

**Athens City Planning Commission
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Wednesday, November 20, 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 November 20, 2024.

Attendees: Sean McMickle, Rob Delach, Russell Chamberlain

1. Call to Order

John Kotowski called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 12:01 p.m. and administered the oath to those in the audience intending to speak before the commission. Quorum established with four members present.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS:

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

STAFF:

David Riggs, Code Enforcement Director	Present
Meghan Jennings, City Planner	Absent

2. Disposition of Minutes

Steve Patterson moved to approve the November 6, 2024 minutes. Chris Knisely seconded. Motion passed 4:0.

3. Cases

**Case #24-07 Zone Change Request
 0 Pomeroy Road
 Spire Development**

David Riggs/Summary

- Zoning change requests can be put forward by the Planning Commission, City Council, or the property owner. The property owner of 0 Pomeroy Road, Spire Development, is requesting a zone change.
- If the commission approves this request a recommendation will be sent to City Council for their review/approval.

Sean McMickle/Spire Development

- The site is ideal for rezoning to R-3. It is consistent with the city's comprehensive plan, it is adjacent to existing multifamily, it is in proximity to public transit, and walkability and sidewalks will be included in the plan.

Discussion

- AS: Only a portion of the property is part of the request to rezone to R-3, the portion across from Coventry, 8.273 acres.
- JK: R-3 makes sense because it is adjacent to a B-3. Suggested that the rezoning extend to include one or both of the two adjacent triangular parcels.
- DR: The parcel requested to be rezoned from R-1 to R-3 is 8.273 acres, A029200002801. Mr. Riggs approached the dais to clarify which parcel is part of the request on the map.
- CK: Suggested that a condition be added to the commission's recommendation that only the 8.273 acres of the larger property be rezoned/developed. Protecting the property may reassure the adjacent R-1 neighbors.
- AS: The more restrictions that are put on land makes it harder to build housing. The existing hillside topography is already restrictive to development.
- DR: There exists in code additional regulations that restrict development on hillsides and slip-prone soils.
- SP: Suggested that the hillside property be maintained as open or green space.
- SM: Spire is open to these suggestions. They would like the one 8+ acre parcel to be zoned as requested to allow them the density they need for the development. The purchase option does not include the two triangular parcels that JK asked about.
- AS: It is not the commission's role to say or restrict what the zoning is for the other fifteen acres on the hillside. This request will get opposition from the neighbors.
- DR: The property owner to the west is Floor & Moore and the other property owner is Kathy Pittman.
- AS: Suggested that when the commission makes their recommendation to City Council, to add that City Council consider changing the one parcel to the west to a B-3.
- DR: The BZA was looking at Pomeroy Rd. zones. Pomeroy Rd. is not a major thoroughfare anymore so they would like the zoning to be reviewed to reflect current traffic and uses. The BZA has received and granted several use variances along Pomeroy in the past few years.
- RD (BZA chair): The BZA has had three separate requests for first floor residential in this area, and they have all been granted. The BZA would like this zone change request to be considered with future zone changes in mind.
- SM: Spire would like the zoning in place by February 2025 because that is when they are applying for funding. "Pomeroy Landing" is the tentative name of the project.
- AS: Suggested to vote to support the request and include an additional recommendation that the parcel to the west be rezoned to B-1 and to ask City Council to support reviewing the overall zoning on Pomeroy Road.
- JK: The logic for R-3 and B-1 is that they both allow 1st floor residential.
- DR: The parcel to the west is five parcels, same owner.
- CK: The commission should move to approve R-1 to R-3 and suggest to City Council the western triangular parcel be changed to a B-1.

Andy Stone moved to recommend approval of the zoning change request from R-1 to R-3, with the added suggestion to City Council to also change the zoning of the parcel to the immediate west to a B-1. Steve Patterson seconded the motion. All present voted aye, motion passed 4:0.

4. **Communications**

None

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

David Riggs/Code Enforcement Director

- Another zoning change request has been received and will be on the December 4th agenda.
- American Structurepoint (ASP) is analyzing Athens's zoning code and will be making recommendations for improvement. They are looking at zoning code overall. The Stimson corridor is a separate overlay project. Athens currently has two overlay zones, the Historic Preservation District, and the Wellhead Protection Area.
- ASP will provide examples in other cities for reference.
- The BZA has requested that zoning along Pomeroy Road corridor be reviewed to meet the existing traffic and uses.

6. **Opportunity for Citizens to Speak**

None

7. **Announcements & Other Business**

- Andy S.: He and Mayor Patterson are attending the ACSD Board meeting to present to them their idea to use West Elementary as a site option for the Welcome Home Ohio Grant.
- John K.: He is an adjacent property owner to Dan DeLuca's property that was part of a recent communication item. It may be that he will need to recuse himself when this comes back as a case.
- Next meeting December 4, 2024

8. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:34 p.m.