

Athens City Planning Commission
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Wednesday, February 19, 2014, 12:00 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Athens City Planning Commission was held in the Council Chambers, third floor, at City Hall on February 19, 2014.

Attendees: Jeff Risner.

1. **Call to Order**

RJ Sumney called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 12:07 p.m. and administered the oath to all who intended to speak before the commission. Quorum was established.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Nicholas Bittner, Chair Absent
RJ Sumney, Vice Chair Present
Nancy Bain Present
Paul Wiehl, Mayor Present
Paula Horan Moseley, Service-Safety Director..... Present

STAFF:

Paul Logue, City Planner Present
John Paszke, Director of DEF Present

2. **Disposition of Minutes**

Paul Wiehl moved to approve the minutes of February 6, 2014. Nancy Bain seconded. All voted aye.

3. **Cases**

None

4. **Communications**

Title 23, Zoning Code Work Session

At the last meeting, John Paszke provided the commission with a proposal showing several uses that are not currently outlined in the Athens City Code.

Mayor Wiehl gave the commission members a copy of the Zanesville and Lancaster codes. The Zanesville code covers several uses in its code; not sure if this is the direction the commission would like to go.

The commission discussed form based codes, based on a theory called performance zoning which allows for more flexibility. Nancy Ban felt that form based codes can be complex and suggested hiring someone to look at this for the commission. Paul Logue said a consultant would make recommendations based on planning meetings with elected officials, the Planning Commission, and through public hearings.

Paul Logue said he could provide information about the Stimson area which discusses some mixed uses, wider size sidewalks, etc. How do you define aesthetics? Mayor Paul Wiehl said he has been cautious about stepping into the aesthetics of the code. RJ Sumney said many areas are out to capacity and are already nonconforming uses. Nancy Bain said the OU Mill Street proposed plan showed one large parcel instead of several individual owners. With the prospect of 74% of the community being rental housing how do you make changes for future development, by offering more or less flexibility?

There are not many pieces of property left in Athens to encourage new construction for businesses. Mayor Wiehl said restrictions such as setbacks, lot size, and flood plain issues can hinder some development in certain areas. It was suggested that Title 29, Housing Regulations, should be updated with newer wording from the state level.

Paul Logue explained how a form based code could work. The aesthetics can be as little or as detailed as the commission is willing to regulate. As examples, you can adjust bulk controls, allow for mixed uses, regulate residential on the second floor and above, require parking in the rear of the building. The commission does not have to get into colors or types of woods, if they do not want that level of detail in the code.

Paula Horan Moseley said her goals are still the perseveration of neighborhoods, vibrant businesses and business areas, restrictions on height, and addressing parking, specifically, an overage of parking on some projects.

RJ Sumney said he feels the commission is still trying to define what shape the code might take in the future and what we want the code to do in the future. The commission discussed Court Street compared to Stimson Avenue. Court Street is pedestrian based with mostly restaurants and second floor housing on the north end. Stimson Avenue is geared more toward vehicular traffic. RJ Sumney asked if we see the Stimson Avenue area similar to Court Street in the future. Paula Horan Moseley felt the population might be there to support this, if the area was more pedestrian friendly.

Nancy Bain commended the conversations but was not sure how far to take the discussions to make recommendations for changes. RJ Sumney asked if the commission would like to look at the city in parts, make observations, and decide how to proceed from there? Paul Logue said he feels this would be a good approach.

Suggested areas to discuss:
Stimson Avenue
Richland Avenue
Columbus Road

West Union Street

Nancy Bain asked if it would be possible to show Lancaster's commercial district on Google Earth. Paul Logue will look to see if this is available to show the commission. Marietta might provide some correlations in zoning to Athens. The commission was reminded about East State Street repairs and future Ohio University plans for a medical corridor.

The commission will review small changes, previously discussed, in the Residential zones that could be easily modified and then focus on looking at the Stimson Avenue area.

5. **Report from City Planner and Director DEF**

Paul Logue

1. No new updates

John Paszke

1. Lamborn building project - Shade Tree accepted recommendations

6. **Opportunity for Citizens to Speak**

The Arts, Parks, and Recreation committee will meet tomorrow at 5:30 p.m. to discuss how to proceed with a presentation to City Council and schedule a public Open House.

7. **Announcements & Other Business**

The next meeting of the commission will be March 6, 2014.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

RJ Sumney, Vice Chair
City Planning Commission

Sharlene Bails, Recording Secretary
City of Athens