

Athens City Historic and Architecture Preservation Commission
Minutes
Athens City Hall, First Floor Conference Room
Monday, January 12, 2015

1. Call to Order

Mary Anne Reeves called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM. Members present include Mary Anne, Joanne Priseley, Keith Chapman, Ann Fidler, Guy Philips, Sarie Landers, and Paul Logue. Cyrus Moore was absent.

Guests include Shawna Bolin, Hugh Sherman, and Mike Canterbury.

2. Disposition of Minutes

Keith motioned to approve the minutes. Ann seconded. All voted in favor.

3. Next Meeting

February 9, 2015 at 5:30 PM

4. New Business

a. Ohio University updates—President Street Academic Center . Shawna Bolin and Hugh Sherman introduced themselves to the commission. Shawna is the campus planner and Hugh is the Dean of the College of Business. Shawna has met with city administrators and historical society members. The business school has space needs and wishes to tear down PSAC and build new. According to them PSAC hasn't been used in 12 years and is in disrepair. OU is planning to demolish it at the end of the academic year. The business school needs do not fit in that building. Copeland Hall was renovated in 1995 to service 1600 students and now handles 3100 including part time grad students. They need room for executive education, graduate students, and undergraduate students to study in a problem based floorplan. PSAC is a contributing building to the College Green historic district. Shawna reported that the building was evaluated from a historic preservation perspective. The building works for small 20 person classrooms but not for large spaces that CoB needs. Ann asked if it was possible to preserve some aspects of the building such as the façade. Shawna didn't think this was possible based on costs and need for difference floor to ceiling heights. Hugh mentioned that site lines would be improved by replacing the building. Mary Anne asked if the new building can be compatible with the district if this one can't be saved. Shawna said this is possible and would be considered. Shawna will be meeting with the trustees next week. Demo will be coordinated with the City of Athens. Green space will be put in after demolition until the new building is constructed. Hugh expects new construction will start in 4 years or so. Regarding this happening while the master plan is being developed, Shawna said this is part of some ongoing planning efforts that were underway prior to the master plan starting. Hugh said the building is in bad shape. Ann asked if there are other buildings that are at risk to demolition. Shawna is looking to renovate and save over 1M sq feet of existing buildings but there aren't resources to save them all and not all buildings are suitable for today's needs. Shawna would like the preservation

commission and the city to comment on the design of the new building. Ann asked if Pilcher House is at risk or any other buildings. Shawna is unaware of any other buildings being discussed to tear down. Mary Anne mentioned the need to mothball buildings until a use is identified for them. Ann recommended that OU take photographs and scale drawings of the building prior to demolition. Shawna would like info from the commission relating to what features and elements of the building are important to keep. Ann stressed that she doesn't want to see any OU press saying that the commission supports the demolition. The commission would like to see historic preservation clearly incorporated into master planning. Guy and others stated that they don't want to see new construction that looks like the additions to Schoonover Hall. Guy would like to see them consider retaining the façade. Paul urged them to take careful consideration with design and looks for campus edge construction as it impacts the city as a whole.

Ann asked how to follow up on this to the commission. Guy thought the commission should formally state that the commission would prefer to see renovation and preservation, but if not, have comment on new design. Mary Anne knows a Packard historian and will see if she will talk with Shawna.

Guy made a motion to send a letter relating to paragraph above. Keith seconded. All voted in favor. Paul will help draft and distribute.

5. Old Business

a. Inventories (Ann Fidler discussion with student)—Ann has an undergraduate at Scripps with a double major in history. Student wants to be a professional historian and is volunteering to help with surveys. Cyrus has done a lot of work on this already. Documents need to be updated. Paul will coordinate with Victoria. Ideally she can work through the historical society. Guy can provide space.

Map of district—Union Street needs to be clarified. Is it important to include College Street buildings and Congress Street houses? Guy thinks we should keep it small and be good with managing districts. Keith thinks we should be careful about residential. Sarie thinks establishing districts should benefit owners through utilization of tax credits. Mary Anne suggested including OU campus in locally designated historic districts. Mary Anne proposed establishing a district that includes the existing national registry and adding Union Street up to Jackie O's. Paul and Mary Anne will meet with Chris Fahl to discuss in more detail.

b. Armory—Paul gave a brief update on the work that the city has contracted with RVC Architects to do. Work focuses mostly on updating costs for renovation and basement use as for public records.

c. Union Street Fire—Paul is working with city and property owners to encourage use of tax credits.

d. letters—don't cc—send them to each group individually.

6. Adjournment

Joanne motioned to adjourn. Meeting ended at 7:30PM