

**Athens City Planning Commission
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Thursday, January 25, 2024 12:00 p.m.**

A regular meeting of the Athens City Planning Commission was held in City Council Chambers, third floor of City Hall, on January 25, 2024.

Attendees: None

1. Call to Order

John Kotowski called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 12:00 p.m. and established quorum with four members present.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Steve Patterson, Chair	Absent
John Kotowski, Vice Chair	Present
Chris Knisely	Present
Austin Phillips	Present
Andy Stone, Service-Safety Director	Present

STAFF:

David Riggs, Code Enforcement Director	Present
--	---------

2. Election of Officers

On behalf of the entire Planning Commission, Vice-Chair John Kotowski expressed thanks to former commissioner Nancy Bain for her many years of service to the Planning Commission as well as City Council. Chris K. noted that Nancy Bain was always dedicated and a model whose shoes will be hard to fill.

Chair

Andy Stone nominated John Kotowski to be the 2024 Chair. Chris Knisely seconded the motion. All present voted aye (John K. abstained), motion passed 3:0.

Vice-Chair

Andy Stone nominated Austin Phillips to be the 2024 Vice-Chair. Chris Knisely seconded the motion. All present voted aye (Austin P. abstained), motion passed 3:0.

2. Disposition of Minutes

Austin Phillips moved to approve the November 2, 2023 minutes. Chris Knisely seconded. All present voted aye, motion passed 4:0.

3. Cases

None

4. Communications

Review of 2024 Planning Commission Goals

Andy Stone presented a list of goals::

1. Pick up the recent City Council Resolution asking the Planning Commission to study and recommend zoning limits on the number of tobacco retailers in each zone. This will become increasingly important with the recent changes legalizing recreational marijuana. The Planning Commission will look at various zones and determine what is appropriate. David R. has researched this and found that there are thirty-three businesses within city corporation limits with tobacco licenses. He has the names and addresses of these businesses that will be affected.
2. Follow up on Stimson Avenue redevelopment plan. Work on zoning overlay with mapping and specific code language that modifies zoning to support the goals of the study. When/if approved this will be sent to City Council for review. There are two zoning overlays in the city right now, the Wellhead Protection Area and the uptown Historic Preservation District. Overlays can add or remove restrictions.
3. Work with the new Community Authority (Ridges) to develop new zoning after their rezoning request is received. The current zoning is all EI. Andy S. and Chris K. are both on the Community Authority board, so they will recuse themselves from voting.
4. Integrate the new City Planner, Meghan Jennings, who begins on February 12th.
5. Continue usual work as it comes before the commission, reviewing developments, etc.

Discussion

- Re: #2., John K. asked if Stimson's overlay will place more restrictions and if the Planning Commission will have a say in adding or removing restrictions. Andy S. commented that the Planning Commission can make recommendations on any added/removed overlay restrictions.
- Re: #1., Chris K. commented that the commission will probably want to move on this soon. David R. said that an intern is working on a GIS zoning map with the thirty-three businesses and what zones they are in.
- Re: #2., Chris K. asked about American StructurePoint's timeline and if they will be returning to the commission with a follow-up. Andy S. said the funding is in the 2024 budget to move forward with their proposal, but the next step is to have the report reviewed by the City Planner and Code Enforcement Director.
- Chris K. suggested including another item to the list of goals; to continue working with other organizations in the city, and develop cooperation with organizations outside of the city, like Ohio University. The university could be a good partner for opportunities.
- John K. asked the group if they wanted to vote to approve the list of goals today or to review and revisit this with an updated list at the next meeting. He likes Chris Knisely's additional goal and would like to add that to the list.

- Andy S. noted that the VP for Planning at OU has moved on and so there is a gap right now at OU. After this settles out the Planning Commission can pursue more coordinated efforts. The city has interacted with OU in the past. Sometimes the university has to come before the commission to discuss developments.
- John K. asked Andy S. for any updates on the Council of Governments (COG) and if the Planning Commission would play any role in the Solid Waste COG.
 - Andy S. said that there was nothing new to report. Any work would be administrative and not involve the Planning Commission. The current COG's that the city is a member of are ORCA and BHRC.

5. **Reports from City Planner and Director of Development & Code Enforcement**

David Riggs/Code Enforcement Director

- Reiterated the work on tobacco code changes.
- A rezoning request was recently received from Dan Deluca. The request is on Elliott south of Stimson adjacent to one of the M zones (Athens Mold and Machine). Mr. Riggs distributed a map (attached for reference) and proceeded to describe the various zones in the area. The developer is requesting a B-3 in the current R-3 zone. He suggests a B-1 instead (non-conforming use would not need to be created in a B-1). He would like to see a buffer zone between the M and R zones there and look at changing some of the other close zones as well.
 - The commission discussed current zoning in the area. The developer wants to do something soon (early summer), a vending service warehouse with sales.
 - The Stimson Avenue corridor plan will need to be reviewed to make sure this zoning request is not in conflict with American StructurePoint's proposal. Then we could move forward with the request sooner.
 - We have stacked zoning, so in a B2D, B3 and M, no residential is allowed on the 1st floor.
 - B-1 does allow residential on the 1st floor. As a B-1 it would still be conforming. There are not many B-1 zones in the city.
 - Legal non-conforming use would be that the two houses that are there now, if the zone is changed to B-3, they will still be allowed (legal non-conforming).
 - Code Enforcement Director's rationale is to have a buffer between I – B – R zones.
 - The benefit of a B-3 is that drive-throughs, bottling works, contractor yards, hospitals, animal hospitals are all allowed.
 - Height requirements are the same in B-1 and B-3's.
 - The process would be that this request will come to the commission as a communication item at the next meeting, then as a case, then a recommendation to City Council. City Council will be required to hold a public hearing.
 - B-1 is appropriate as a "local business" in this case.

6. **Opportunity for Citizens to Speak**

None

7. **Announcements & Other Business**

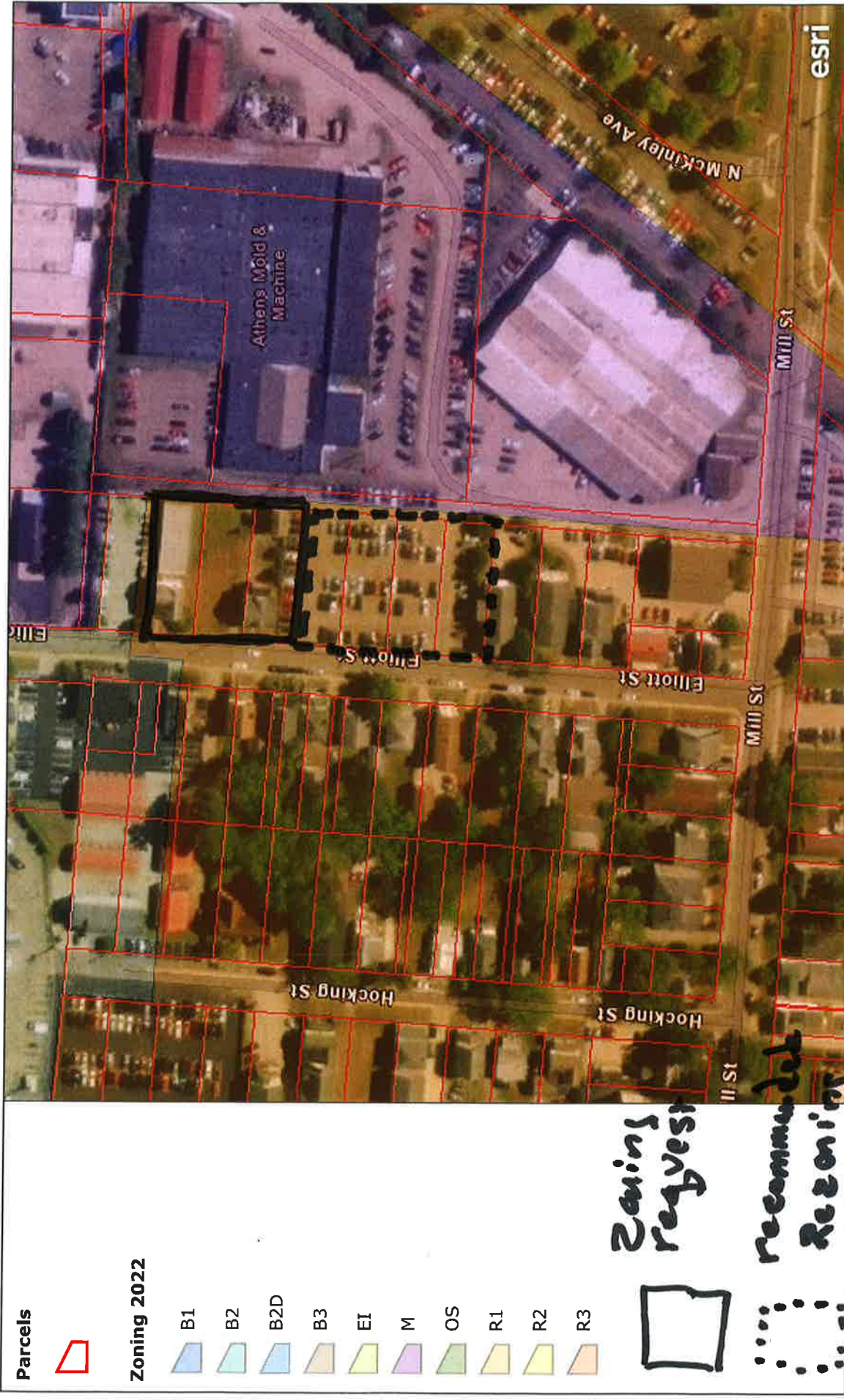
Next meeting February 1, 2024

- The meeting schedule was discussed for the upcoming year. Due to recurring schedule conflicts Andy Stone will be unable to attend the 3rd Thursday meetings. The commissioners discussed the possibility of moving to the 2nd and 4th Thursday or some other combination of days/locations. Availability of Council Chambers, Government Channel staff, and the individual commissioners will dictate the new schedule. The secretary will work on this.
- The first 1st Thursday February (2/1/24) meeting will not be held, as there will not be a quorum present. The secretary will work on the best date to meet in February.

8. **Adjournment**

Austin P. moved to adjourn; Chris K. seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 12:44 p.m.

Zoning Draft 2022



Zoning draft in 2022, includes Athens County parcel feature service

Maxar, Microsoft | State of Ohio GIS | Esri Community Maps Contributors, WVU Facilities, VGIN, West Virginia GIS, © OpenStreetMap, Microsoft, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS