

Athens City Planning Commission
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Thursday, March 6, 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 March 6, 2014.

Attendees: Jeff Risner.

1. **Call to Order**

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

STAFF:

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

2. **Disposition of Minutes**

Paul Wiehl moved to approve the minutes of February 19, 2014. RJ Sumney seconded. All voted aye. Nicholas Bittner abstained.

3. **Cases**

None

4. **Communications**

Title 23, Zoning Code Discussions

John Paszke provided a map for the commission members. Paul Logue provided the commission with a copy of the Comprehensive Plan and a document about zoning practices that might be useful.

The Comprehensive Plan addresses overlays for some corridors in the City of Athens. Paul Logue said corridor based overlays might be a good approach and is definitely a discussion worth having but is ultimately a decision that the commission will need to make. Nicholas Bittner said an overlay might work well in some areas that have the

same zoning but has different functions.

John Paszke explained his process for the map he presented to the commission; R1-W would be a residential neighborhood on the west side with different bulk controls, etc. It could take a comprehensive study to come up with setback requirements, etc. for each of the zones. The map was presented as a conceptual idea for the commission to discuss and consider as an option in the planning process. Many of the cases that are heard by the Board of Zoning Appeals are within the original requirements but those standards are now non-conforming. All Ohio University property was identified as E-OU/Educational.

Paul Logue asked if the Planning Commission was interested in pursuing this type of plan. Mayor Wiehl felt that overlays could be used in combination with this conceptual plan. Nicholas Bittner felt strongly that overlays would still be very beneficial. As you consider neighborhood preservation, Paula Horan Moseley said she supports the idea of a conceptual map combined with overlay corridors. Also, the South Green extension needs discussed as part of this process.

RJ Sumney said he likes the idea of a general corridor overlay, identifying common functions in each corridor and allowing for more specific requirements in different areas.

Such as Stimson Avenue, how much more density or less density do we want to add to this area.

Nancy Bain said some of the information provided in the map mirrors the Comprehensive Plan. There are still several good suggestions in the Comprehensive Plan. Looking at a Columbus Road corridor, there could be many limitations after you overlay the flood plain map to this area. The commission discussed parking needs on Stimson Avenue and whether more green space would work or if there would still be a need to have parking available.

RJ Sumney asked if bike lanes can be incorporated in an overlay. Not necessarily, bike lanes are considered a public improvement. Paul Logue agreed, if the university is proposing changes to this area the commission needs to consider how they would like to see this area. Through zoning, the Planning Commission and City Council have control over this new gateway. Will the traffic on Stimson Avenue increase or decrease? Nancy Bain wanted to know what the service of this new area will be; more student or citywide traffic. Mayor Wiehl said, this is a residential area but it abuts a commuter area and vehicles are directed by google maps to the university via the Stimson Avenue exit. The commission discussed some of the parking lots located on Stimson Avenue and whether parking on the street would still be needed due to the lots that are already available.

Nicholas Bittner asked if the commission could look at each corridor to see what is the same, what is unique, design standards, and what the Comprehensive Plan proposed for these areas. Paula Horan Moseley made a good point, there is a lot to be said for what is already existing and occurring.

The commission members agreed to look at the corridors as listed below:

Paul Wiehl - W Union Street
Paula Horan Moseley - East State Street
RJ Sumney – Stimson Avenue, Carpenter as part of the process
Nicholas Bittner - Richland Avenue
Nancy Bain – Columbus Road

Due to cases at the next meeting, the commission agreed to have their homework completed by the next meeting but will not discuss it further until the first meeting in April.

The commission was provided with information about a possible annexation request for the applicant to receive city services to build a microbrewery. The Planning Commission will be asked by City Council to recommend a zoning for the proposed annexation.

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

Paul Logue

1. Summary of the flood insurance program changes was passed out to the commission members, grandfather status previously lost, congress passed it on Tuesday, expensive impact to homeowner, cap at 15%, respect grandfathering.

John Paszke

1. Board of Zoning Appeals
 - A. Conditional use – 5 North Shafer, Mother Earth
 - B. New members - John Golzy and Ellen Soltow

6. **Opportunity for Citizens to Speak**

None

7. **Announcements & Other Business**

The next meeting of the commission will be March 20, 2014.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:22 p.m.

Nicholas Bittner, Chairperson
City Planning Commission

Sharlene Bails, Recording Secretary
City of Athens