Cooper projects initially have affordable rents but increase prices in subsequent years. This is common for tax credit housing projects. This will require legislative changes. Zach will bring in examples/data to the next meeting. AHC will see what we can do about this. The Woda Cooper project has struggled to find a local property manager. Their office is open now so you can go on in person. The information needed to provide them is exhaustive.

Jumping to item 3 so we can have quorum to approve bylaw changes (Mollie to depart at 12:30p). Mary moves to adopt City of Athens Affordable Housing Commission bylaws. Seconded by Mollie.

**2. Review and pass bylaws -**

Section 4.1 Number of Members: changed to no more than 11 voting members. Reviewed member of commission (required and non-voting). Changed to require “mayoral representative.”

Section 4.3 Terms of Office Meghan suggested checking with Patti because all commissions terms were standardized - only term length is standardized. Per the ordinance, terms start May 1st and there is no limit on terms (3 year terms). Ordinance is to establish terms for AHC at first. Then we refer to the AHC by-laws.

Section 4.4 Resignation: If AHC members leave current positions, a replacement will be identified.

Due to lack of time and respect for visitors, we will table motion.

Polly Sumney joined meeting at 12:25p. Mollie left at 12:30. Quorum still met.

3. **Review maintaining documents and communication -**
4. **Discuss housing/zoning overview with Charles Gardner and Josh Ferdelman of the Mercatus Center – Urbanity Project – via MS Teams**

Non-profit that focuses on zoning issues and help with policies around these issues. Other cities have passed reforms.

- David Riggs article 24k people city
- Aim to make Athens more walkable, transit, affordable
- Campus takes up about 50% of the metropolitan
- 70-30% for owner occupied vs. rental
- Housing stocks really low
- Cost to purchase a home in this region is unaffordably high, \$200/sq. Ft. to build new
- Tax incremental program by the city
- Construction cost cannot be controlled but land cost could be controlled through zoning
- Burlington, Vermont example
  - Predating 1950
  - Major things: abolition of minimum lot sizes, allowed four plexes, 2 free standing structures on the same lot, abolishing parking minimums,
- 2023, Spokane, WA
  - Change of lot sizes– 4000 vs. 8000, 20-30% of cost from
  - Split up – entry cost can be reduced
  - Infill : making process simple
  - Adding rental unit, expanding range of uses
- How do we gradually make some changes or manage controversies?
  - Housing uses, garage units- zoning
  - Aging in place
  - Not changing the city, relegalizing, zoning changes as a process
  - 80 use?? R1
  - Returning rights to property owners, more flexibility to do what they want
  - Infill street network, strengthen and expand to lots without having to disrupt

- Zoning codes make their homes illegal
- Moves based on climate change
- How to rewrite zoning: a lot of single family homes became rentals
- Constitutional challenges
- Infrastructure issues
- 3 takeaways: 1.
- County vs. City planning

5. **For the Good of the Order -**

6. **Adjourn - 1:10 p.m.**