

Athens City Planning Commission
Minutes of Regular Meeting

Thursday, August 6, 2020, 12:00 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Athens City Planning Commission was held virtually on August 6, 2020.

Attendees: Jim D./Sands Decker, G. Decker/Sands Decker, Brad Hosfeld/Schorr Architects

1. **Call to Order**

RJ Sumney called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 12:00 p.m. and administered the oath to those in attendance wishing to speak before the commission. Quorum was established.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS:

RJ Sumney, Chair	Present
Christy Zempter	Present
Nancy Bain, Vice Chair	Present
Steve Patterson, Mayor	Absent
Tom Pyle, Interim Service-Safety Director	Present

STAFF:

Paul Logue, City Planner	Present
David Riggs, Code Enforcement Director	Present

2. **Disposition of Minutes**

RJ Sumney moved to accept the June 18, 2020 minutes. Christy Zempter seconded. All present voted aye. Motion passed 4:0.

3. **Cases**

None

4. **Communications**

Athens Middle School Renovation Title 41

David Riggs/Summary

- Plans for renovating two buildings located at 51 & 55 W. State St., the school and gymnasium.
- 3,950 sq. ft. of site work. Modifying the buildings but not altering the footprint. There will be some changes to parking and access.

RJ Sumney asked if the plans, as far as social distancing (larger classrooms?), have changed now because of the pandemic.

Brad Hosfeld/Schorr Architects

- The pandemic is not altering the layout of classrooms, as the project is more maintenance based, working on correcting some security items, and a new parking area.

RJ Sumney asked if any changes are being made to accessible parking, or having trash on the outside of the buildings.

- Improving ADA parking, adding 6-7 spots that will provide ADA access into the building.
- G. Decker noted that 6 spots are being added on South Lancaster St., just south of W. State. Two of the spots will be ADA accessible, at the NW corner of the site. Redoing sidewalks in that area, where there currently is a parking pull off on Lancaster Street.
- No change to ingress/egress.

David Riggs: The plans have been distributed to staff for review. This could be brought back as a case as early as the next meeting, 8/20. He has to do a public announcement 2 weeks prior.

Brad Hosfeld inquired about any variances that may be required regarding parking. David Riggs was planning to address this with the staff review and at the meeting when this is presented as a case.

Solar Zoning Changes Recommendation from the Environment & Sustainability Commission

Paul Logue/Summary

- He has been serving on this commission (Mayor's appointment) since its inception, about 6-8 years ago.
- Solar zoning changes have been presented previously to the Planning Commission, within the last 18-24 months.
- The E & S commission began working on this in early 2020. The last communication on this the city administration, City Council, and the E & S Commission were building a series of activities for Earth Month 2020 (40th anniversary). All the planning fell apart because of the pandemic. This was part of that strategy, to reinvigorate the zoning issue, to make it easier in the zoning language to allow for the installation of solar panels. This received a unanimous vote from the E & S Commission.
- This would require a recommendation to City Council. The commission is not required to hold a public hearing if it doesn't think it is necessary.
- He or David Riggs can present to the commission as a case. He will clean up the document that was distributed and provide it at the next meeting.

5. Report from City Planner and Director of Code Enforcement

Paul Logue

- Would like an opportunity soon, perhaps at the August 20th meeting, to present the draft Comprehensive Plan. This would require about 20 minutes for him to summarize. Chris Fahl, City Council representative, would like City Council to begin moving forward with the process. Planning Commission will be required to review, provide comment, and make a recommendation to City Council. He will make one final push for comments.
 - RJ Sumney agreed to add this to the August 20 agenda.
- A group called Age Friendly Athens County is working through the planning process, under the auspices of AARP, to have Athens County including the City of Athens designated as an “Age-Friendly” community. The group is divided up into 9 different categories of topics. He is a co-chair on one, along with Shawna Bolin at OU Planning, to look at age-friendly housing best practices. As a whole the group is working on a survey to get feedback from the community on issues, needs, etc. Will be working on this for the next few years. If anyone is interested in serving on the committee it meets every 2 months. Let him know.

RJ Sumney: Regarding the Comprehensive Plan, does the city have a detailed strategic business plan?

Paul Logue: No, we rely on ACEDC for this, and they receive funds from the city to help maintain services/staff (funds from OU, County and perhaps Hocking College as well). Also work with the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce and other organizations.

RJ Sumney: Could more momentum be generated if it was the city that was directly involved given the university’s current circumstances.

Paul Logue: Yes, this is a given that we need to be focused on diversifying our local economy. Mayor Patterson has been working on these issues. Historically we are very fortunate to have an economic base that is a state university. This is this is a liability for us now. More detailed conversations are warranted. He will mention this to the EDC.

David Riggs

- No updates

7. **Opportunity for Citizens to Speak**

No comments

8. **Announcements & Other Business**

The next meeting will be August 20, 2020.

9. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

RJ Sumney, Planning Commission

Patricia Witmer, City of Athens