

Athens City Planning Commission
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Thursday, January 17, 2019, 12:00 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Athens City Planning Commission was held in City Council Chambers, third floor, at City Hall on January 17, 2019.

Attendees:

1. Call to Order

Nancy Bain called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 12:10 p.m. There was no one in the live audience to administer the oath to. One member was absent and arrived during Item 4. Quorum was established.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS:

RJ Sumney, Chair.....Absent (arrived during Item 4)
Christy ZempterPresent
Nancy Bain, Vice Chair.....Present
Steve Patterson, MayorPresent
Andrew Stone, Service-Safety Director.....Present

STAFF:

Paul Logue, City PlannerPresent
Rick Sirois, Code Enforcement Director.....Present

2. Disposition of Minutes

Steve Patterson moved to accept the December 20, 2018 minutes. Andrew Stone seconded. Three ayes, one abstention (Christy Zempter). Motion passed 3:0.

3. Cases

None

4. Communications

Ohio University, Facilities Management & Safety
December 20, 2018 Letter
Re: Planned HCOM Union Street Facility

Paul Logue

The Planning Commission received a letter dated 12/20/18 from Ohio University notifying the Planning Commission that under ACC 23.03.19 OU is submitting a letter outlining their nonconformance with regulations of the zoning code as it relates to the construction of this new facility. Mr. Logue read from portions of the letter:

Master Plan:

- *Ohio University's 2016 Comprehensive Master Plan outlined several major changes on Ohio University property*
- *This site is located within the boundaries of the Union Street Green which recommends academic facilities within a Knowledge Community.*
- *The master plan contains relevant recommendations for this site, including building designs that contribute to a pedestrian-friendly frontage.*
- *The University has already been conducting academic business within both zones, B-3 and M*
- *The university worked with the city on the vision as well as obtained a portion of Moore Avenue for the development which allowed the university to scale the building to minimize height/mass/scale.*

Global Zoning Changes:

- *Ohio University recently met with staff from the city of Athens to discuss global requests for zoning changes as there are several areas of the campus that have evolved over time, yet the zoning has not been updated.*
- *Ohio University's over-arching goal is to ensure that campus land is zoned appropriately for current and future uses.*

Our intent is to invoke government property exemption for this project (23.03.19).

The HCOM Phase One facility as currently designed does not meet the below described requirements for development in 8-3 and M zones:

The Principal permitted uses and permitted accessory uses do not specifically allow for an academic facility for a public or private institution in a B-3 zone.

*Title 23 - Zoning Code, Section 23.04.07 - B-3 General Business Zone - Permitted Use
Zoning Code, Table A - Schedule of Bulk Controls
23.03 - General Regulations, including building height
23.03.07. - Height regulations.*

Height limitations stipulated elsewhere in the zoning code shall not apply to open amusement uses, church spires, belfries, cupolas and domes, monuments, water towers, chimneys, smokestacks, flag poles, masts and aerials; or to parapet walls except that no parapet wall may extend more than four feet above the limiting height of the building.

The maximum allowable height for a building in a B3 or M zone is 45 ft or 3.5 stories. The proposed height of the new HCOM building is 63 ft, which includes a 45 ft - 3 story building with a 4th floor rooftop mechanical penthouse that is 18 ft. The building size was reduced to better fit within the landscape of the neighboring properties.

Ohio University has reviewed city zoning code and ensured several elements are adhered to as follows:

23.03.12- Buildings on public streets

Each principal building shall front on a duly accepted public street which has been improved in accordance with city standards or on streets in the process of being improved in accordance with requirements of the subdivision regulations, Chapter 151. The building will front a duly accepted public street which will improve the access to this location. The building meets the required setback.

Ohio University has held several public and city collaboration sessions to share the vision and changes to this area of the campus:

*2014-2016, Comprehensive Master Plan process, including public open house workshops on and off campus. The public forum was advertised via local newspapers and Ohio University social media well in advance of the event. Additionally, Ohio University staff engaged directly with Homestead America (River Park Apartments) on August 2nd 2018 and again on September 6th, 2018. To date, the primary concerns presented have been related to noise impact to the surrounding neighborhood and the height of the building. We have addressed each of these items.**

ADAC - Ohio University's Architectural Design Advisory Council, has reviewed exterior concepts both on September 28, and December 3, 2018. This project was recommended to move forward at the December meeting.

**(Note, after reading this underlined section Mr. Logue, commented that it does not apply to the HCOM facility but relates to the chilled water plant.)*

Mr. Logue disclosed that he is a member of the ADAC referred to in OU's letter.

Discussion

Nancy Bain: This design does not fit in to campus very well.

Steve Patterson: On the last page of the renderings it depicts the view from Factory Street. Is the orientation that the front of the building will face Factory Street?

Paul Logue: Yes, the east elevation is the view from Factory Street.

Steve Patterson: The last rendering is Factory/W. Union.

Andrew Stone: City staff has been working with the design team on utility support and coordination, so that when the time comes it is least impactful.

Nancy Bain: Are they going to move back in to the storage facility?

Andrew Stone: That probably is their ultimate plan. They have a lot of other work to do in future phases. The existing facilities building, on the last rendering, is in the back but the storage space is not showing any longer. Factory Street is shown as a pedestrian walkway. The cities position is that Factory Street should remain open for vehicular traffic unless there was some alternative. Businesses on Station Street need access to Union Street. Any change to Factory Street would be part and parcel to another north-south roadway opening.

Nancy Bain: If they go back they won't go all the way to the old canal bed because we have a major sewer line under there.

Andrew Stone: And a major water line – we are working around that right now.

Steve Patterson: In looking at the east elevation, where is Moore Avenue in reference to this?

Andrew Stone: Roughly where one of the dark green trees are on the left side of the image. The east elevation also contemplates a Green in the location of the existing HRTC parking lot which would go elsewhere. There is some parking behind, on the west side of the building and across the street. Ohio University is trying to get away from parking right next to buildings and have a more pedestrian oriented campus. We will see a significant transformation of this area in the next 5-10 years. The impact to West Union Street and the spinoff of economic activity that can take place in this area is exciting. We are working with OU to make sure that the infrastructure supports these efforts.

Nancy Bain: Do you see the parking disappearing from West Union?

Andrew Stone: No, certainly not the section that currently has on street metered parking.

Paul Logue: We are looking at doing a study this year of Union Street from Shafer to 682.

Andrew Stone: The study is part of the preliminary engineering for a project addressing the crash problems and congestion in that corridor.

5. **Report from City Planner and Director of Code Enforcement**

Paul Logue

- Comprehensive Plan: Several videos are available on Facebook and YouTube, looking at summary ideas for what is being considered for some of the corridors of Athens, including Union Street and Stimson Avenue. Meeting with city staff to better understand what they anticipate happening within their organizations in the future.
- Reapplying for bike friendly status, which expires this year.
- City organizing an All-City Boards and Commission meeting on February 19th 5-6:30 at the Community Center.
- Plains Zoning Ad Hoc Committee: The final recommendation from the ad hoc committee was asking Athens County Commissioners to adopt a resolution to enable zoning in the unincorporated areas of Athens County specifically looking at The Plains area of Athens and Dover Townships. Conversations are going on right now with Athens County Commissioners relating to that. Athens Township Trustees have already approved the establishment of a zoning committee to try to advance that towards a ballot. Dover Township voted it down. The ad hoc committee has completed their work.

Rick Sirois

- Snow and ice removal: The website has a list of registered contractors that can be hired for snow and ice removal. The requirement is to remove after 4 hours of the last snowfall. Be considerate of absent or elderly neighbors. Be aware that snow covers litter, trash, pet feces.
- Continuing to address neighborhood blight which includes garages.

6. **Opportunity for Citizens to Speak**

None

7. **Announcements & Other Business**

- The next meeting will be February 7, 2019.

8. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

Nancy Bain, Planning Commission

Patricia Witmer, City of Athens