

Council Advisory Meeting
Monday, February 2, 2026
(postponed from Monday, January 26th due to snow)

Attendance:

Amy Sullins	Hugh Willson
Anne Marie Shaffer	Joe Kimbro
Barbara Peck	Shawn McKeehan
Francis Witt- McMahan	Patti Greek. Chair

We postponed the meeting due to bad weather the week before and therefore several were out of town from previous commitments (3), (2) due to illness and (2) did not respond.

We began by welcoming our new member, Joe Kimbro.

As always, I remind everyone they need to share their thoughts, that is why they were asked to be on this committee.

Following the agenda; our first topic –**Beautification of Exit 49 & Exit 52**

I reminded them about a Main Street meeting I attended several years ago and how the speaker showed 7-8-10 photos on a wide screen and asked all the Main Street Directors and the Chamber of Commerce Directors to look for their city.

Well, we all looked and looked. After a few minutes and several photos went by, he said, “did you see your city?”. No response. He then said, “hard to know—they all looked alike!”

So what can we do to show Athens is different?

Exit 49:

- agreed that the lighting is better at 49.
- Weigel’s has brought a nice clean look
- Need nice plantings with a *maintenance plan*
- Possibly Athens in big letters, so people will recognize it on the side of the hills either way. A T H E N S all in lights.
- Maybe the international symbol of friendship that has been used—but have signage that we are the “Friendly City” next to the symbol
- Signage needs to stand out more—other colors than green & white. For the Museum, Athens Art Center, Historic Downtown, etc.
- If the City could/would finish the **Regional Park**, more restaurants and activities would come and bring more tax revenue.

One of our largest assets and we have not finished this project.

The whole group said... “if you build it- they would come”.

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- There was a note from the City Manager that gave us an update of him meeting with TDOT about a large Milk Jug and a Ice Cream Carton for the Mayfield's Tour and Ice Cream shop for tourist to visit.
- What can be done with the old empty gas station next to Krystal—is there a plan.
- “Coffee Trail” -since we will have 3 free standing coffee shops and a Starbucks inside Ingles and Food City. A clever member added; “have a little milk with your coffee”?
- Someone suggested have another Mayfield's ice cream shop at exit 49.
- Large sign “Welcome to Athens” have all the clubs~
- Large sign about the County~ how and what there is to see in McMinn County. Have the sign in the shape of McMinn County. We have so much history in our county—let people know what we have. They may not be able to stop today, but they may want to come back.
Niota has the train depot, the Englewood Textile Mill, etc. This could also be at exit 52 and with

EXIT 52

- Horrible: too dark, scary—why would you want to get off there unless you know where you are going?
- It is never mowed consistently.
- Hard to turn left when coming off the exit
- Need new lighting
- The traffic on Ingleside has increased, so people are coming all the way into Athens.
- Need a major overhaul.

Second topic for tonight's meeting:

Asked by Vice-Mayor Curtis to discuss **Public Comment Rules and Decorum**

- The City Manager executive assistant provided us copies of the current rules and past guidelines. Each member reviewed those documents.

Open discussion began and continued for around 20+ minutes.

We reviewed the following cities' rules:

Oak Ridge: 3-minute limit for citizens which takes place at the end of the meeting.

The comments must pertain to the current agenda No dialogue.

Input to the City council only.

Maryville: Sign up or email topic. Comments only pertain to the agenda.

Lenoir City: 3-minute limit.

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Council Advisory Committee

Monday, January 26, 2026 @ 6:00 pm

Athens City Hall - Conference Room

1. Call to Order & Attendance

2. Discussion

A. Exit 49 & Exit 52 Beautification

Notes from the Chair, Patti Greek:

Just as we were setting up Main Street in 2016, I attended a meeting in Franklin, TN with all the other Main Street Board chairs, Directors and Chamber Presidents.

A gentleman began his presentation with photos of different exits for our cities. The first question...

"Can you spot your City exit?"

Well ...one after the other popped up.

After about 10 photos, he said, *"Can anyone spot their City?"* No one raised their hand. His next statement....they ALL look the same!

His then asked... *"What could you do to make your City exit stand out and be different?"*

B. During the January 12th Work Session, Vice Mayor Curtis asked our committee to discuss the Public Comment Rules & Decorum.

Three versions have been presented by staff to city council:

- Current version (attached)
- Proposed Revision 2025 (attached)
- Councilmembers Sherlin's revised version (attached)

3. Committee Election

Written Ballot Election

- i. Nominations
- ii. Each eligible member gets a slip of paper and writes one name.
- iii. Ballots are collected.
- iv. Votes are counted.
- v. Chair announces the results for the record.

Advisory Committee Meeting
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Please sign in:

Amy Sullins Amy Sullins

Anne Marie Shaffer AM Shaffer

Barbara Peck Barbara Peck

Bill Wilson _____

Bob Roseberry _____

Frances Witt-McMahan Frances Witt-McMahan

Hugh Willson Hugh Willson

James Fries _____

Jo Lundy _____

Joe Kimbro Joe Kimbro

Josh Goodman _____

John Profitt _____

Patti Greek Patti Greek

Scott Mashburn _____

Shawn McKeehan C. Sh McKeehan