

**ATHENS CITY COUNCIL: REGULAR SESSION, MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2025,
7:00 P.M.**

Athens City Council met in Regular Session at the above hour with the following members present: Clodfelter, McCarey, Risner, Spjeldnes, Swank, Thomas, and Wood.

Also present: President Crawl and Mayor Patterson.

Risner moved to approve the minutes of the Regular Session held October 6; McCarey seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

COMMUNICATIONS:

President Crawl shared that the Council has received many communications, some requesting their letter be read into the record. He clarified it is not a requirement that these be read into the record, noting that some may contain derogatory comments and would not be appropriate to read, while others may be very lengthy and spending time reading them into the record would not be able conducive for Council to attend to its normal business. That being said, City Council Members can share communications they have received and are welcome to read an entire letter or simply a portion of it into the record, or simply state they have received communications in general either in support of or opposed to a matter.

President Crawl has received a communication from Cody Sigmon who is unable to attend the meeting, expressing concern about the lack of public road closure notifications that would be helpful to support businesses and citizens in the City and region, see attached.

Council Member McCarey is in receipt of a letter from Stephanie Hunter, a member of the Pedestrian Accessibility and Bicycle Task Force, requesting assistance from the Administration for improved pedestrian safety regulations regarding neighborhood Trick-or-Treat.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mayor Patterson reported on the following:

- Neighborhood Trick-or-Treat will be held October 31st. The City has put out numerous guidelines for how to make trick-or-treating safe. He encouraged those accompanying young children to be mindful of their safety.
- October 24, 2:00-9:00 a.m. the Stimson Bridge will be closed to pour the second half of the decking, so please plan accordingly. He reminded residents they can sign up to receive City notifications regarding street maintenance and road closures on the City's website.

ORDINANCES FOR THIRD READING:

0-85-25

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE ATHENS CITY CODE TITLE 9, GENERAL REGULATIONS, CHAPTER 9.12, STREETS AND SIDEWALKS, SECTION 9.12.18, MATERIALS ON STREET OR SIDEWALK. Spjeldnes moved for Adoption; Clodfelter seconded. Adoption was approved unanimously.

0-96-25

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2025 APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE 115-24. McCarey moved for Adoption; Clodfelter seconded. Adoption was approved unanimously.

ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING:

0-100-25

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE-SAFETY DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO A PRE-ANNEXATION AGREEMENT WITH THE ATHENS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS.

0-101-25

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE-SAFETY DIRECTOR TO ADVERTISE AND ACCEPT BIDS, WHERE NECESSARY, AND ENTER INTO CONTRACT(S) FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW WATER LINE ALONG JACOBS STREET FROM GRAHAM TO STONEYBROOK, PROJECT (#386).

0-103-25

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING TITLE 29, HOUSING REGULATIONS, CHAPTER 29.37, UNOCCUPIED AND VACANT PROPERTY REGISTRATION. Discussion: Swank questioned Section 29.37.07(C), Exemptions, he believes this precludes a sale by owner from getting an exemption, and questioned whether it may need amended.

Thomas agrees, as does the Mayor, that language should be addressed.

Wood also supports a change.

Swank moved to remove “~~and listed with a licensed State of Ohio Realtor;~~”

Spjeldnes seconded.

The amendment was approved unanimously.

0-104-25

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 29, HOUSING REGULATIONS, CHAPTER 29.37, DEFINITIONS.

0-105-25

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ATHENS CITY CODE TITLE 1, GENERAL PROVISIONS, CHAPTER 1.03, CODE FEES ESTABLISHED, TO INCLUDE SECTION 29.37.06. Discussion: Swank questioned that the residential fee is doubled for vacant commercial properties.

Spjeldnes believes these fees are similar to those in other communities. She has no concern with higher fees for for-profit businesses.

Thomas agrees, commercial generally has higher fees.

Swank cannot justify it; he sees no logic.

Thomas thinks a higher fee may motivate the owner to rent their property as opposed to letting it sit empty.

Wood agrees, there is more urgency to fill commercial space; the community cost is higher.

Spjeldnes noted that commercial property translates into jobs.

Swank questioned whether the higher fees for commercial property is a discriminatory practice.

City Prosecutor Townley responded it would not be as long as there is a rational basis justifying the higher fee.

0-106-25

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A "DO NOT KNOCK" REGISTRATION PROGRAM THROUGH THE NORTHEAST OHIO PUBLIC ENERGY COUNCIL.

0-107-25

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ATHENS CITY CODE, TITLE 11, BUSINESS REGULATIONS, CHAPTER 11.04, VENDING, PEDDLING AND SOLICITING, SECTION 11.04.17, TRESPASSING OF PEDDLERS OR SOLICITORS.

0-110-25

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A CYBERSECURITY POLICY FOR THE CITY OF ATHENS.

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READING:

0-112-25

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ATHENS CITY CODE TITLE 23, ZONING, CHAPTER 23.04, PERMITTED USES, TO ALLOW TEMPORARY SHELTERS AS A PERMITTED USE IN AN R-3 RESIDENTIAL ZONE AT 1, 5, AND 7 NORTH CONGRESS STREET.

Discussion: Swank moved to change the review period from biennial to annual; McCarey seconded. The amendment was approved unanimously.

Spjeldnes believes it is important to help the unhoused, and is very much in favor of this legislation. She then read excerpts from a support letter received from Kerri Pigman, see attached.

President Crowl noted that the Council is in receipt of letters both in support and in opposition to this project.

Jack Stauffer, Elmwood Place, has spoken to the Mayor and Council Members and suggested alternative sites for one year, or until the Sunset Shelter opens on Columbus Road. The Fairgrounds seems to be a logical possibility, or on City-owned property. He requested the Council Table this legislation for more thorough consideration; let common sense and reason prevail. The Council should consider the Law Director's Opinion; this legislation could indeed be challenged.

Kent Lankas, West Washington Street, reiterated this proposed site is very secure with camera-monitoring and counseling services.

Aaron Thomas, Avon Place, believes three Huts are better than none.

Mark Sutton, North Congress Street, encouraged the Council's support of this project.

Nick Tepe, Ellis Street, stressed the site of this Hut project was selected because services are available at this location.

Ginger Schmalenberg, Executive Director of The Gathering Place, hopes those who have fears can set them aside so these individuals who are in recovery can have safe, temporary shelter.

0-113-25

AN ORDINANCE REZONING PORTIONS OF NORTH LANCASTER STREET, SECOND STREET, COLUMBIA AVENUE, AND COLUMBUS ROAD FROM ZONES R-1 AND B-2D TO ZONES R-2, B-1, AND B-2. Swank moved to amend the Planning Commission's recommendation to modify the rezoning map to exclude the R-1 area and B-2 lots east of Lancaster/Columbia for further consideration. This change will continue to allow the City to proceed with the leasing of the fire station; Thomas seconded. Discussion: Spjeldnes feels this amendment is with good reason.

Mayor Patterson is supportive of the Council's amendment.

The Amendment was approved unanimously.

0-114-25

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE 2025 APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE 115-24.

0-115-25

AN ORDINANCE DECLARING PROPERTY LOCATED AT 25 CENTRAL AVENUE NO LONGER NEEDED FOR A MUNICIPAL PURPOSE; AND AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SELL SAID PROPERTY TO ANOTHER POLITICAL SUBDIVISION. Discussion: McCarey indicated that should the Athens Metropolitan Housing Authority,

its successors or assigns, wish to sell the property, the City shall have the right of first refusal for purchase at fair market value. Funds from the sale of the property will be receipted into the CDBG Fund, earmarked for those eligible activities

Swank asked if a fair market value appraisal has been received.

The Mayor believes that will be available at second reading of this legislation.

0-116-25

AN ORDINANCE DECLARING PROPERTY LOCATED AT 458 RICHLAND AVENUE NO LONGER NEEDED FOR A MUNICIPAL PURPOSE; AND AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SELL SAID PROPERTY TO ANOTHER POLITICAL SUBDIVISION.

Discussion: McCarey indicated that the proceeds from the sale of this property listed at \$144,160 will be receipted into the General Fund and transferred into the ACIC Fund.

0-117-25

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DISPOSAL OF EQUIPMENT NO LONGER NEEDED FOR A MUNICIPAL PURPOSE.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & OTHER BUSINESS:

Risner moved to Accept the September Financial Reports; Thomas seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Clodfelter moved to Accept the August 2025 Credit Card Transactions; McCarey seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Swank announced the following Public Hearing notices:

November 3, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., a recommendation from the City Planning Commission, to amend Athens City Zoning Code, Section 23.04.03, Permitted Uses in R-3 Residential Zone (Multi-Family), and 23.04.07, B-3 General Business Zone, to permit Temporary Housing Shelters as a Conditionally Permitted Use.

November 17, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., a recommendation from the City Planning Commission, proposing zone changes for properties along North Lancaster Street, Second Street, Columbia Avenue, and Columbus Road.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO SPEAK ON LEGISLATIVE ITEMS AND CITY SERVICES NOT COVERED ON THE AGENDA:

Rob Delach, Morris Avenue, member of the Pedestrian Accessibility and Bicycle Task Force, reiterated that proactive, physical measures need to be taken by the City to ensure the safety of those participating in Trick-or-Treat, see attached.

Aaron Thomas, Avon Place, encouraged the City to work with the State as they try to pass legislation for property tax relief. He is concerned that our retiring community could potentially be unhoused due to increased property taxes.

At approximately 9:45 p.m. McCarey moved to Adjourn; Spjeldnes seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.

President of Council

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council