

# Affordable Housing Commission

## Minutes

January 21, 2024 at Noon

City Administration Building - Council Chambers

**In attendance:** Mary Abel, Zach Dye, Kimberlee Francis, Meghan Jennings, Shay Meyers, Maria Modayil, Solveig Spjeldnes, Polly Sumney, Megan Vogel

**Excused Absence:** Mollie Fitzgerald, Amy Lipka

1. **Introduction** – Solveig started the meeting at 12:04 p.m., welcomed all including those who may be watching on the Government Channel and read the AHC mission.
2. **Establish Quorum** – Quorum met.
3. **Disposition of Minutes** – Meghan Jennings moved to approve the minutes. Shay Myers seconded. All in favor and the motion passed.
4. **Speaker** – None
5. **City Updates** – Meghan (Planning Commission - ADUs), Solveig (City Council – LIHTC options) and Shay (Board of Zoning Appeals)

ADUs (Additional Dwelling Units) can be detached or attached to living spaces– could be basement dwellings, garage apartments.. Athens City does not allow for ADUs in the Code. Would apply to tiny homes as well. Should be 140 sq. ft. for one person and increase by 70 sq. ft for each additional. 70sq. ft for bedroom, for 2 people increase by 50 sq. ft. Code would require connection to public utilities and on solid foundation. Tiny home villages would require a zoning PUD process with the larger parcel being owned by an HOA. ADUs

could also be detached structure in the back yard or above a garage. Solveig added that there are a number of ADUs in the community and were grandfathered in. ADUs open up different possibilities to allow individuals to stay in homes, make extra income towards mortgage, etc. There is not a maximum on sq. ft. currently in Athens. Shay Myers added that there are cities that have legalized the maximum sq. ft.

Danny Yahini spoke about his passion for small houses or tiny homes. He also showed a powerpoint with different models of small houses and tiny homes that he has built in the past. Most of these are built with sustainable materials, are the size of a livable trailer but are better quality.

Solveig asked about the number of ADUs that the City currently has and Meghan Jennings reported that she would get the data. Solveig also said that her intention was to educate the commission about ADUs as an option and perhaps in the future pursue this as an approved option for the City.

David Funk with Capstone completed a presentation on LIHTC (Low income housing tax credit) including age demographics, home ownership and equity. In Athens, there are a lot more rental units than home ownership but some of this is because the inventory of starter homes is really low in Athens. In Athens County, David reported that there are a total of 26,386 housing units and 2,690 vacant units. Athens County Housing Affordability Index, meets the 40% income under \$625/month. LIHTC will focus on \$50k and below. 9% tax credit for LIHTC projects, 4% with 30% Appalachian Boost. The State has identified Athens County as an area of interest. The State often funds projects/ developers who have a positive history in the State. Can look up the funding through OFA (Ohio Finance Agency). Currently LIHTC housing available is about \$943/month which is a lot higher than what the Athens affordability is at \$625/month. David Funk would like to create a public/private support service partnership that keeps jobs local and decreases the rent to the target population in Athens lower than AMI.

Meghan Jennings asked if Capstone Properties has a plan on solving this need for housing to assist with affordable homes in the County. David reminded the group that LIHTC cannot be converted to ownership property, it has to be rentership alone.

## **6. Other city and housing related news**

Emergency Housing has been established thanks to Athens County Foundation, Gathering Place, City and volunteers at the Columbus Rd. Firestation

Sunset Motel plans are progressing thanks to HAPCAP and Athens County Foundation. Special thanks to Kerry Pigman (in attendance) from Athens County Foundation spearheading this project.

## **7. Committee Reports/Updates**

### **a. Nominating Committee (Ad hoc) - Mary, Megan, and Amy Lipka**

No updates.

### **b. New Development Committee - Mary, Megan V, Amy, Meghan J, Mollie and Shay**

Haven't met. Plans to host a Housing Roundtable in the Summer.

### **c. Neighborhood Revitalization - Maria, Zach, Solveig, Polly, Kimberlee AND Michelle Papai as our consultant**

Megan V. and Solveig are meeting with Mary Nally from Ohio University to talk about reinvigorating the Athens Beautification Day. Will report back to the group after this meeting.

Solveig met with James Kaufman from the University about the Ridges. Controlling Board approvals are expected in April and then it goes to the Governor to be signed within about 30 days to 6 weeks. Land surveys have been completed. Appraisals need to be updated for DAS requirements in progress. Purchase contract is being reviewed by DAS, OU counsel,

and once approved will discuss with Joe Recchie. Condominium declaration – structure how the New Community Authority will manage and control decisions over the condominiums. It will for example need control parking. Some roadblocks are being worked through. A few minor things still need to be worked out. Then DAS will need to approve. And after this will be sent to the Controlling Board in April or May.

d. **Communication/Education Committee (Ad hoc)** – Polly and Amy

Will be coordinating communication efforts and haven't met since November

**8. For the Good of the Order**

None

**9. Concluding Remarks**

None

**10. Motion to Adjourn**

Mary Abel motioned to adjourn at 1:05 p.m. Shay Myers seconded. All in favor.