

Athens City Planning Commission
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Thursday, June 5, 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 June 5, 2014.

Attendees:

1. **Call to Order**

Nicholas Bittner called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 12:00 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 Chair Absent
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**

Paula Horan Moseley moved to approve the minutes of May 15, 2014. Paul Wiehl seconded. All voted aye. Nicholas Bittner abstained.

3. **Cases**

None

4. **Communications**

Title 23, Zoning Code, Corridor Discussions

The Ohio Department of Transportation is in the process of a public safety review for East State Street. A table will be setup at the Farmers Market on Saturday, June 14, 2014, to solicit public input.

Columbus Road – Nancy Bain

Nancy Bain sees manufacturing in the Columbus Road area on lots that are large enough to accommodate light industrial.

The Comprehensive Plan outlines a general commercial zoning district. The building setbacks are not consistent and a common architectural theme was suggested in the plan.

This corridor provides access in to the city and the new roadway will be beneficial for growth in this area.

Mayor Wiehl said the wellhead protection area will be a consideration in this area for any future development. Nancy Bain said the city should continue to be vigilant of the flood plain area. Paula Horan Moseley asked the commission members to be cognizant of the promotion of an industrial corridor in the wellhead protection area. Nancy Bain felt that a light industrial business would not be considered a pollutant. John Paszke agreed and said this is already permitted in a B-3 zone.

Jeff Risner asked the commission how they will define light industrial so that it would be applicable to what is being discussed. Nancy Bain felt a good definition of light industrial would be important.

Paul Logue said many individuals have the notion that the wellhead protection area is extremely strict and it discourages potential developers from pursuing opportunities in this area. There are regulations in the wellhead area but development is not impossible or as strict as some may think.

The commission discussed two of the bigger parcels in the Columbus Road area owned by Sean Jones and Glen Knudson. Previously, Mr. Knudson had a permit to build on the property but the market changed and this did not happen. The properties located on the eastern side abut an R zone which increases the difficulty for businesses to build in this area because of the distance requirements.

The Mayor asked Nancy Bain how she sees this area in ten years. Nancy Bain did not feel there would be many changes in this area. The Columbus Road corridor has the potential to bring in more commerce and jobs. Nicholas Bittner said the focus was to create an overlay to promote this.

Couple of points from Nancy Bain:

1. What is allowed in the wellhead protection area
2. What types of development are currently allowed in this district

Paula Horan Moseley said she would be willing to meet with the wellhead protection team to ask them to promote what development can be accomplished in a protected area.

The Comprehensive Plan speaks about development standards but it does not address what uses should be implemented in the code. For future development, upgrades to access roads and right of ways issues might need to be addressed on Columbus Road.

The Planner, Paul Logue, offered to find a definition of light manufacturing.

Nicholas Bittner – Richland Avenue

This area is limited by its topography and the Richland Avenue will be under construction in the future.

Assessment of topography and corridor:

- Hillside on the eastern side,
- The highway is located on the western side,
- Eastern side is residential and the lots are very narrow,
- Richland Avenue floods on the southern end during rain events,
- Foot and bicycle traffic, with several curb cuts on Richland Avenue.

The Richland Avenue improvements will improve grade and storm water runoff and bike lanes will be added.

Nicholas Bittner said most of the buildings are single story with some two story buildings, such as the Athens Sun and Fun building. There has been some loss of single family homes across from the tire shop. The biggest area of potential development is from the grocery store to the highway underpass. The location of the old Highland Laundromat parking lot is underutilized. The restaurant across the street uses the lot for customer parking. The bridge area that crosses over Coates Run is privately owned.

The Comprehensive Plan encouraged additional development standards to promote quality development in this area. The process for approval in an overlay district would include Title 41 and Title 25 site plan reviews.

Nicholas Bittner said Richland Avenue is an accessible area in the city and he could see the potential for more businesses, such as bank and restaurants, located in this area. The area is busy and the potential for reaching traffic capacity in the future is possible. The addition of the roundabout and the future planned improvements will help alleviate some of these problems.

The planning process of the Ohio University Ridges Master Plan is underway. This could impact the Richland Avenue corridor depending on the outcomes of what is proposed for The Ridges.

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

Paul Logue

1. A public meeting will be held next Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. for The Ridges Plan
2. A flood insurance panel discussion will be held on June 13th at 8:00 a.m.
3. There is an open seat on the Environment and Sustainability Commission, which was previously held by the Athens County Planner

John Paszke

1. Board of Zoning Appeals
 - A. New Life Assembly, variance was denied – PUD submittal in the future

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2. Planning Commission granted a one year temporary use permit for 960 E State Street – possible extension request
3. PC Agenda
Lot Split, University Estates
Two Wireless Use Permit Applications

6. **Opportunity for Citizens to Speak**

None

7. **Announcements & Other Business**

Athens County has established a Transportation Improvement District. The next meeting of the commission will be June 19, 2014.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.



Nicholas Bittner, Chairperson
City Planning Commission

Sharlene Bails, Recording Secretary
City of Athens