

AGENDA

ATHENS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

3:30 P.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of August 7, 2025 regular meeting minutes

OLD BUSINESS

1. Discussion of historic overlay downtown

MINUTES

ATHENS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

3:30 P.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

Laura Lenoir

Jona Garrett

Kim Cochran-Graham

Chairperson Shawn McKeehan

MEMBERS ABSENT

Justin White

Jordan Curtis

Timberly Guffey

OTHERS ATTENDING

Nora Cardin

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of August 7, 2025, regular meeting minutes

The minutes of August 7, 2025, regular meeting, were read and approved on contingency that the minutes be amended with the following correction being made. The motion was made by Laura Lenoir; seconded by Jona Garrett; vote – unanimous

Chairperson McKeehan said there were two people who were listed as attending the last meeting that were not in attendance. Tyler Boyd and John Duggan were not there, and yet their names were on the minutes, so he thought they needed to be amended. All agreed.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Discussion of historic overlay downtown

Chairperson McKeehan said last month they had the city administrator of Sweetwater, Jessica Morgan, come and talk about their experiences with a downtown historic district. She encouraged the Commission to work with Main Street, which they are now fully partnered. Last week he, Mrs. Cardin, and Sandra Kinney met and planned a November 6th info session, which will take place at 5:30pm like the last info session. They are going to try and bring in people online or in person from other jurisdictions who have done this and have been successful, like Elizabethton or Winchester. Lane Tillner is going to come back, and Chairperson

McKeehan is going to talk about guidelines again and answer any questions. They are hoping to get Sam Moser from Sweetwater.

Mrs. Cardin said she emailed him but has not received a response.

Chairperson McKeehan said that Mrs. Kinney believes that roughly 50% of property owners are in support of the downtown district. He is hopeful that before they ever take a vote to recommend to Council that they get greater than 50% support.

Mrs. Lenoir asked how they did that survey.

Chairperson McKeehan said that Main Street was going door to door of the businesses.

Mrs. Lenoir said so, they are talking with the business owners and not necessarily the property owners.

Chairperson McKeehan said that he thought Mrs. Kinney had talked to most of the property owners.

Mrs. Lenoir made mention that no one talked to her.

Chairperson McKeehan said they are planning this one final info session so they can get that number up before they send out a mailed survey.

Mrs. Cardin said they will probably mail the survey details out and have them complete the survey online instead of having people mail something back in.

Chairperson McKeehan said the EDA (Economic Development Agency) and the county tourism office are supportive of the downtown district. He said Main Street also wants to support this. One of the things that he and Mrs. Cardin are going to start working on is a handout for the November 6th meeting containing frequently asked questions.

Chairperson McKeehan said he attended the Main Street meeting on the downtown improvement grant. He said some in attendance questioned the certifications of each of the AHPC members. There is no architect that lives in the confines of the city limits of Athens and so they do not have an architect. However, they have members of the Historical Society as well as property owners in the potential new district. He explained they are audited every year by the state and have had no adverse findings. If the commission members were inappropriate to hold these positions, they would have heard about it.

Mrs. Cardin said that Mrs. Kinney recommended having panel of multiple people from different aspects of historic preservation instead of just the Commission members answering the questions. She said that concerns her, because she doesn't want people from the outside to end up being badgered by the property owners.

Chairperson McKeehan said they will ask them to submit questions and Sandra (Mrs. Kinney) will be in acting as the moderator.

Mrs. Cardin said if Sam Moser cannot come, she can ask Jessica Morgan, who was at the last meeting, to participate on the panel. Whomever they want to try to get she can reach out to them. She, Chairperson McKeehan and Mrs. Kinney threw out some names like Dr. Tillner from the State of Tennessee, Sam Moser, whom Jessica mentioned from Sweetwater, who owns the building the Lazy Beagle is in, the vice mayor, and he's an architect, and then maybe someone from Main Street, as well as Chairperson McKeehan to answer questions. She said if they know of other people they would like to participate on the panel or have questions they would like to ask to let her know. It is not until November, and she will send out the notices to property owners at the beginning of October.

Mrs. Lenoir asked if in other cities, Main Street is involved with the Historic.

Chairperson McKeehan said most successful historic zoning that has occurred nationwide has had a Main Street organization in their town that they've partnered with.

There was further discussion about those who could possibly come. It is preferred they come in person rather than online.

Mrs. Lenoir asked if there was a cost to have someone come in.

The answer was it depends on what organization they are with.

There was a discussion on some of the feedback they had encountered.

Mrs. Lenoir asked who was going to give a general overview of an historic overlay and the dos and don'ts.

Chairperson McKeehan said they can let Dr. Tillner do it.

Mrs. Cardin said they can ask Dr. Tillner to do the synopsis first and then go in to asking the panel questions.

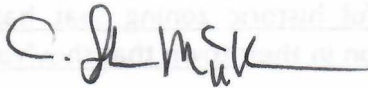
Mrs. Lenoir said it would be good to give an idea of how it works.

Chairperson McKeehan said TWU (Tennessee Wesleyan University) now wants to be part of the Historic District.

Mrs. Cardin said if they can think of any frequently asked questions they want to include, or people they would like to speak on the panel, just email them to her.

There was continued discussion.

The meeting was adjourned.



Shawn McKeehan, Chairperson



Timberly Guffey, Secretary