

Athens City Historic and Architecture Preservation Commission
MINUTES
Athens City Hall, First Floor Conference Room
August 14, 2017

1. Call to Order—Chairman Keith Chapman called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. Members present include Mr. Chapman, Cyrus Moore, John Valentour, Mary Anne Reeves, and Joanne Prisley. Members absent include Guy Philips and Pam Callahan. Quorum was established. Guests included Shawna Bolin. Paul Logue represented the administration and recorded minutes.

2. Disposition of Minutes—the minutes from June 2017 were reviewed by the commission. Ms. Reeves made a motion to approve the minutes with no additions, deletions, or corrections noted. Ms. Prisley seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of approval. The minutes were approved.

3. Next Meeting—September 11, 2017

5. New Business

a. Ohio University update—University planner Shawna Bolin introduced herself to the commission. Ms. Bolin also heads the transportation and parking services department.

Shawna reported that a work group designated on small houses completed an evaluation on conditions with the buildings. Remaining work has been paused until new OU leadership gets caught up to speed on these projects. Shawna will be meeting with President Nellis on August 21 to discuss this and Park Place. She has presented to the board of trustees in June. Updated capital plan has \$5M for deferred maintenance on these buildings. Condition analysis in work group recommended utilizing most buildings for university needs. None of the buildings were recommended for demolition. The work group will reconvene to complete their planning provided that Dr. Nellis supports it. Trustee Goodman is interested in working on more capital funding from the state as well. Joanne mentioned that alumni love the old homes and the architecture of College Green and lamented that Miami has a better reputation for historic preservation. She said there is a document by a former professor that may be useful.

Mr. Chapman asked about College Green improvements. Shawna reported that new wood windows have been added to Cutler, Wilson, and McGuffy; the retaining wall has been repaired and added drainage; Cutler has new paint and carpets. Shawna asked if Wilson and McGuffy are worthy of national landmark status. Mary Ann volunteered to check in with Barb Powers about what is needed to add them.

Regarding Park Place, Shawna doesn't have much to report on at this time. She can provide more info after meeting with Dr. Nellis.

Shawna reported that Dr. Nellis took an all-day tour of the Ridges and is supportive of better utilizing that area of campus. Shawna anticipates \$12-15M to renovate buildings 13, 14, and 18 for administrative uses in order to open some current administrative uses for academic uses elsewhere on campus. First steps will be bare bones renovations in order to make the buildings useful again. She will

be presenting to board of trustees on this in October. Mary Ann recommended they see the restrooms at the Dairy Barn as they retained much of the old features in them. Keith asked that any historic features that won't be restored this round be stored for future uses. Non-contributing building 20 is being considered for demolition to make room green space, parking, etc.

Joanne and Mary Anne expressed issues with public parking at the Kennedy Museum. Shawna will work on this with them.

The Ridges framework also included recommendations for new housing development on other areas of the Ridges lands. There were public concerns from several area constituents regarding development on the Tier I land and current thinking is to not develop on that area. Regarding possible senior housing development up there, Joanne stressed that seniors may be hesitant to live on a hill that may be hard to access. The university is interested in collaborating on a market study to better understand the need for senior housing in Athens. The Ridges advisory committee has a meeting on Aug 28 in Baker 240 at 11 AM. Mr. Moore is interested in working with university people on the Ridges sesquicentennial in 2018.

b. Uptown strategy—Mr. Valentour has been thinking about this issue recently. He has an outline to work with to encourage preservation, safety, and economic development. The central question is how to get property owners to make improvements. Preservation needs to make financial sense to property owners. Options might include tax credit/deduction/abatement programs, public improvements/ subsidies/ code changes to encourage renovations. John thinks local labor participation should be included. Many of our old buildings are showing their age and need renovated. Adaptive reuse is the key to uptown preservation. John thought the US Department of Interior guidelines would work well for Athens and the city doesn't need more detailed guidelines since the standards provide flexibility. John provided a map with a recommended district.

c. St. Paul's Church—Mary Anne Reeves reported that Fr. Moore is considering closing the church and building a new one. St. Paul's is the oldest active church in Athens dating back to 1895. Cyrus has some historic photos. Fr. Moore and other residents of the rectory have moved out of St. Paul's. Joanne and Mary Anne are concerned about the potential loss of the church. Cyrus agreed that the church should be preserved. The commission asked Mary Ann and Joanne to update them on this.

4. Old Business

a. Armory historic marker—Mr. Logue hasn't heard back on this yet.

6. Announcements and Updates

Paul reported that he received a certificate from the National Park Service to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and congratulates the city on being a CLG.

7. Adjournment – Keith motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 PM. Mary Anne seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of adjournment.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Logue

