

Affordable Housing Commission

Minutes

Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at Noon

City Administration Building – Council Chambers

Members Present: Solveig Spjeldnes, Maria Modayil, Megan Vogel, Zack Dye, Mary Abel, Meghan Jennings, Shay Myers, Maria Modayil, Amy Lipka

Excused Members Absent: Polly Sumney, Mollie Fitzgerald. Kimberlee Francis resigned

1. Introduction – Solveig welcomed everyone and stated the Commission’s mission: The Athens City Affordable Housing Commission is a commission of city government established to review best practices, investigate community affordable housing models, and identify needs and opportunities within Athens’ city limits to advance decent, safe, sustainable affordable housing for all city residents. The commission is tasked with providing advice and guidance on measures and policies that influence access to and needs within the local housing market.

She emphasized the AHC looks at housing developments on all points of the housing spectrum.

2. Establish Quorum – Quorum met.
3. *Speaker – Ken Oehlers, ED Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Ohio – New Housing Plan* – unfortunately, due to a last minute change in schedule Ken was unable to present as planned.
4. Discuss – Solveig shared a resolution in support of an ad hoc committee to review rental code inspection processes to enhance efficient and effective code compliance and rental unit safety.

The proposed resolution is intended to be thoughtful and considerate of existing limitations and was modeled after another resolution Solveig previously worked on. The committee reviewed and discussed the specific language and committee members gave some suggested feedback including:

Megan Vogel suggested adding quotes around those pieces that are pulled directly from the 2040 comprehensive plan.

Meghan Jennings: asked about whether we should empower the existing sub-committee vs. create a new ad-hoc committee. There would no complications with the bylaws on this.

Meghan expressed that she is not aware of the code office's goals and if there is a misalignment with what this committee hopes to achieve. Solveig responded that the Code office is unable to complete code reviews in a year (it is currently at 14 months). There are also some reporting and transparency of the code reporting. Solveig shared personal experiences and reports that she has received to validate a need for the need for this committee.

Meghan added that the structural integrity of buildings are mostly controlled by the state without any local input. There has been some conversations about a county-wide office but this needs more funding. The code office follows Title 29 mainly and some of the concerns are beyond their control.

Shelby Olzinga, lives in The Plains but works in Athens, asked if there was a place to record complaints for future data evaluations/ follow up. Shay and Solveig reminded them that this would be on the app but Solveig was unsure how these were handled.

Mary suggested that the changes be made as discussed today and bring this back to the commission next month to discuss if it needs to be a resolution to the City Council. Mary moved this, Meghan seconded. All in favor.

5. Disposition of Minutes – updated the minutes to include Amy Lipka. Meghan moved to approve the minutes, Amy Lipka seconded, all in favor.
6. Member Resignation: Solveig mentioned that Kimberlee Francis has resigned from the committee and asked that the nominating committee explore finding a new member to replace Kimberlee.
7. Committee Reports/Updates –Progress on Projects and Goals
 - a. Nominating Committee (Ad hoc) - *Mary, Megan, and Amy Lipka*: N/A
 - b. New Development Committee - *Mary, Megan V, Meghan J, Mollie and Shay*.
No new updates.

- c. Neighborhood Revitalization - *Maria, Zach, Solveig, Polly, Kimberlee, Megan and Michelle Papai as our consultant*. Ken Oehlers wasn't able to be here but asked if this can be more easily accessible such as at Arts West. Amy Lipka suggested that the information/ Resources on health safety information on website. Coordinate with City activities such as trash pickup, Spring spruce-up, volunteers in the park, etc.

 - d. Communication/Education Committee (Ad hoc) – *Polly and Amy*: N/A
8. For the Good of the Order – None
9. Concluding Remarks – None
10. Motion to Adjourn - Adjourned at 12:59 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, June 17th at 12p in Council Chambers

Committee meetings held at 11am.