

Athens City Planning Commission
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Thursday, August 7, 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 August 7, 2014.

Attendees: Matt Gaiser and Ben Holter.

1. **Call to Order**

RJ Sumney called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 12:01 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 July 17, 2014. Nancy Bain seconded. All voted aye. RJ Sumney abstained.

3. **Cases**

Case #14-09 Matt Gaiser, University Estates, Lot Split

Lot number 11 is approximately 5 acres. The property owner would like to split the lot into two parcels; 2.57 acres and 2.335 acres. As you drive in to University Estates, this is the first lot on the left side. The lot is currently zoned B-3 and the developer is not asking for any changes to the zoning designation.

There is an access easement for both parcels shown on the survey. To gain access to the property, there is an existing curb cut for the 2.335 acre lot. Matt Gaiser has discussed the access easement with Andy Stone.

The intent is to develop the northern most lot, with the existing access, to construct a medical office.

John Paszke said the lot meets all the current requirements. He discussed the curb cut with Andy Stone and he did give his approval. Any building over 5,000 square feet, will need to be reviewed by the commission.

Nancy Bain asked if the property abuts an R-3 district; across the street is Grande Vista. The project might require a Title 41 review.

Paul Wiehl moved to recommend approval of the lot split as requested. Nancy Bain seconded. All voted aye.

4. **Communications**

Title 23, Zoning Code, Corridor Discussions

RJ Sumney – Stimson Avenue

The Comprehensive Plan outlines the Stimson Avenue area as a 3 quarter mile of road to Stimson Avenue; zoning along Stimson is B-3. The area is linked to Ohio University through Palmer and Elliot Street.

Most of the businesses on Stimson Avenue have the same owners for the past 10 years. The area is a mix of small businesses and a student residential neighborhood.

The feel is a small village atmosphere with anchor stores, along with Athens Bicycle, Jackie O's, Bella Vino, and Stimson Gardens. New businesses are finding success because of the anchor stores.

The South Green extension, gateway aspect to OU, and the proposed roundabout could impact the area greatly in the future. Retaining the traffic lanes and the on street parking could be challenging and bike lanes could be part of future plans.

The Prokos site could be a key area for future development on Stimson. The commission discussed a uniform zoning on both sides of the street. Mayor Wiehl commented that zoning is impacted by the abutting zones.

Some of the businesses require on street parking and some have adequate parking for their business and would like to see less parking on the streets.

How much more traffic will Mill Street bring to the area and will the OU gateway plans affect the area; unknowns. Paula Horan Moseley said the bike path access to the Stimson Avenue area is not ideal for biking at this time.

RJ Sumney suggested "Branding" the corridor with a village name.

Nancy Bain gave her observations of the Stimson Corridor:

1. Concerns for the Athens Fire Department
2. ATCO-wheelchair traffic, not well served by the existing sidewalks

RJ Sumney said many citizens have concerns with the location of the US Postal Services. When the lot is full individuals tend to park in the other lots and traffic in and out of the parking lot creates potential safety issues.

The Prokos site would be a good location for a Fire Station. It was noted that the Athens Fire Department avoids access from major highways because of the high speed traffic.

Nancy Bain felt the area is of interest for further development and with common ownership of some of the lots, larger developments could occur.

RJ Sumney was concerned about empty store fronts with residents living on the second floors and above. The existing structures fit in with the village aspect along with maintaining the businesses for a small town flavor. The Mayor discussed creating different B-3 zones; blending of B-1 and B-3.

RJ Sumney said the area is accessible by bike and automobile. Paul Logue said there is a potential for a walkable area surrounding Stimson but currently the roadway does not allow for this. Currently, the students drive to use the recreational area on Stimson Avenue.

Nancy Bain feels the roundabout will have an enormous impact on this area.

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

Paul Logue

1. Environmental Sustainability – Plan late October, one available seat on the commission
2. Historic Preservation Meeting – Nathan Bevel gave a presentation on the Certified Local Government process and the workshop was recorded by Government Access. Protect resources and update inventory, can include buildings 50 years old and greater.
3. The Ridges Master Plan – A public participation meeting will be held on August 18, 2014, 5:00 p.m., Building 21 at The Ridges.
4. Bicycle Committee will meet at noon on August 22, 2014 to discuss the upcoming League of American Bicyclists group event.
5. Essence of Athens Plan – copies to the commission members, good design ideas outlined in the plan.

John Paszke

1. Board of Zoning Appeals
 - A. 30 Utah Place – variance to put a fence around the property
 - B. 75 Stewart Street – addition on the back of the building
 - C. 24 South Shafer Street – alteration to the height of the building
2. No cases for next meeting, upcoming Title 41 plans

6. **Opportunity for Citizens to Speak**

None

7. **Announcements & Other Business**

The next meeting of the commission will be August 21, 2014.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:08 p.m.

RJ Sumney, Vice Chair
City Planning Commission

Sharlene Bails, Recording Secretary
City of Athens