



Meeting Notes  
 Citizens Advisory Board (CAB)  
 November 18, 2020  
 2:00pm – 4:00pm  
 Virtual Meeting – WebEx

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**Meeting attendance available [here](#). | Recording of meeting available [here](#).**

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Introductions (Mike Wharton, ACCGov)

- We'll be posting a recording of this meeting on the web. Meeting is being livestreamed through YouTube.

Recap of October CAB meeting & education series lookahead

- Education Series schedule

Date	Topic
September 16*	Clean Energy 101: Impact Opportunities in Energy Efficiency
October 7	Efficiency in the Built Environment
<del>October 21*</del>	<del>Greenscaping</del>
November 4	Energy Systems and Grid Policy
November 18* (TODAY)	Energy Burden and Housing Inequality
December <del>9<sup>th</sup></del> 16	Greenscaping (RESCHEDULED)

- Feedback opportunity for CAB: *December 9<sup>th</sup> Education Session will be rescheduled to the 16<sup>th</sup>, and combined with the regularly scheduled December 16<sup>th</sup>.*

Community survey update

- Community survey has been updated with feedback from ACCGov, Greenlink Analytics.
- Will be shared with CAB following this meeting – for information only, no action required.
- Will be deployed in 2021.

Recap of Stakeholder Identification and Invitation Processes

- 1:1 / "mini-charrettes"
  - Current list of stakeholders for "one-on-one" (or small group) interviews – shared with the CAB. For information only; no action needed from the CAB.
  - 12 stakeholders have been identified.
  - More may be identified after initial engagement.



- Charrettes
  - 3 stakeholder charrettes:
    - Community & Equity
    - Clean Energy Economy
    - Intersection of the Natural & Built Environment
  - Optimum number of attendees: 15-25
  - Each charrette will include 1-4 CAB members.
  - Meetings will not be recorded to encourage candor. Detailed notes will be shared publicly.
  - Documents forthcoming for CAB information only (no action required):
    - Description of charrettes
    - Proposed invitees
  - **CAB action requested:**
    - Complete survey for preferred charrette attendance.

### Education series part 3, panel: Energy Burden and Housing Inequality

- Introductions
  - Alex Trachtenberg – Senior Project Manager, Southface Policy & Community Impact
  - Megan O’Neil – Program Manager, Southface Policy & Sustainability Services
  - Bailey Shea – Program Coordinator, Southface Policy & Sustainability Services
  - Yeou-Rong Jih – Director of Urban Initiatives, Greenlink Analytics
  - Melinda Lord – Community Development Specialist, Athens-Clarke County Housing and Community Development
  - Margo Fowler – CSBG and EFSP Program Director, Action, Inc.
  - Stephanie Nesbitt – CFO, Action, Inc.
  - Tawana Mattox – Director of Community Education and Empowerment, Athens Land Trust
- Agenda
  - Overview of housing in Athens
  - Opportunities for clean energy in housing
    - Overview
    - Local organizations
  - Panel discussion
- Housing stock in Athens
  - GICH report – thanks to Melinda Lord and ACCGov HCD for provision of this data
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  - Breakdown by type:
    - 47% single family detached
    - 49% multifamily (2-20+ units), mobile homes
      - 14,000 multifamily units (2015)
    - 62% Renter
    - 38% Owner-occupied
  - Owner-occupied
    - Median value of owner-occupied = \$152,000
    - Avg. sales price for all home types = \$200,400 to \$338,028



- 72% increase (1995-2015)
- Athens' population is growing but the amount of housing is not growing at the same rate
  - 2010-2017 – 7% pop. growth, only 2% housing growth
  - Shortage of affordable housing
  - Some competition with students and population growth
- Housing Affordability
  - What is "total affordability"?
    - Total Affordability: Health, comfort, resource & location efficiency (energy, water, transportation), budget / income
    - Why is this important?
      - Because we know that rent/mortgage is only one piece of the puzzle for people who are trying to make ends meet every month, support their families, and survive in a pandemic, and hopefully thrive and achieve success for themselves and their children in the future.
  - 30% income / housing cost rule (includes utilities) – Housing is considered affordable when housing costs, including utilities, make up 30% or less of the household's income. In Athens:
    - 10,580 families below low-income threshold of \$46,400
    - 70% of renters earn <\$35,000
    - (2012-2018): Rent increased 23%
    - 50% of Athens renters are cost burdened
      - This is 8% higher than Georgia
      - >50% = severely cost burdened
    - Athens Housing Authority waitlist = 2,709 (Dec. 2018)
  - Total affordability measure: 45% for housing and transportation costs
    - Athens = 58% avg.
    - Lots are severely burdened.
  - It would take 90 hours per week at minimum wage to afford average rent for a two bedroom apartment in Athens.
- Barriers
  - Cost of construction and rehab
    - Avg. cost increase of 64% ('98-'17)
  - Market demand and supply
    - Mostly multifamily student housing construction (67%)
  - Upfront capital and limited programming - rebates, incentives
    - Innovative financing - i.e. PAYS®
    - Utility / govt. programs
  - Split incentives / benefits (owner v. renter)
  - Federal guidelines v. local need
    - Ex. Weatherization Assistance Program - 12 mo. rent restriction period - local policy opportunity
  - Living wage employment and workforce development
    - 90 hr. @ min. wage to afford 2 BR in Athens-Clarke
- Opportunities (Finding Home, GICH, 2019)



- Housing Trust Fund
- Inclusionary Development
- Redevelopment efforts on existing land
- Code Enforcement
- Anti-Displacement
- Intersection of Health, Housing, and Energy
  - Energy Efficiency = Healthy Housing
  - Health Impacts
    - Approximately 17% of households report at least one individual with asthma (comparable to rates in Georgia and US)
    - 9% of county population report mold problems in the home
    - Households reporting presence of mold are 11.3% more likely to report asthma
- Energy Burden in Athens
  - Energy burden is the amount of yearly income that residents pay for electricity and gas bills
    - ~3% national average
    - 6% is considered "high"
    - 10% is considered "severe"
  - Median energy burden:
    - 5% Georgia
    - 7% Athens-Clarke County
  - Energy burden ranges from 3% to close to 30% in Athens.
  - The census tract with the highest energy burden in the state lies within Athens-Clarke County.
  - Impacts:
    - FDIC: #1 reason for a payday loan is to a pay utility bill
    - 31% of Americans have gone without a meal or a prescription to pay a bill
    - Energy burden exacerbated by COVID-19 due to higher energy use + impacted incomes
    - Residential energy efficiency and solar can reduce energy burden, increase home comfort, create jobs, and stimulate the local economy
- Housing & Clean Energy Opportunities
  - Conservation first! Then energy efficiency. The renewable energy.
  - Energy code compliance – within local jurisdiction, ultimately governed by state Department of Community Affairs
  - Green building programs – certification programs can guarantee safe, healthy, sustainable, and efficient housing
  - Low-no-cost measures – turn out lights, reduce "energy vampires," do not heat/cool home when not inside, weatherstrip doors and windows, LED lights, door sweeps
  - Weatherization
  - Utility programs – Georgia Power and other utilities offer rebates and incentives for energy efficient appliances
  - Deep retrofits – primarily seen with commercial buildings
  - Renewable energy



- ACCGov Housing and Community Development – Melinda Lord
  - Receives U.S. HUD, CDBG, HOME Investment Partnership, Continuum of Care, and CDBG-CV (COVID) funding and allocates it to eligible local organizations (mostly nonprofits) in support of quality affordable housing
  - Affordable housing (AH) activities include
    - Acquisition of properties and demolition for future AH projects
    - Homeowner-occupied rehab
    - Historic preservation
    - Support of new construction activities through HOME funded
  - Housing counseling services
  - All rehab and NC activities encourage energy efficient materials, supplies, and appliance usage
  - Many programs are targeted toward homeless programs including shelters and permanent supportive housing
  - New CDBG funding has been awarded by HUD since and because of COVID
  - Will be dedicated to public services with priority for financial assistance activities including rent and utility assistance, as well as homeless services
  - ACCGov also received CARES funding. HCD administers this. Currently funded orgs:
    - Athens Land Trust
    - Action, Inc.
    - The Ark
    - East Athens Development Corporation
    - Athens Area Habitat for Humanity
    - Casa de Amistad
- Action, Inc. – Margo Fowler and Stephanie Nesbitt
  - Action is a private nonprofit agency – hand-up approach for community members for short-term and long-term goals that they have
  - 10 counties: Jackson, Madison, Elbert, Barrow, Walton, Clarke, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Morgan, Greene
  - Focus on partnerships, opportunities for education and resources
  - Education programs – aimed at getting gainful employment,
    - Career coaches – mentorship and guidance throughout programs in high school youth program
    - Opportunities to excel – works with seniors in their transition from high school to college
    - Achieving Career Excellence (ACE) – GED or short term certificate for special populations (veterans, those with substance abuse issues, others facing special circumstances)
    - Educational re-entry program for 16-24 y/o to get GED
  - Goals are gainful employment, which means sustainability
  - Community based programs
    - Employment support
    - Rent/mortgage, utility assistance
    - Nutrition program



- Full Plate program – food “rescue” program reducing waste and serving homeless
- Budget counseling – aim to reduce expenses
- HUD certified counselor for housing counseling
- Weatherization – Stephanie Nesbitt
  - Aimed at reducing energy burdens through home inspection and energy modeling, sending contractors for repairs and weatherization, follow-up inspection
  - Weatherization for elderly and people w/ children
  - Goal to reduce energy burden by at least 30%
  - Clarke County – roughly 5 homes per year
- Athens Land Trust – Tawana Mattox
  - Community land trust, governed by board of residents, community members, public representative
  - Holistic approach to affordable housing, stewardship of the land
  - Each division within ALT has a corresponding youth program
  - Best known for AH programs
    - Permanently affordable homes for generations
      - Funded through CDBG and HOME grant
    - Tawana is Director of Community Development and Empowerment
      - Oversees youth, community, and neighborhood revitalization programs
    - HUD certified agency with HUD certified counselor that works across the NE GA community
      - Runs a first time home-buyer workshop – home buying *and home retention*
    - CARES funding has contributed to rent/mortgage support
    - Young Urban Builders – gain construction skills, soft skills, and revitalizes West Broad Neighborhood
  - Conservation
    - ALT has worked with landowners to protect over 19,000 acres through conservation easements and other means – forest, wetlands, farmland, neighborhood green space
    - Community agriculture – work with minority farmers to learn and grow
    - Young Conservation Stewards
    - Young Urban Farmers
  - West Broad Neighborhood Revitalization – home improvement and weatherization program in historically African American neighborhood, with youth workforce development component
    - Southeast Sustainability Directors Network (SSDN) grant, worked with ACCGov Office of Sustainability
    - Goal to reduce energy burdens
    - Structural work – didn’t realize what was needed until speaking to community
    - Completed 16 homes – could not meet original goal of 21 homes, but high expenses



- 21 homes completed energy audits
  - Provided 2 churches with energy efficiency upgrades through Georgia Interfaith Power and Light (GIPL)
  - Community engagement was critical to the project – shed light on concerns and allowed ALT to be flexible and change the project to meet their needs
  - City officials were visible and accessible
  - Working WITH the community, not FOR the community.
- Q&A
    - Effects of the COVID-19
      - Margo – Clarke County is highly service industry-based
        - Have seen significant increase in calls
      - Have received CARES funding
        - Has also received county CARES funding
        - Have a full time county coordinator for this
      - Lisa – Community services county coordinators, Athens Clarke is especially hard hit by unemployment, rent/mortgage, utility bills, food
        - Aim to integrate services
        - Connect them with other partners who can help if Action can't
        - Follow people's budgets after weatherization to ensure they're realizing savings
        - Goal is always: Can we take them past their current crisis of being unemployed? Let's use all our options to do that.
      - Melinda
        - Increased demand on staffing – taking on CARES and other emergency funding and services is a lot
        - (Mentions moratorium on rent)
        - Athens Land Trust has been advocating for renters, sometimes even calling landlords to make deals
    - What are the barriers and the pathways? What do you want people to know about the complexities of moving clean energy forward ?
      - Melinda – The extent of rehabilitation that some housing needs is *extensive*. (Think: hole in wall, hole in roof, hole in floor, etc.)
      - Limited finances. Projects that will only receive \$5000 to complete work may need \$25,000+ in rehabilitation.
      - Melinda – With rehabs and rebuilding, there's no permanent displacement so this is often preferred – CDBG funding does this
      - Amy Kissane – Are there policies or regulations that add to costs?
        - Policy barriers – the higher you go in rehab assistance for HOME more regulations
        - Local level
          - Planning to look at ordinances on the books to decrease restrictions
    - Community solar – made difficult in Georgia because of legality – this is determined at state level through Georgia legislature and the Georgia Public Service Commission



## Wrap up

- Today, we:
  - Review October CAB meeting and remaining education series meeting
  - Reviewed progress on stakeholder engagement
  - Learned about energy burden and housing inequality, and their connection to clean energy in Athens
- Information only (no action needed):
  - Community survey
  - Final stakeholder lists
    - 1:1s
    - Description of charrettes and proposed invites
  - Action needed:
    - Complete survey for preferred charrette attendance.
  - Upcoming:
    - Communication update – Maggie will be in touch with CAB members individually by phone call more often before and/or following monthly CAB meetings
    - December 16 – CAB Meeting and Education Series on Greenscaping