

**Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County**  
**Meeting Summary**

Meeting Name: ARPA Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (GICH)

Meeting Date: April 11, 2023

Meeting Called to Order: 10:04AM

Location: Dougherty Auditorium- 120 W. Dougherty Street.

Recording: <https://youtube.com/live/max5-c5oqH0?feature=share>

Virtual?  Yes /  No

Public Input Requested or Received?  Yes /  No

**Committee Attendees:**

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kelly Girtz               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evan Mills                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jesse Houle                         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marqueta Swain | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brad Griffin               | <input type="checkbox"/> Sharon Liggett (non-voting)                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Niki Jones     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alice Kinman               | <input type="checkbox"/> Spencer Frye (non-voting)                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rick Parker    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shea Post                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Charles Smith (non-voting)                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> John Spagna               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Matthew Hall               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fred Smith (non-voting)             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heather Benham | <input type="checkbox"/> Solomon Smothers                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Charlie Gluodenis (non-voting)                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laura Alexander           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Roderick Wallace (virtual) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Terris Thomas (non-voting, virtual) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cecilia Mercer            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ovita Thornton             |   |

**Staff Attendees:**

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alejandra Calva | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cameron McGlothen | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hannah Savard          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coral Rogers    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paige Seago       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melinda Lord (virtual) |

**HR&A Attendees:**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Philip Kash (virtual) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sophie Danish (virtual)    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vidhee Garg           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Austin Amandolia (virtual) |

**Items Discussed:**

1. Committee approved minutes from meeting on 2/16/2023. First motion by Jesse Houle, seconded by Matthew Hall.
2. Marqueta Swain provided updates about 2023 GICH Point Process, including that a sub-committee (Roderick Wallace, Shea Post, Cecilia Mercer, Jesse Houle, Solomon Smothers) is currently reviewing the single application received by Athens Land Trust. Additionally, Rick Parker shared with the group that he and Marqueta Swain recently attended the GICH Retreat in Cartersville (a requirement to keep GICH status).

3. HR&A provided a recap of the discussion during 2/16/2023 meeting, and previewed the day's agenda to include a review with the committee potential housing tools to address Athens' lack of quality affordable rental homes, lack of support for homeownership, and a modest affordable housing delivery system. HR&A provided quick clarification of what "lack of support for homeownership" means (this was also addressed later in the presentation).
4. HR&A shared a list of 18 new and improved tools ACC could use to address key housing needs, which would complement and/or enhance the tools already in place locally. They explained the evaluation criteria they used to select these, including: alignment, feasibility, impact and implementation.
5. Specific to helping address ACC's modest affordable housing delivery system, HR&A described 2 key tools in this section: (a) establishing/growing a local housing fund that would support a range of housing programs to help expand/sustain funding, and (b) develop a housing dashboard to help sustain focus on affordable housing.
  - a. Discussion about: need to avoid the word "trust" when describing the housing fund due to legal constraints; ACC does have a small housing fund to which AHA contributes ~\$120K-\$130K annually (North Downtown, Columbia Brookside projects have benefitted from this fund); past efforts to build up this local fund have failed possibly due to lesser focus/support on affordable housing; need to identify local funding source—beyond finite ARPA dollars—that fits within constraints of state law without decrease funding of other programs; highlights from brief case study of Savannah's housing fund; a housing fund could support both affordable rental and homeownership programs (depending on funding amt.).
  - b. Brief discussion about creating and sustaining a dashboard outlining key housing programs, including dashboard developer options.
6. Specific to local rental affordability challenges. HR&A highlighted 4 potential tools, including (a) gap financing for new LIHTC projects, (b) redevelopment of public housing into mixed-income, (c) public land disposition, and (d) a preservation fund.
  - a. Discussion about how local processes around re-zoning and timing of existing gap financing doesn't align with DCA's LIHTC application, posing challenges for developers. Brief discussion about possibility of creating a "fast-track" in ACCGov's re-zoning process for affordable housing projects.
  - b. HR&A presented on ongoing AHA's efforts with mixed-income redevelopments.
  - c. Discussion around how disposition of available public land could support affordable housing development—both rental and homeowner-occupied units—by discounting sale price of land or providing funding through proceeds from land sales. Committee also discussed that title clearance is also a big challenge related to land acquisition; Marqueta Swain has an initial meeting scheduled soon with Georgia Heirs Property Law Center re: collaboration opportunities.
  - d. HR&A shared that a preservation fund could help provide funding to rehab existing small multi-family rental. Since it's quite complex and requires a large amount of initial funding, HR&A may not present it as a short-term tool for ACC.
7. To help address ACC's homeownership-related challenges, HR&A talked about (a) down payment assistance programs that include housing counseling and local mortgage pools, (b) increasing supply of move-in ready homes by enhancing single-family rehabilitation and infill efforts, and (c) supporting lower income households through owner-occupied repair. Alice Kinman shared that there is ongoing discussion about expanding ACC's

new voluntary inclusionary zoning policy to include single-family owner-occupied units within the next year.

- a. Generally, committee agreed DPA would be of interest. Discussion about: different structures of DPA programs (e.g., grants if wealth-building is goal vs. interest-free loans if goal is to protect affordability); local DPA programs currently run by ALT and AHA, as well as AHA's DPA in 1980s; inherent challenges of relying on state-run programs like DCA's Georgia Dream program to layer funding; limited current funding for housing counseling programs.
8. There was not enough time to go through all of HR&A's recommendations at the meeting, due to rich discussions. As such, HR&A gave timeline and next steps including:
  - a. HR&A/HCD will share presentation with committee members, and requested written feedback of potential housing tools. HR&A will follow up with additional conversations/data requests as needed.
  - b. Next committee meeting will be in June/July to discuss Final Draft Housing Strategy which will incorporate committee's feedback.
  - c. Alejandra Calva shared that there will also be a broader public input process over the summer 2023 before M&C vote on it in September or October 2023.
9. In response to Jesse Houle and Shea Post's comments about whether/how the affordable housing and homelessness strategic plans overlap and will "talk to each other". Alejandra Calva shared that HCD has been making sure that both consulting groups are aware of each other's work, how both efforts have identified need for more affordable rental housing for example, and that more overlap will surface as both plans move forward.
10. Alejandra Calva provided details of upcoming community events focused on fair housing, and adjourned meeting.

Meeting Adjourned at: 11:51 a.m.