

Athens City Planning Commission  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
Thursday, June 2, 2016, 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 2, 2016.

**Attendees:** Alex Goodman, Al Downs, Richard M. Linscott, Betty Hollow, Joan Kraynanski

1. **Call to Order**

Nancy Bain called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 12:12 p.m. One member absent. Quorum was established.

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

RJ Sumney, Vice Chair .....Absent  
Christy Zempfer .....Present  
Nancy Bain ..... Present  
Steve Patterson, Mayor ..... Present  
Paula Horan Moseley, Service-Safety Director..... Present

**STAFF:**

Paul Logue, City Planner ..... Present  
Richard Sirois, Director of DEF ..... Present

2. **Disposition of Minutes**

*Steve Patterson moved to approve the minutes of May 19, 2016. Christy Zempfer seconded. All present voted aye.*

3. **Cases**

None

4. **Communications**

**Generation Opportunity: Home Sharing Economy Presentation**

Alex Goodman and Albert Downs/Generation Opportunity

- Generation Opportunity is a non-partisan, non-profit organization based out of Arlington, VA.
- Home sharing (Airbnb, HomeAway, FlipKey) is a fast growing cheap room rental option.
- Phone apps.
- Properties to rent worldwide.
- Home sharing user ratings.

- Home sharing host ratings.
- Home sharing is not commercial, it is a private/personal activity that is incidental to home ownership.
- Does not compete with traditional housing options (hotel revenue decreases by less than 1/2 % for every 1 % increase in spending on home sharing).
- Home sharing hosts are not lodging service providers.
- Home sharing users are typically younger – a new way to tap into potential tourists because the younger demographic is not substituting a hotel room with a home share room.
- Home sharing hosts are not slum lords because the profit is not there (profit is <16% of what they could make from a traditional long term lease).
- Regulation is built in to the home sharing economy.
- Peer regulation vs. government regulation (64% of users feel peer regulation is more valuable than government regulation).
- Most home sharing hosts only do it for less than 50 days/year
- Rental leases usually prohibit renters from renting rooms.
- Generation Opportunity is funded in part by the Koch Brothers, not by the home sharing companies.
- Cleveland is working on legalizing home sharing.
- Different ways to address tax collection: redefine who is subject to the transient guest tax; require that the platforms remit the tax; put the obligation on the host with an option for the platform to remit the tax on behalf of the host.

Steve Patterson

Airbnb and other home sharing companies have no policy to remove users or property owners, solely reliant on self-removal and the ratings. Concern is that there are no checks and balances.

Christy Zempter

Municipalities have the responsibility to ensure that people are protected. It would be a strain on city resources to ensure that home sharing properties are safe. Single owner occupied homes are not subject to yearly inspections like commercial or rental properties. The home sharing property owners may not be aware of city code requirements.

Paula Horan Moseley

Renters in Athens have rented their rooms out, so not all leases ban this activity. There is a Fair Housing/Equal Rights concern.

Paul Logue

The potential for discrimination exists with home sharing, there is no regulation.

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

Paul Logue

- Sustainability Commission
  - A public meeting to present the draft of the Sustainability Plan is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on June 21<sup>st</sup> at the Community Center.
  - The draft will be available for distribution approximately 1-1 ½ weeks prior to the public meeting.
  - The plan should go to Council in August.
- Building Doctor Event
  - The event was well attended and successful.
  - The first hour of Thursday night's presentation is available via streaming video on the city website.

Rick Sirois

- Attended the Government Affairs Roundtable on Wednesday, June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Upcoming before the BZA: 12 East Carpenter - requesting 15 parking spaces for compact cars (8' vs. 9').
- Upcoming before the Planning Commission: Title 41. Dairy Barn parking request on green pavers.

Nancy Bain

Requested a 3D rendition of the Garry Hunter building on Union Street for the next meeting. Paul Logue will see if one is available. He suggested adding this into their Title 41 review; the additional requirement of 3D renderings with plan submittals.

6. **Opportunity for Citizens to Speak**

Nancy Bain administered the oath to Betty Hollow.

Betty Hollow/31 Maplewood Drive

Commented about general zoning codes, Athens City codes, and the current comprehensive plan and how they connect to the idea of Home Sharing and short term rentals in districts where they are not now allowed. There are reasons for the existing restrictions to short term rentals. Athens City code allows changes to code if some or all of these conditions are met: there is a public necessity; to ensure the general welfare of the city and its citizens; and/or to ensure good zoning practices. She does not feel these conditions are met by Generation Opportunities petition to change Athens City Code. She does not feel it is justifiable to change established code/laws just to accommodate short term rentals. She feels these changes in the city code would be incompatible with the existing Comprehensive Plan.

7. **Announcements & Other Business**

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The next meeting of the commission will be June 16, 2016.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

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Nancy Bain, Planning Commission

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Patricia Witmer, City of Athens